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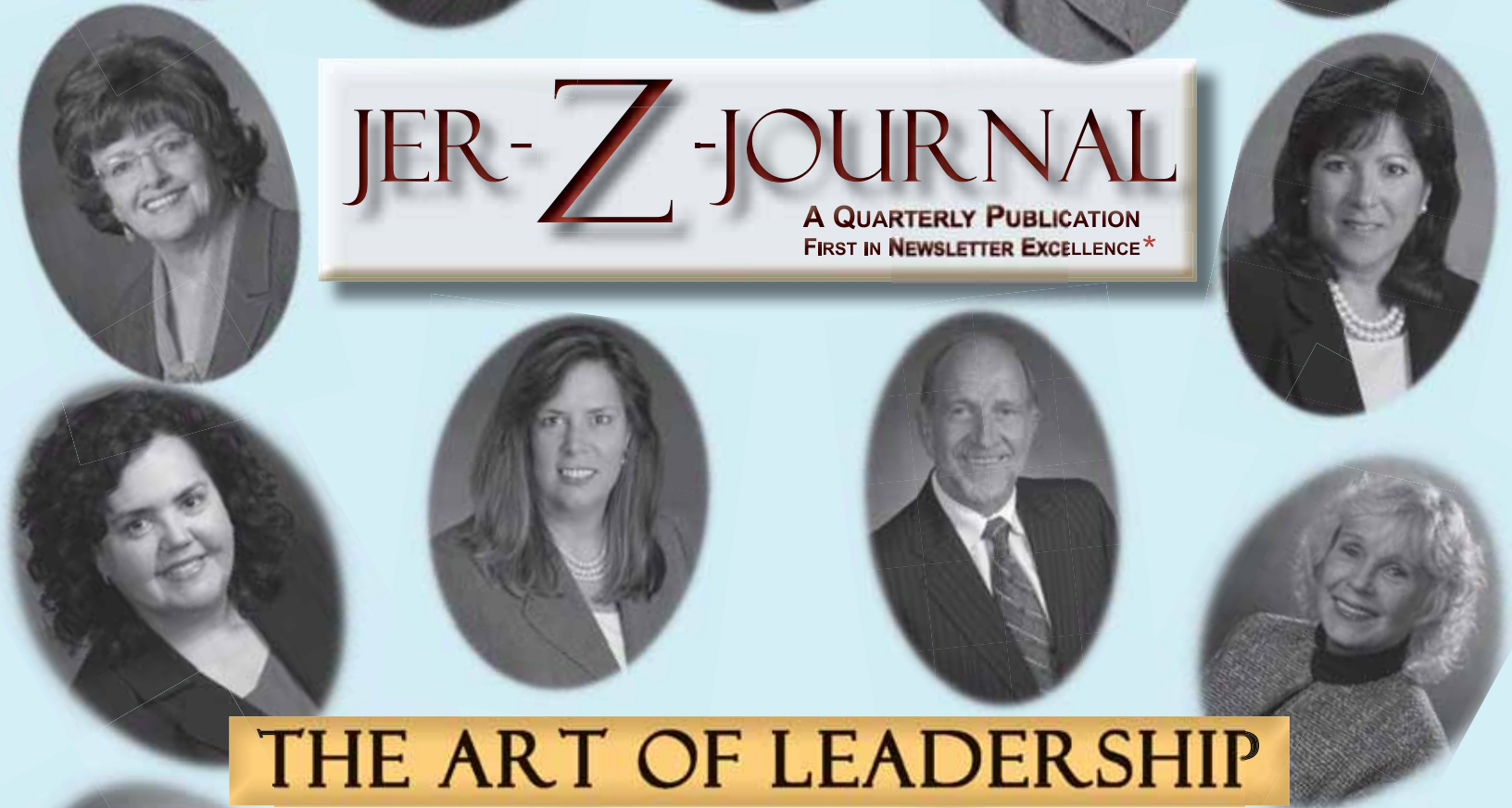
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ON THE COVER

In honor of the recent Presidential election, and featuring some of our own NJALA past presidents on the cover, it seemed like a great time to focus on “The Art of Leadership.” Articles in this edition identify the attributes of great leaders, and offer suggestions from the NJALA trenches on how to improve your own leadership skills.

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PIONEERING EFFORTS

BY MARY ELLEN DOLAN

Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "Our chief want is someone who will inspire us to be what we know we could be." Thanks to the efforts of our organization's early pioneers, specifically, Brad Hildebrandt, Joan Stern and Theodore Geiser, who formed our organization, NJALA continues to thrive and continues to inspire.

When I sat down to write this article, my first thought was how many great leaders are or have been affiliated with the New Jersey Association of Legal Administrators since its inception in 1967. When this organization began, a few legal administrators got together and created a forum to help each other manage their respective firms. Through their vision and leadership, the International Association of Legal Administrators was formed. Without those great leaders, where would we be? Today, our chapter has close to 150 members, all working to continue the tradition of our early pioneers.

Defining leaders and leadership is no easy task. A simple definition would be that a leader is someone who establishes and influences others to follow. Leadership is defined as a quality which cannot be acquired by a person from another person, but rather, it is acquired by the self-determination of a person. Leadership is a quality hidden in the personality of each human being and it is the process by which a person has the capabilities to direct, guide and influence the work of others. Each of us spends a good part of our days leading our organizations and employees to thrive. That caused me to think about some of the characteristics required of a successful leader.

Great leaders know that one must involve every person in the organization to achieve success, no matter how challenging it may be. With individuals who are difficult to communicate with, great leaders go out of their way just to get in touch with them, even if their contributions are considered insignificant. Every person on the team counts.

Great leaders know how to delegate but understand that

delegation is useless without accountability. Recently, one of our Past Presidents told me, "To be a leader and be successful one must delegate and rally the troops." Our early pioneers understood this and rallied a few administrators to build our organization: And look at us now.

In an organization, a great leader will not only create a legacy for themselves, but will help others hone their skills and capabilities as future leaders. Many Past Presidents and leaders of NJALA have done this over the years. We should call them our mentors, because their leadership has been instrumental to the evolution of our organization.

A leader gets things done through other people. Although people differ from one another physically and psychologically, we are all driven by certain basic needs. A great leader understands that all individuals need to gain recognition for a job well done. A good leader who praises his or her team members will have very little difficulty achieving success. That being said, let me please say that I truly appreciate the efforts of our NJALA board and volunteers.

Many things make a great leader, and our organization certainly has achieved our successes because of the efforts of our members. As we approach the end of our 45th Anniversary Year I would like to thank all the individuals who have been a part of our organization. In the 45 years that NJALA has been in existence, there have been many influential leaders who have dedicated their time and expertise to allow our organization to grow and succeed. Many of our past leaders have demonstrated the skills to be a great leader, and we can certainly learn from them. My hope is that we will continue to build on their legacies and lead by example to continue to achieve great successes for NJALA. Let's continue their pioneering efforts.

*Mary Ellen Dolan is the Office Administrator of
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YOUR LEADERSHIP STYLE

BY LISA CUFFARI, CLM

While you may not be aware of it, you have a leadership style. The performance of your key employees will be shaped by the way you interact with them and by the climate that is created by your actions. Your leadership style probably changes with your audience at a particular time, especially if you are intuitive to your team. There are numerous studies available that address the academics of leadership, and that provide instruction on identifying how and when our “default” style works or doesn’t work. This article will first provide a review of the most recognized leadership styles and then will give you some ideas for tweaking your style.

Psychologist Kurt Lewin identified three different styles of leadership in 1939. In the study, Lewin and his team studied the behavior of schoolchildren, who were given arts and crafts projects, under the direction of three specific leadership types. The way the children responded to the styles solidified the academic view of leadership at the time. Since this early study, most business leaders recognize six different types of leadership that find their roots within these basic definitions.

Authoritarian/Autocratic Leadership. Leaders who are authoritarian in nature will provide clear expectations for results, and will direct their underlings each step of the way. The authoritarian leader makes his/her decisions independently, keeps control, and maintains distance from those following the orders. Lewin reported that the children under an authoritarian leader performed well but showed little of their own creativity in their projects.

Authoritarian leadership is effective in situations where there is little time for group decision making (such as in the military) or where the leader is the most knowledgeable member of the group. This type of leader may have trouble adapting to different circumstances.

Daniel Goleman further discussed authoritarian leadership in his 2000 Harvard Business Review article. Goleman identified certain managers who exerted tight control over their employees and who relied upon the threat of negative consequences as engaging in a “coercive” leadership style. In the long term, this type of leadership can demotivate employees. However, it was noted that, during periods of change, it can help employees focus and perform well.

Participative/Democratic Leadership. With participative leadership, guidance is given to group members, but the members themselves have input into group decisions. Most agree that democratic is the most effective leadership style. Goleman further defines this as an “affiliative” style, where harmonious interactions are emphasized and the manager encourages the group to work together. In Lewin’s study, the children with a democratic leader were less productive than the members of the authoritarian group, but their contributions were of a much higher quality.

The participative/democratic leader retains the final say over the decision making process, but encourages his/her employees to use their skills and abilities in solving problems. The employees feel engaged in their work and are often more motivated and creative. Watch, however, the incompetent employee who is unlikely to raise his or her game with this management style.

Delegative Leadership. The children under delegative leadership in Lewin’s study were the least productive of all three groups. They showed little cooperation and were unable to work independently. Delegative leadership leaves decision making up to the group members, does not define roles or goals, and often results in missed deadlines. Also known as laissez-faire leadership, in order for this “hands-off” approach to be successful, employees must be highly skilled, motivated and capable of working on their own.

While related to delegative leadership, Goleman uses the term “coaching” to describe a style that helps employees recognize their own strengths and weaknesses. The coach helps employees to set their goals and provides regular feedback to improve performance. Experts say that coaching can work well when the employee acknowledges the need for improvement.

Current trends encourage us to be transformational leaders. We are expected to recognize how best to lead based on the situation and the goals to be attained. Effective leaders draw on all of the styles described above, by being visionary when change is needed, acting as coach for developing the individual employee, encouraging team work and harmony in a group, being democratic in order to tap the collective

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Your Leadership Style

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wisdom of employees, setting the pace and high standards to effectuate change, and finally, by being commanding in times of crisis.

The traits of transformational leaders include enthusiasm, passion, and energy. These leaders show qualities of assertiveness, adaptability, intelligence and conscientiousness and are able to empower and develop followers. Just how, exactly, can we do this? Here are some strategies that may help us become better leaders.

1. Look at what you currently do, and assess your skills by taking a leadership style quiz. There are many options on the Internet. Once you identify your dominant style of leadership, you can think about your office and how this style either works or doesn't work with the people you manage.
2. Be a role model to your employees by setting an example in your own work habits.
3. Show genuine enthusiasm for your firm and its culture. Be appreciative of the contributions your employees make, even the small ones.
4. Talk one-on-one with your employees and keep them informed of upcoming changes, new equipment, policies, etc.
5. Be optimistic about the future even in the face of challenges.
6. Encourage ideas from your employees, especially to improve or clarify procedures.
7. Recognize and praise your employees' accomplishments.
8. Give yourself time to think about a situation before reacting to it.
9. Respect your employees and avoid potentially uncomfortable conversations until you are in a private setting.
10. Keep trying new things!

Leadership is a hat that must be put on and worn. The style you utilize will change based on a variety of factors. Don't be afraid to ask how you're doing. The answers you hear may surprise you.

*Lisa J. Cuffari, CLM,
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HELLO, I'M YOUR OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR—CAN I COUNT ON YOUR VOTE FOR RE-ELECTION?

BY KERRY JEAN MOORE

With this year's Presidential election just having passed, this may be a good time to consider what it would be like if your own continued employment were not at the will of your firm's managing shareholders but, instead, depended on your having to be re-elected to your position by your firm's employees every four years. Did that get your attention? I thought it would.

In assessing your re-electability as incumbent, how confident would you be in your accomplishments over the past four years and in your proposals for "hope and change" within your office? Would the eligible voters in your office view you as someone who tries to balance, in a bipartisan manner, the needs of both attorneys and staff? Can you point to any fresh, new initiatives that you have instituted during your term to help get your office out of the slump of a prior administration and on the road to improved efficiency?

Asking ourselves these daunting questions will help us take stock of our prior terms. Like many politicians, we may have taken office with wide-eyed optimism and a belief that we could make significant changes to the status quo. Along the way, however, intervening circumstances may have made us redirect our energies or lose our momentum. Perhaps our enthusiasm was dampened because our early initiatives were either not well-received or did not generate the necessary support. Perhaps the continued effects of 2008's economical freefall derailed our valiant efforts to make improvements. Perhaps, through no fault of our own, our mantra over the last four years went from, "Let's make a difference" to "Let's just hold on and survive."

But whatever challenges were encountered over the last four years, in the "election" we are imagining, hope still springs eternal. Personal comebacks and reinventions happen all the time in our great country. So dust off your unfulfilled campaign promises and get ready to win back your old supporters and maybe even win over some detractors. To help structure your upcoming campaign, I humbly offer, as my version of a "thousand points of light," the following six critical points for your platform:

1. **Town hall meetings:** If you have become disconnected from your "constituents," there is no better way to reconnect

than by holding small, focused "town hall"-type meetings. Be brave enough to seek your employees' honest assessment of your "administration" and ask for their cooperation in rallying for the future. When you invite them, ask each one to bring along three ideas that they believe will help create a better office. Their ideas could be related to policy, procedure or morale. At the meetings, do something that politicians too often forget to do: LISTEN. Being in the trenches everyday, your employees most likely have suggestions to help improve your office in some capacity. Listen and get to know "where they are coming from." I guarantee you will learn from them and about them. The meetings will also foster a feeling of community. And where there is community, there is strength.

2. **The economy:** If history is a guide, an incumbent who has not been a good steward of his/her jurisdiction's economic well-being will have an up-hill battle for re-election. What is the current state of the economy in your office, and how successfully have you managed your office's budget? How well have you brought together technology and people to streamline efficiencies? In the new paradigm of law firm management, it is no longer enough to just balance the budget: We must also cut costs while delivering better service. Making your campaign slogan, "I will deliver more with less," shows that you fully understand the challenges of the post-2008 market. But it has to be more than just a slogan. Have you evaluated the traditional role of secretaries to create a more efficient approach, or "pools" of assistants who manage multiple tasks? There are several ways to achieve better budget management, including renegotiating your current lease, developing bulk agreements with your caterers and looking for alternative vendors for office supplies.

3. **Morale:** Would your "constituents" say that you spend sufficient time and effort working to create a collegial office environment? Statistics show that our employees are more stressed than ever, juggling serious concerns over job security, childcare, elder care and other professional and personal issues. Have you fostered an office environment that offers your employees a safe haven during their storms? Granted, budgetary constraints make it more difficult to provide soft perks. But it does not take big dollars to make an environment more collegial. Take advantage of opportunities to bring employees

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Hello, I'm Your Office Administrator

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together to nurture a work community that provides some respite from outside problems they may be facing. Recognize not only professional anniversaries, but also birthdays, weddings and other personal milestones. Acknowledge employee accomplishments. Develop a "university" for acquiring firm knowledge and skill sets, and award certificates for completion. Unite everyone in charitable endeavors. Consider purchasing a TV for the lunchroom or breakroom so that everyone can gather around to watch major news or other events.

4. **New Frontiers:** The ideal administrator "candidate" is one who looks beyond today and sets ambitious goals for the future. Great leaders of the past have taken us to the moon, have created new technologies and have found new ways of doing business. Where have you taken your office over the last four years? Although you may not have gone to the moon, give yourself high marks for introducing a new billing system or time-entry software that promoted greater efficiency. More importantly, though, what do you envision for your office over the next four years? Maybe you will help create a virtual office environment in order to reduce leasing expenses, or maybe you will facilitate job-sharing. Perhaps you will take the lead in turning your office "green" to help the environment and, in the process, save money, or perhaps you will revamp your technology, institute a wellness program or introduce some other important program to benefit employees.

In doing all these laudable projects, though, don't neglect your own personal goals. An invigorated administrator is a tremendous asset to an office. Ask yourself where you want to take your career over the next four years? Might it be time to add "CLM" to your resume?

5. **Healthcare:** Healthcare costs are a challenge for both employees and employers. Wellbeing of employees can have enterprise-wide effects in addition to the benefits at the personal level. Organize a health fair and other programs designed to give employees an opportunity to learn about nutrition, stress management and exercises specially designed for busy people and to receive recommended screenings. This is a "win" for all involved.

6. **Security:** While elected officials have the grave responsibility of our national security, back here on the home front it has never been more important or more challenging to keep our people, technologies and facilities safe. What steps have you taken to ensure the safety of your employees, your clients and your office technology? Have you reassessed the software housing your documents and e-mails? Have you educated your employees on how to safeguard sensitive information? What procedures have you put in place to handle a natural disaster? Do you have a recovery plan, and do all of your employees know about it? Have you replaced "phone trees" with "hotlines" and/or "mass-text and alerts"

sent directly to employee cell phones? These are all critical areas for which you can never be over-prepared. Pledge that, in your next "term," you will keep current on new safeguards and will be on the lookout for new threats, whether external or (unfortunately) internal.

Reviewing these "platform" points may make you feel like running for early retirement rather than re-election. But don't be discouraged: The fact that you are an office administrator means that you have already been given a vote of confidence. We all face challenges, but we are all dedicated and capable. Seize this moment to evaluate and reinvigorate your "term." Believe in your vision, and go into Election Day confident that you have done the best job that could have been done. Here's hoping you all win re-election by a landslide!

Kerry Jean Moore is the Business Director of Greenberg Traurig, LLP in Florham Park



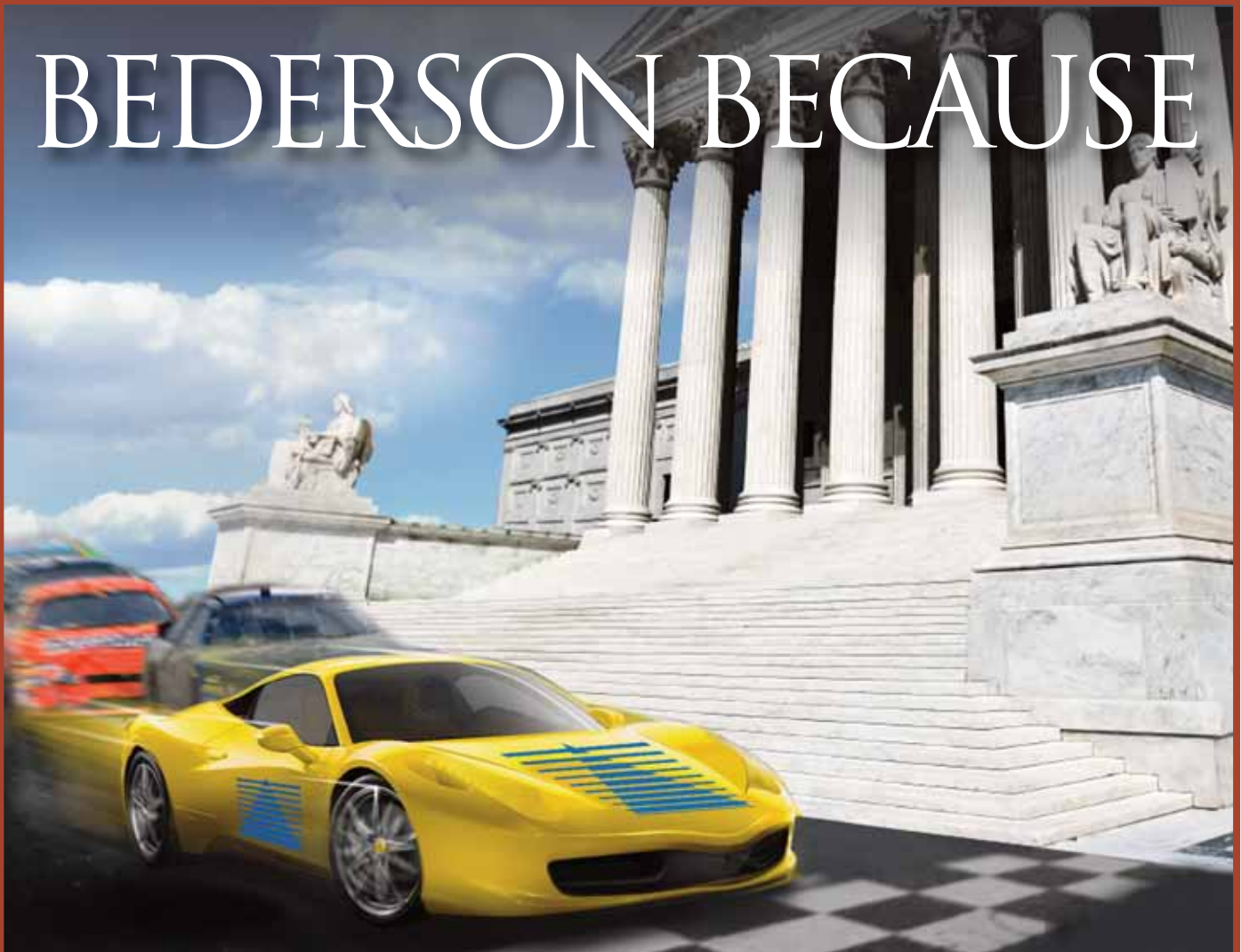
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IT'S A PROCESS: OFFICE LEASING PITFALLS AND COST AVOIDANCE

BY MARC J. TREVISAN

So you think the deal your current landlord just offered you to renew your lease is a good one? Think again. Is the rental rate increasing, decreasing, or remaining at the current level? Is the current level that he or she is “matching” a base rent or escalated rent? What about relocating to a “better” building? Is it really too expensive to move? How old are the mechanical systems in the building and when will they be replaced? Is free rent as valuable as improvement allowance? Why will some landlords strive to maintain high face rates while others offer below-market rates? These are some of the many aspects of a lease negotiation between tenant and landlord.

After 25 years of brokerage, the one thing that still mystifies me is when a tenant says, “We don’t need a broker, we can do this ourselves.” While some would argue that negotiating a lease is not nearly as complicated as practicing law or conducting tax audits, I say consider the following.

Landlords do this every day. Tenants, but once every five years or so. Landlords are expert negotiators and are generally armed with excellent market intelligence. Only a qualified broker advocate can meet this lofty standard. Landlords rely on meaningful market data to underwrite, finance, and lease assets. They have a solid sense of every cost and how to best stretch the capital required for each tenant. A “smart” tenant acknowledges the value-add of a good broker. The “I’m smarter than you” tenant represents his or her own interests and generally comes out the loser in the negotiation with the landlord.

I have represented many law firms and applaud their way of thinking which includes: “Why do this myself when the fee is in the deal? I do not have time or required data to develop a cogent, credible negotiation. If the landlord has experts, I need experts.” Often times when a tenant chooses to go it alone, they reason that they are not moving anyway, so why involve a third party? Consider the following: Renewal and relocation both require a process which includes criteria development, scenario planning, market engagement, construction, lease negotiation, etc. I would, and do, also argue that a renewal or stay-in-place transaction contains a greater risk of paying too much. Now that I have your attention, you need to understand the variables. If you renew, the landlord saves a bundle—no downtime, limited improvement allowance, and no marketing costs. So how does

the tenant participate in those savings? The example below is a simplified version of what my team relies on when negotiating a stay-in-place transaction.

Table 1

Landlord Costs	
	Replacement Avg. Cost (psf)
Architectural Fees	\$0.40
Engineering Fees	\$0.30
Filing and Permit Fees	\$0.13
Demolition Costs	\$2.75
Loss of Rent/Downtime	\$52.40
Free Rent	\$7.29
Leasing Commissions	\$21.33
Landlord Work Contribution	\$35.00
Legal Fees	\$0.25
Operating Expense and R.E. Taxes	\$15.00
Fire Safety System	\$0.18
Security System	\$0.43
Signage	\$0.30
Broker Promotional Expenses	\$1.38
Total	\$137.22
Annually over 10 yrs. @ 8%	\$18.93

In a market where asking rents are somewhat irrelevant, I would confidently say there is more room on a renewal negotiation than there is in a relocation negotiation, so a tenant who is set on staying actually needs my services more! The avoidance of a break in income is worth more than you can imagine. The time it takes to replace a tenant today is extensive. No tenant, no rent. No rent, no operating income to service the debt. No debt service, no ownership. No ownership, new career. Now, there are two sides to every story (in some cases three). The landlord needs a certain level of rent to operate the building and service his/her debt. This is after operating expenses, real estate taxes, brokerage, legal, architectural fees, etc. Let’s not forget the improvement allowance—the most impactful economic element of every deal. From the landlord’s perspective, the tenant cannot afford to relocate due to costs. Table 2 below is a simplified example of the landlord’s take.

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It's a Process: Office Leasing

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Table 2

Tenant Costs		Relocation Avg. Cost (psf)
Architectural Fees		\$1.75
Engineering Fees		\$0.88
Telecommunications, Switch and Hand Sets		\$5.50
Wire - Data and Telecom		\$4.50
Stationary		\$0.33
Furniture		\$11.25
Interior Construction Costs		\$65.00
Legal Fees		\$1.00
Computer Equipment		\$2.50
Mailroom Equipment		\$1.13
Audio Visual Equipment for Conference Space		\$3.05
Security System		\$0.63
Signage		\$0.30
Plants		\$0.08
Art Work		\$2.50
Welcome Kit for Building		\$0.08
Restoration for Existing Space		\$2.50
Moving Expense		\$1.75
Landlord Work Contribution & Free Rent		(\$42.28)
Total		\$62.41
Annuity over 10 yrs. @ 8%		\$8.61

So now you are not sure whether you should take advantage of the down market and upgrade to a newer building with amenities, or avoid disruption and stay. Fair enough. You are not alone. You decide to test the market and determine if, operationally and financially, your firm or company should stay or go (remember, the strategy is the same in either case). The age of the building and its mechanical systems is critical to future service interruption and/or costs. How the building is financed is also tantamount to a successful negotiation. What happens if the landlord loses the building? How important is a SNDA (Subordination and Non Disturbance Agreement) from the mortgagee? How much incremental value does the lease create for the asset and how does the tenant participate in the impact? Who is paying a supervisory fee for the construction of my tenant improvements and why is overtime HVAC so expensive? Are you starting to get the picture? It is complicated and expensive, especially if handled poorly. And let's not forget the security deposit. The landlord's ability to fund the all-too-important improvement allowance is directly tied to the credit-worthiness of the tenant. This aspect alone can often be the difference between moving and staying.

Develop a process. Follow a process. It just might save your job.

Marc J. Trevisan is an Executive Vice President with Cushman & Wakefield of New Jersey and heads its Law Firm Practice Group. He provides consulting and brokerage services to professional services firms and corporations. Marc can be reached at 201-508-5217 or at marc.trevisan@cushwake.com.

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MEET MARY MEHLING

BY FRAN PUNTILLO, CLM

Mary Mehling, the middle child of five (four girls and one boy), was born in Philadelphia, PA. She and her family moved to West Orange, New Jersey, when she was about five years old. She went to East Orange Catholic High School and was BFF with Deborah Baseil of Baseil Associates, a recruiter in Morristown and one of my favorite NJALA business partners (small world, isn't it??).

While in high school, Mary took a part time job with Saks. Upon graduation, she took a full-time job as a buyer for that company. She worked in the garment industry for several years, commuting back and forth from her home in Morristown, New Jersey, to New York. After "paying her dues" and developing an expertise in the industry, she became a national sales manager for Carole Little. When I asked Mary to name a manager or supervisor who had a positive impact on her at work, she named a woman she worked for in the garment industry. This lady was a hard task master, and according to Mary she didn't tolerate mistakes and had very high expectations of her employees. Mary feels that her own work ethic came, in part, from this supervisor. Mary learned to anticipate the needs of her manager and to check her facts because you didn't want to make a mistake and disappoint this rather ruthless boss. And those skills learned under fire during this period of Mary's life continue to serve her well today, both personally and professionally.

Mary is not sure whether it was the long, daily commute into the city, a desire for a new and/or different challenge, or a job offer she just couldn't refuse, but Mary decided to change careers about 15 years ago. She accepted a job at Maynard & Truland, a law firm with six attorneys in Morristown, New Jersey. The firm specializes in high profile criminal and family law matters.

Mary reports that she loves her current job and can't imagine changing careers again. She likes the bright people, as well as the pace, enthusiasm, and energy that pulse throughout her firm. She reports to the Managing Partner of the firm and handles the finances, human resources, marketing, and facilities at her firm.



Mary and Winston

Mary feels her highest priority at Maynard & Truland is being the office's team builder with a positive attitude. She's obviously very proud of her team and enjoys mentoring her staff. I'm sure her firm appreciates her efforts, as evidenced by the stability and low turnover rate at her firm. She relies on her humor and positive outlook to get her through stressful cases and situations in the office.

When asked about professional challenges in her position, Mary replied that she feels the economy is slowly improving and getting stronger, so the challenge now is to continue with the austerity plans developed before the economy and business picked up.

When asked, she said probably the most unique thing at her law firm is "Winston." Winston is a small service dog who goes to the office with his master almost every day. Winston wanders freely around the office, waiting and willing to offer comfort to the firm's clients and families, in a way no one else can. Mary is continuously surprised by the positive impact Winston has on her firm and its clientele. In his "spare time," Winston visits children in a local hospital's cancer ward. Mary said the little guy always knows how to respond to the people he meets. He knows when to sit quietly at the feet of a client or patient, and when to offer his warm, wet nose to a child who needs a kiss.

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Meet Mary Mehling

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On a personal note, Mary loves to cook. She has taken cooking courses at the Culinary Institute of America, and Gourmet Institute. She loves playing “chef” for dinner parties and/or family gatherings, and her favorite dish to prepare is ossobucco. She enjoys reading as well, and one a recent favorite of hers was “The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo.” As for movies, she enjoys the oldies but goodies like “Gone With the Wind” and “Lawrence of Arabia.” For vacations, she visits LBI every summer with friends from high school and does Las Vegas for Thanksgiving with old friends. I asked her what she likes about Vegas, but she said, “What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas.” Oh well! She’s also traveled to Europe to visit with her nieces and/or nephews who are studying abroad. She said she’d love to visit Italy again.

When I asked her what two people would she like to meet, Mary responded Pope John XXIII, because of his efforts to bridge the gap that separates people of different religions; and Eleanor Roosevelt, who, Mary feels, was one of the first woman to “make a difference” in the White House. But when asked to name one of her heroes, Mary named her mom. Her mother is 91 years young and is on Facebook weekly to keep up with the news of her large family.

Mary joined ALA and NJALA about 15 years ago because Deborah Baseil told her it was a smart thing to do when she changed professions (thanks for the plug, Deb). Mary tries to make the monthly meetings as often as possible because she feels the networking, resources and educational sessions are on point, and help her with her daily duties at her law firm. I asked if she would offer suggestions to improve the chapter, and she thought we, as a chapter, might work a little harder to welcome new members and help them acclimate them into the chapter. Mary acknowledges that she herself sits with her friends at the meetings, which may appear to be “cliquish,” but Mary said she makes a point of greeting a “new face” and asks the new member to join “her group” during the monthly meetings. She said she still remembers her first NJALA meeting all those years ago when she was warmly greeted by Doreen Formato and Carole Sanguino. So she’s paying forward by offering a warm smile and greeting to new NJALA members.

Good advice, Mary. We’ll try harder!

Fran Puntillo, CLM, is the Office Manager of Weiner Lesniak, LLP, in Parsippany





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BE THE LEADER YOUR FIRM NEEDS YOU TO BE

BY ED MILLER

As an enthusiast of World War II history, I am fascinated how the differing leadership styles of various American generals led to the war's greatest successes and failures. Although their styles were almost polar opposites, history has concluded that two of America's most proficient and greatest leaders were General Dwight D. Eisenhower and General George S. Patton. Eisenhower was a low-key, consensus-building, strategic-thinking leader, while Patton was a flamboyant and aggressive leader driven by loyalty and a sense of personal destiny. Even though their personalities and styles were completely different, I believe that there are universal themes, principals, and qualities to effective leadership. This article will focus on the qualities of an effective leader and how they apply to the administration of a law firm.

I think the most essential trait for any leader is self awareness. A leader really needs to know the strengths and weaknesses of his or her character, skill level, and knowledge base. For example, if a leader thinks he is trustworthy, but his subordinates and superiors do not share this view, I seriously doubt that they will follow him—which, after all, is the goal of leadership. Without self awareness, the leader will not be able to build trust and confidence in his subordinates. Great leaders continuously strive for self-improvement, often through training, self reflection, and by working with others.

The next quality that is essential for leadership is having the ability to communicate with all members of the organization. The leader needs to be able to communicate the organization's overall goals and strategic objectives. The leader needs to communicate how each person can contribute to the organization's success. People need to understand beyond a doubt what their roles are and what tasks need to be accomplished. People clearly need to know the chain of command, both up and down the chain. Lastly, an effective leader needs to share information about the "state of the organization," as well as the vision for the future.

The leader needs to know the culture and values of the organization and must emulate them. Those within the organization who do not live by the organization's culture and values must go. If an organization truly values a commitment to its community, the leader should be an active participant in related activities. She should be a motivator and the first person with a hammer in her hand at the community homebuilding event. If the organization's culture is one of inclusion and collegiality, the leader has to lead by example, by being professional and courteous at all times.

As mentioned earlier, an effective leader needs to know him

or herself; he or she also must have the ability to know others, or better said, the nature of other human beings. The leader needs to know how to utilize the strengths and capabilities of all individuals in the organization. The leader needs to make sure all her people are properly trained and equipped to perform the tasks at hand. The leader needs to look out for the well-being of the organization's people. This includes physical, emotional, and financial well-being. Lastly, the leader needs to know what motivates people to get the most out of each of them.

Other qualities that a leader needs to possess include the following:

- Be good at his or her job
- Have the ability to make good decisions and use good judgment
- Take responsibility and accept blame when necessary
- Be selfless and completely loyal to the organization
- Be able to delegate with confidence
- Be able to manage people

So this is my philosophy of what makes an effective leader. What does it mean to the law firm administrator?

Obviously, the position itself is one that requires the ability to lead. On a daily basis, the administrator can show his or her leadership abilities by helping to create and communicate the firm's vision. The administrator can make sure all firm personnel are on board to help the firm achieve its strategic goals. The administrator should know the firm's culture. Therefore, she can be a champion for it by ensuring that the culture established by the firm's leaders is carried out. Those who want to work counter-culture need to be held accountable and removed from the firm if they refuse to get on board. The administrator can establish priorities and make sure firm employees are properly equipped and trained to carry out the tasks at hand. Lastly, the administrator can best show his leadership abilities by actively managing people. This includes motivating them, offering feedback and assistance, holding them accountable and responsible, and rewarding them when the job is getting done.

I conclude that to be an effective leader, the administrator can just be himself or herself. There is no need to try to be Eisenhower or Patton to be a great leader. Your firm depends on you to lead.

Ed Miller is the Chief Marketing Officer of Norris McLaughlin & Marcus, in Bridgewater

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FOLLOW THE LEADER: LEADING BY DOING

BY DOREEN MARINO

“Delegating work works, provided the one delegating works too.”

~ Robert Half

Leadership is defined as a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective, and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent. [Concepts of Leadership at <http://www.nwlink.com/~dondark/leader/leadcon.html>]

Boss is defined as one who makes decisions or exercises authority. [Webster]

In one way or another, each and every one of you is a boss. But that is the easy part. You are given authority and you direct things to be done. Just being a boss does not lead you to success—not in the world of law firm management. No matter how big or how small your firm is, you need to have a team behind you. If you are still thinking that, as a boss, you just tell people to do things and they better just do it because you’re the boss, well, then the time has come for you to find a new career. I don’t mean to be harsh, but you are not doing your firm or your employees any good if that is your outlook. That worked thirty years ago. Today we need leaders to lead the path and show the way.

Leaders need not be super heroes. A leader simply pulls people together to work as a group for a cause. The best part of it all is that once you get people working as a team, they actually prefer to work that way. The bad news is that it is your job to get them there. Everyone wants to be part of the team—especially a winning team. Your challenge is to make everyone feel that they are part of that team.

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will get insight into different types of leadership styles. Here, I want to focus on the importance of a leader understanding that they set the example. It is crucial for administrators to know that your employees will mimic the examples you set.

You all recall that respect and credibility is earned. No one is born into it unless you are born of a royal family. That is the

same for leadership. You must prove your leadership before you can have a team that follows. Many times that is not an easy road. It is learned and it is probably the best investment you can ever make.

There are fundamentals to leadership that you must practice. Some are hard to follow, and some are so simple that it amazes me why administrators don’t practice them. The essence of this article is to provide you with the basic tools for leadership success. Case in point are the administrators who can say, “I have such a great group working for me.” That administrator is a leader. Everyone will follow their leader—you just have to be one. So here are some of the basics. Follow most of them, if not all, and you can turn around and see everyone following you.

1. Set the Example. What you do will be mimicked. You thought you were the boss and can do what you want, and let the minions do what they need to do. Fallacy. People watch their boss and mimic the behavior. If you are late regularly, they will be late regularly. If you take long lunches regularly, they will take long lunches regularly. If you bolt at the end of the day, they will bolt at the end of the day. If you have low productivity, well, you got the point.

There is something even more surprising. The higher you are in the administration chain, the more your employees will study your behavior. Leaders remember that they are always being watched. When you lose your temper or feel disgruntled yourself, everyone is watching and, yes, complaining about your behavior.

Leaders use this to their advantage. Remain positive and happy in the office. Always look on the bright side. Always state confidence in the ability of your employees to get things accomplished. Always set the example of how you want your employees to behave.

2. Confidentiality/Trust Building. Employees need to be able to trust their superiors. That means not wasting time telling them what you think they want to hear. That means being trustworthy to the conversation. Telling the truth and keeping confidences is important and takes discipline. If you feel the need to talk to someone else about the problem/situation, ask the

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Follow The Leader

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employee's permission to talk to someone else. For example, if an employee brings to you a critical personal financial situation and you possibly think the firm could help, but that would mean talking to the managing partner, ask the employee first if they would mind you speaking to Joe Whomever to review the situation to see if there is anything that the firm can do to help.

Everyone already knows that, in the case of a complaint that will involve an investigation, you need to advise the employee that the goal will be to keep things as confidential as possible; however, also tell them that people need to be questioned and confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

As part of the trust building with your employees, remember not to leave them out of the loop when they are participating in a project. If you can't have them participate in meetings, then fill them in *right after* the meeting so they feel included. Copy them on e-mails that involve the project as well. That goes a long way in making the employees feel like an integral part of the project, and boosts employee confidence.

3. **Honesty.** Everyone respects an honest boss. If they can't trust you, they can't trust anyone in the firm. The trick is to learn how to be honest without being insulting. Good news is always very easy to communicate. Criticism is not. You must always remember when questioning a behavior there is a reason for everything. I repeat that again, **there is a reason for everything**. That is so very important to remember.

Always tell the employee the truth about what you are hearing, identify what is the current problem, and give them an opportunity to explain it:

*You have been late regularly, what is the problem?
I think you messed up on this, what happened?
You seem to have a negative attitude, what is going on?*

As you know, employees tend to deny behavioral problems. The best way around that is to state, "I would want to know if people had this perception about me. I am telling you because I respect you and I know you would want to know the same. What can we do to change this perception?"

4. **Give People Undivided Attention.** This is a very strict HR rule. When someone is trying to talk to you and needs you to listen, make sure you are doing that. **DO NOT ANSWER THE PHONE** when you have someone that is upset or needs your advice. **DO NOT LOOK AT YOUR E-MAIL.** There is nothing more complimentary or ensuring of the employee's importance when phones and computer are totally ignored when he/she is speaking. If you are waiting for an important call or e-mail, just tell the employee that you have to monitor the phone and e-mail for that purpose.

I was interviewing a candidate and asked the typical question of why the candidate was looking to make a move? The candidate explained how her superior never listened to her. She explained that every time she tried to talk to her manager, he constantly answered the phone as if she wasn't even there. She said he also kept glancing at his e-mails. Her frustration was that she felt her manager did not have an understanding of what her job entailed, and she was beyond frustrated trying to get him to listen. The last straw for her is that the same behavior occurred during her performance review. Sometimes I am left speechless, even in interviews.

Guess what, guys? That's why God created voicemail. Whoever is calling, you can get back to them. So, **NEVER** answer your phone when you are with an employee dealing with work-related issues and concerns.

5. **Know Your Employees' Jobs.** Leaders spend the time learning the challenges that their employees face everyday. Never underestimate those challenges. More employees complain that their boss has no idea what it takes to do their job. Make sure you not only understand the challenges, but verbalize your understanding to employees.

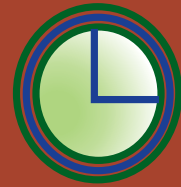
Ask your employees what is the biggest challenge they face when trying to do their job. Keep lists of these challenges and let employees know you appreciate them. Some challenges can be eliminated, but there is a good chance that many you cannot change. Really listen to the employees. Acknowledge that dealing with tough challenges is part of the job function. If employees know that you understand what their challenges are, they build confidence in your knowledge of their jobs.

6. **Be Happy.** Everyone wants to be happy at work. If you are miserable, they are miserable. Laugh, smile, joke, and bring levity to the office. Employees spend a large amount of time at work. Try to make it as happy as possible. Happy employees have better productivity and attendance. So don't worry, be happy.

It is said that the basic criteria for a leader is being able to do a lot of work every day. It never slows and never ends. The rewards are shown in some of the best companies. But we need to start by remembering that employees follow our lead, so let's try to lead everyone down the right path. And I would like to add my own opinion—say thank you often, but not so often that it is insincere. Don't say thank you to everything. Say thank you when you know your employees tried hard or went out of their way. Say thank you in an effective way, such as, "Thank you for taking on this assignment, it means a lot to me."

Doreen Marino is the Human Resource Director of Lerner David Littenberg Krumholz & Mentlik, LLP in Westfield

A Quarter Past



September, 2012

The 19th Annual Business Partner Exposition was held on Wednesday, September 19, 2012, at Mayfair Farms in West Orange. The Business Partner participation was outstanding this year. Scholarships were raffled off, prizes were provided by the Business Partners, lots of networking and fun was had by all.

Scholarship Winners:

Regional Scholarships:

1. Rosemary Jerome – Winner
Mike Sikora – Runner Up
Nora Dowd – Runner Up
2. Nicole Kloss – Winner
Jim Van Leir – Runner Up
Barbara Maglin – Runner Up

National Conference:

Dan Mulooly – Winner
Margaret (Peggy) Hand – Runner Up
Delia Quinn – Runner Up

The educational session held prior to the Business Partner Exposition centered around the “Pitfalls of Telecommuting.”

On the insurance side, Ray Keough of USI Affinity spoke about the insurance liabilities of employees working from home. Included in this discussion were issues concerning workers compensation, professional liability, and short- and long-term disability.

On the legal side, employment lawyer Christopher Mills, Esq., a partner at Fisher & Phillips, LLP, discussed the legal concerns surrounding virtual offices. Topics included managing wage and hour laws for virtual non-exempt employees, and obligations of meeting disability accommodations outside the office.

A 50/50 raffle was held in support of the NJALA’s Community Challenge for the benefit of The Covenant House in Newark. The winner of the 50/50 was Pat McGovern—a very lucky woman this year!





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