INTEGRATING KNOWLEDGE AND CONNECTIONS

The Network

A Chapter of the Association of Legal Administrators

Volume XI - Issue 3

ALA MISSION

The Association of Legal Adminstrators' mission is to:

Promote and enhance the competence and professionalism of all members of the legal management team;

Improve the quality of management in law firms and other legal service organizations; and

Represent professional legal management and managers to the legal community and to the community at large.

Responding to the Needs of our Community: "Bowling for the Cure" to benefit the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Creates Awareness for Breast Cancer

By Grace C. Lopez

Let's go bowling for a good cause!

Please join our Chapter in supporting breast cancer awareness month in October by joining us at our first "Bowling for the Cure" to benefit the Susan G. Komen for the Cure. This is a great opportunity to collaborate with our business partners, members and the community at large while benefiting a great cause. Our chapter is committed to servicing the needs of this community by planning events that are purposeful in creating awareness about an important cause. We couldn't think of a better cause for the month of October than, breast cancer.

The ALA's initiatives with its Community Challenge Event planning supports more than 100 chapters throughout the world in reaching its goal in servicing local communities with charitable efforts. The month of October was selected by the ALA because it was perceived that this was the month when members and their families were less likely to vacation, and there were no other conflict with other ALA commitments. Therefore, ALA chapters throughout the world put forth their best efforts during this month. For us, it meant to take this opportunity to honor breast cancer month by supporting the local affiliate of the Susan G. Komen for the Cure. This organization has the largest grassroots in breast cancer health. According to Harris Interactive in 2010, this organization was ranked #1 out of 1,151 non-profits in the U.S. as the most valued non-profit brand and the charity people are most likely to donate money to. This cause is also important to us because many members and business partners have been affected by this horrible disease.

Our chapter also supports the "Race for the Cure," which is the largest local race and fundraiser for the Susan G. Komen for the Cure. This race is scheduled for Saturday, October 15th at 7:30 a.m. Our chapter is so committed to this cause, that it will pay for the registration fee for ALA members. This race is attended by more than 22,000 individuals and it will be televised for the first time by CBS.

So join us in making a difference in our local community and be a part of our Community Challenge Event! Network, mingle, meet, greet, and bowl at our first "Bowling for the Cure" scheduled for Thursday, October 27th from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at Lucky Strike in Miami Beach. Our chapter is committed to charitable efforts and your support is crucial in reaching our goal as a group. This event is open to friends, family and anyone interested in supporting us and our efforts in fundraising for breast cancer. The cost to

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Celebrating 40 YEARS 1971 - 2011 ALA Association of Legal Administrators

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The Network is published to provide information for the education and benefit of legal administrators, law office managers, managing partners of law firms and others interested in law firm management. Any article or advertising published here or in any prior issue of this newsletter should not be considered to be an endorsement by the South Florida Chapter of the Association of Legal Administrators of the opinions expressed therein or any products(s) advertised. Contributing writers are asked to disclose interests and affiliations that may influence their writing position so that those facts may be obtained upon request.

ASSOCIATION OF LEGAL ADMINISTRATORS
SOUTH FLORIDA CHAPTER

A Chapter of the Association of Legal Administrators

Celebrating 40 YEARS 1971 - 2011
ALA Association of Legal Administrators

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

Victoria L. Allen, CLM
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Happy New Year! No, don't check your calendar, it's September, not January, but for me September has always signaled the real new year when I (and then later my kids) returned to school. Resolutions were made to study harder, new clothes purchased, new goals set, deals struck for more perks. Each new year was like a new start, a chance to improve over the previous year and make bigger, better plans for the coming year.

At the office and in the chapter, planning has begun for the next calendar year, including setting budgets and planning events. Why not make note of a few of them now and plan to join us.

On October 27th, our chapter will host Bowling For the Cure, at the Lucky Strike Lanes in Miami Beach. All proceeds to benefit the Susan G. Komen for the cure. Even if you don't bowl, you can join us for a drink and a snack and connect with a few of your peers while raising money for an excellent cause.

The following weekend is the ALA Region 2 Conference in Charlotte, North Carolina. The regional conferences offer the opportunity to pack a lot of education and networking into a very short time period.

Our holiday party in December is an excellent way to wind up the calendar year and get to know some of the other chapter members.

We kick off January with our annual State of the ALA meeting, and are happy to have ALA president Karen Griggs address our chapter.

Next is Spring and our vendor expo. When was the last time you went? One stop shopping for your office. Invite your attorneys and other firm managers. Ask the vendors you currently work with if they will be participating.

There is still more work to do on these events and room to plan more. What would you like to see? What would make you leave the office and join us?

I challenge you to make a new years resolution to make the most of your ALA membership and get involved. Join a committee, volunteer for an event, write an article, do something that will make you stretch personally and professionally and get to know other administrators and business partners. It's an investment in your career that will pay off. •

Teaching Business Development Skills to the Newest Lawyers

By: Sharon Meit Abrahams, Ed.D.

In the past law firms told their young associates to focus their attention on honing skills and expanding knowledge in their chosen legal field. Firms actually told associates not to worry about or even to think of business development. That has all changed. With the economy in the tank and the legal profession contracting, the only way for firms to increase revenue is to capture more market share. This means everyone needs to jump into the game. Firms have started to focus attention on teaching their youngest business development skills. Here are few ideas for you to implement in your firm.

STAY IN TOUCH

When your new associates join the firm often there is a press release or some other type of announcement. Ask your associates to make a list of all their law school friends, undergraduate friends, family friends, professors and anyone else they can think of and send the same announcement. Encourage them to begin collecting addresses and emails to start a contact list. Teach your associates how to use their secretary to assist with maintaining their contacts.

Building an Internal Reputation

No matter the size of your firm it is important for your junior associates to work with as many partners and senior associates as possible. This allows the associate to develop working relationships with others which gives everyone an opportunity to train and develop the associate's skills. Hopefully within a year or two many attorneys will now reach out to use this associate because she is known for her ability as well as being a team player. Teach your associate that their internal reputation precedes them and it's one their most important assets.

FINDING A NICHE

If an associate has been given the opportunity to work with others then the associate should have been exposed to a variety of legal areas. There is a good chance that the associate has found an area that she enjoys and is interested in pursuing. By all means encourage this endeavor unless it does not align with your firm's overall strategy. Encourage the associate to develop a deeper level of knowledge in the area either through self study or by attending CLE conferences. Teach your associates that being an expert in an area can lead to an exciting and challenging career.

BUILDING AN EXTERNAL REPUTATION

At some point within the first 2-3 years the associate who has found a niche should feel quite comfortable with his or her extent of knowledge in the area. This is the time to direct the associate to begin writing and speaking on this topic. In the past the associate attended the conferences and now the associate, possibility along with a partner, should submit requests to be a speaker.

Finding places to get articles published is also another route to pursue. There are a myriad of journals, association newsletters and other sources for publication. As with a stellar internal reputation a solid reputation in the legal field is built over time. Teach your associates that being know as an "up-and-comer" or even as a new expert in a field is key to acquiring future business.

THE NEW NETWORKING

Every associate should learn the ins and outs of person to person networking. The skill in schmoozing and small talk are key to socializing and making connections at events and conferences. The key now is to capitalize on the junior attorney's skills in social networking. The younger generation knows how to surf the net to find the people, places and information they are looking for. Teach them how to parlay those wired connections into live connections. Show this generation that it's the personal touch that creates relationships in the legal world. Teach your associates how to parlay those wired connections into live connections.

COMMUNICATING WITH CLIENTS

As most lawyers know it is easier to get additional business from current clients then it is to find new business from prospective clients. Role model the appropriate behavior that demonstrates to your younger attorneys that communicating with clients involves asking questions, listening, handling complaints and most especially, offering business solutions that go beyond legal advice. Teach your associates that communicating with clients is a fundamental skill in developing future business.

CROSS SELLING SERVICES

When an attorney has an open line of communication with her client she is able to delve into issues that go beyond her practice area. This is when knowing others in the firm pays off. The associate can introduce the client to the experts in the firm that can handle the client's needs. Proliferating the business you currently have by knowing the depth and breadth of what your firm offers is a foundation for developing an ongoing client relationship. Teach your associates the benefit of learning about the firm and help them match the client's needs to internal experts.

ASK FOR WORK

Once an attorney makes recommendations for business solutions, offers business advice and matches legal needs with fellow colleagues, it's time to ask for the work. It is odd to think that a client you have a good relationship with would not give you work, but it is possible. If

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2011 BUSINESS PARTNER RECEPTION

On July 27th, Bilzin Sumberg hosted our annual Business Partner Reception. This event is an opportunity to recognize and show appreciation for the chapter's tremendous business partners. Committee Chair Andrea Ellison also awarded the Chapter's annual scholarships to four deserving college students. Special thanks to Jackie Fleites for a great event.


Brian
Shanahan

Are Your Social Networking Accounts Effecting Your Career Networking Chances?

By: Gina Torres, Legal Staffing Manager, Personnel Management Solutions

Have Social Networks Changed The Way Employers Screen Resumes?

The answer is a resounding YES! As a professional recruiter and business owner for over 10 years, one thing I can tell you for certain is that social networking has changed the way we screen resumes.

With the popularity of social network sites like Facebook, Twitter, Myspace and LinkedIn, job seekers need to be aware of a few things in this incredibly competitive job market.

Number one, if you put it out there, someone will see it. When we receive resumes of prospective employees, we do an initial screen of your qualifications, we then do what is called a social network screening – in other words, we search Facebook and other social network pages, as well as other internet searches. This all happens before we even make an initial call to talk to you about your qualifications. Think about what you put out there in the virtual world. If you are applying for a youth counselor position and you have a profile picture of yourself doing a keg stand at the last Phish concert on your Facebook page, you might not get the call for a potential job.

Right or wrong, this is happening and you need to be aware of it. Here a few things you may want to do:

- Set your privacy setting to the highest levels, but be aware even by doing this we can sometimes still see your profile picture (so make sure it is something appropriate and that you would want a future employer to see).

- Have two email addresses, one for sending out resumes and one that you manage your social media sites with. It is much harder for us to find your information if we don't have an email address that is associated with you social media pages.

- The last thing to always remember IF YOU PUT IT OUT THERE WE WILL LOOK AT IT.

Social network sites can be a great asset for you, if used correctly in your job search. OR they can do the opposite, as they can also exclude you from ever getting an initial call from a prospective employer.

By doing these simple things, you won't have to worry about a recruiter or future employer finding more information about you than you are willing to share. •

BROWARD SCENE

By: Judith Pawloski, CLM
Peterson Bernard

June's luncheon welcomed Gary Reif of Reif King & Welch Court Reporting. Gary and his team showed the attendees the newest technology in court reporting and the wave of things to come in that industry.

Sandy Boriello presented to the group in the July meeting on Social Media in the Workplace. The packed room enjoyed Sandy's presentation which was extremely well research and informative.

In August a round table was held with approximately 12 attendees. The new CLM coaching program was discussed, along with several human resources issues. The attendees enjoyed the opportunity to casually chat with peers and learn more about each

person's office dynamics.

The meeting in September will be presented by Lisa Medina of Evolution Legal Technology Solutions discussing the newest tips and trends of the TimeMatters database program. •

Are you interested in becoming a Certified Legal Manager (CLM) but just don't know where to start? Maybe you've seen notices about study groups but don't want to let the whole world know you're thinking about pursuing certification. Well, now there's an app for that. (Ok, not really an app, but it sounds cooler than a "new program".)

Our chapter is starting a CLM coaching program. You can reach out confidentially to any of the members listed at the end of this article for help. The coaches are willing to mentor, encourage and support you thru the CLM process. Maybe you just need to talk with someone before committing or maybe you find the application process a little overwhelming or confusing, a coach will help you thru it.

A coach could help you get a study group started, or give you some guidance should you decide to study alone. They can help you determine what seminars you have taken meet the test prerequisites. For more information, please contact the following coaches:

Victoria L. Allen, CLM Victoria@rmzlaw.com 954-462-1431
Susan L. Butler, CLM Sbutler@wlaf-law.com 305-372-0060
Lisa Dasher, CLM LDasher@WickerSmith.com 305-448-3939
Claudia Hoffman, CLM Claudia.Hoffman@hklaw.com 305-789-7799
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Edna Rosen, CLM ERosen@rprslaw.com 954-462-8000
Vicki Smith-Bilt, CLM Smith-BiltV@gtlaw.com 305-579-0765

FUN AND FRIENDS AT THE SEMINOLE HARD ROCK

On June 17th, the South Florida Chapter and the Palm Beach County Chapter co-hosted a night of food, drink and fun at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino. Special thanks to Marilyn Fong, Marlon Mendez, James W. Menendez, CLM and Dawn Tasca for organizing this event.


EXIT

Employee Handbooks - Tools for Success

By: Tracee V. Moecker, President, Firm Options, Inc.

As legal administrators, you are often faced with unusual questions and issues from your employees. "I gave you my two weeks notice, but I'm leaving today and want to be paid for it anyway" or "What happens when an employee uses unearned PTO?" Creating and implementing an effective Employee Handbook that embodies your firm's culture gives you the documentation necessary to handle any matter on a fair and equitable basis.

The fact is that a well-written and well-executed handbook is a very powerful tool for law firm success. By ensuring that your firm's Employee Handbook is updated regularly, you will ultimately protect your law firm and yourself. Doesn't it make sense to choose to make that document one that enables employees to do their jobs better?

Here are some of the outcomes you can expect when you utilize your employee handbook as a tool for success:

1. Protect your law firm. Make certain that it includes all necessary provisions, such as an employment at-will statement and a zero-tolerance discrimination/ harassment policies, to name a few. Failure to include necessary provisions can subject an employer to potential liability.

2. When your handbook indicates that management respects and values employees, morale can improve within your law firm. An employee handbook must be easy to read and clear to both the employer and employee. If the policies and procedures within the handbook are vague or confusing, managers have a difficult time administering the policies and employees will avoid reading and following them.

3. Often, productivity can arise from your employees because clear boundaries reduce the need for micromanagement. The policies and procedures must clearly outline the expectations of your staff, as well as what staff must expect from the managers and leaders of the law firm.

4. Clear communication up front avoids confusion later. To further ensure that an employee is aware that the firm's policies exist, every employee must sign an acknowledgment form. The acknowledgement should also indicate that the employee understands their obligation to comply with the firm's policies and procedures, and the consequences for failing to do so.

5. Often managers will receive fewer complaints because decisions are made consistently across the organization. To ensure success, it is essential that the firm train all supervisors and staff on the contents of the handbook and how the provisions will be administered.

6. Treating employees equally, by consistently applying the firm's policies and procedures, can help prevent discrimination claims. Effective, well-drafted employee handbooks have earned added value as a strong defense tool in unemployment cases. The evidence necessary includes a showing that the employee violated a law firm policy, the employee knew of the policy, and knew that violating the policy could result in discipline up to and including termination.

Most employees want to do a good job and meet or exceed management's expectations. Too often, however, the employee handbook does not help them do that. Handbooks that focus largely on telling employees what they should not do provide little or no guidance about what they should do. Just as providing effective feedback requires us to name the specific behavior or outcome that must change and identify its specific replacement, reading the employee handbook should enable employees to clearly understand the desired behaviors and outcomes.

If I were to ask you whether your organization truly gets the maximum value out of its employee handbook, would you be able to say yes? •

For more information on employee handbooks, employee performance review systems or any other organizational planning matter, contact Firm Options, Inc. at 954.903.0503 x 2201 or via email TMoecker@FirmOptions.com.

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ALA members is $40 and $50 for non-members (Includes Bowling, Shoes, Two Beverages & Food).

All of the proceeds from this event will benefit the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Miami/Ft. Lauderdale Affiliate with grants for local programs that offer individuals who are underserved, uninsured and underinsured the services needed for breast cancer health. Did you know that every eight seconds a woman is affected by breast cancer? There are more than 2.5M survivors in the U.S., and some of these survivors are people we know. In 2011 more than 230,000 cases were reported and unfortunately 39,000 died from the disease. Men are affected by breast cancer also. There were 2,140 cases reported and 450 deaths. The good news is that there is a 98% chance of survival if caught on time. This is why we need to raise awareness about the cause that we have selected to support.

For more information about sponsorship, auction or volunteering for this event or the Susan G. Komen for the Cure, Miami/ Ft. Lauderdale Affiliate, or how you can make contributions directly, please contact me at grace.c.lopez@weil.com or 305.577.3130.

Thank you for your support and commitment in making our charitable efforts a reality. This effort would not be possible without the support of our members, business partners and friends of this community. We look forward to another successful event! •

Imagine
life without breast cancer®

Grief in the Workplace

By: Susan Moore, M.A.,
Grief Counseling Director , Contra Costa Crisis Center

Reprinted with permission from East Bay Views, the newsletter published by the East Bay Chapter of the Association of Legal Administrators, Winter 2006.

Outside of our families, we spend the greatest number of hours each week with our coworkers. Some become our friends and we enjoy spending time together; some become our competitors or a source of stress and conflict; most are nodding acquaintances or just a familiar face in an elevator. Regardless of the personal relationships we have, when death enters the workplace, everyone takes notice.

There is a basic conflict: managers and supervisors try to meet the needs of the grieving employee but there are performance demands of the job that do not change. What do we need to consider?

Death within an employee's close circle:

It is difficult to convey the importance of a relationship, especially if the person lived far away. Elderly parents may never have seen the office or understood the job. Who we are at work may not match with our outside life. An employee may not be able to attend a funeral. There is an intense sense of disconnect between the intensity of the grief and the inability to convey it to the work world.

Death of a co-worker:

Nothing generates more feelings of vulnerability than this unwelcome reminder of the reality of death. Everyone is impacted. There are shifts in the workplace atmosphere that are often accompanied by anxiety, irritability, poor sleep, and increased vigilance.

Catastrophic losses:

Some losses may have a degree of expectedness but the extent of the tragedy may overwhelm us. Forecasted disasters (like hurricanes and tornados) are just as devastating as those that come without warning (like earthquakes). There are incidents where several employees die at once (plane crashes, chemical fires, mine collapses). When the catastrophe is man-made and deliberate, like in the Oklahoma bombing and the attacks of Sept. 11th, another layer of shock and pain is added.

How do people behave at work?

Our society says to either heal quickly or get treatment to "cure" the grief, find "closure", and move on. For the bereaved, this is easier said than done.

Grievers may feel a strong obsession with the losses, constantly replaying, "What If". Preventable deaths can increase a sense of guilt or anger. Our perception of whether our loved ones were suffering may complicate our reaction.

The number of people involved, the ability of others to offer support, the chance to talk with others, and the community's unity may affect grief. Whether one person or many, common feelings are:

- Guilt and/or anger
- Hopelessness
- Loneliness
- Lingering sense of disorganization
- Consuming obsession with person who died
- Heightened sense of vulnerability, anxiety, and being unsafe

Grief Management at Work

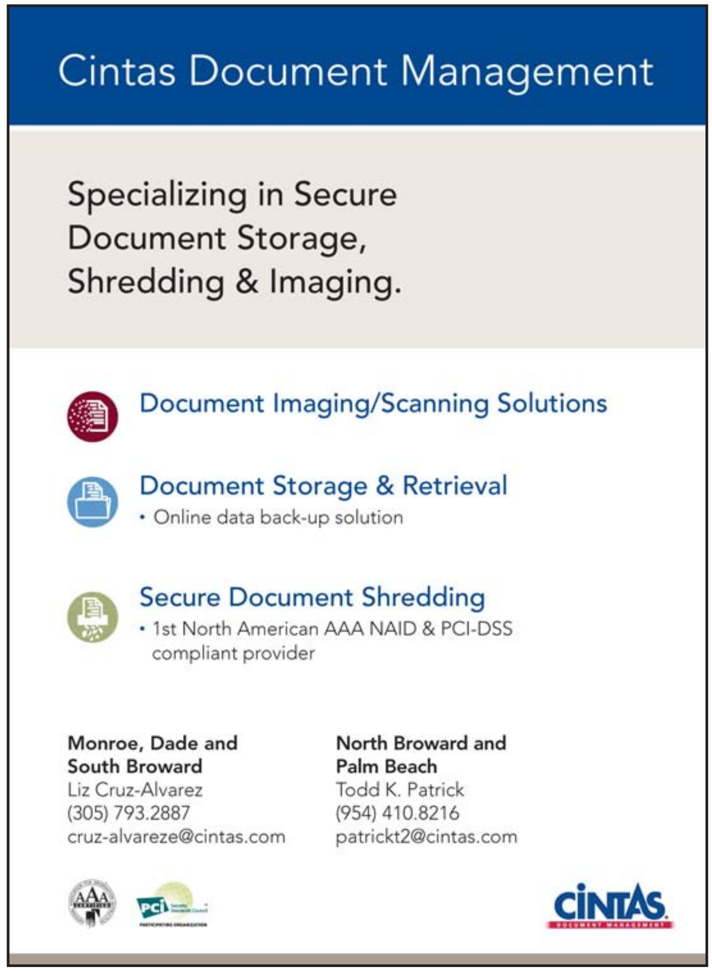
Become empowered before it is necessary. Like writing a will or assembling a disaster kit, everyone agrees it is a good idea, but no one wants to do it. Making a checklist of potential problem areas can be a critical first step. It is the small, practical items listed below which will have great impact on the day-to-day management of grief in the workplace.

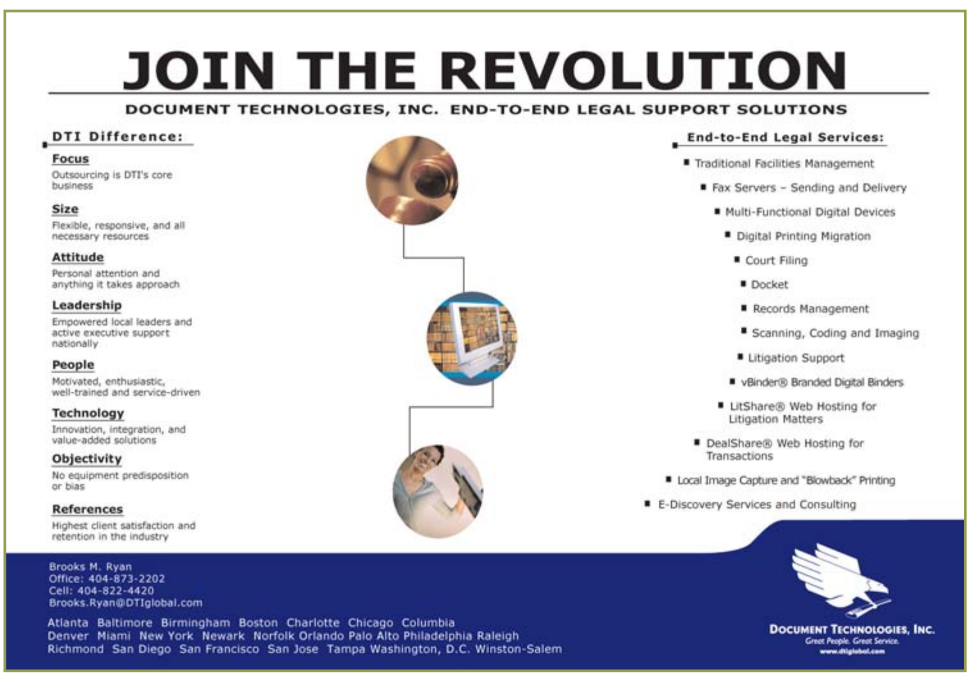
Many grievers go through a crisis of meaning. They wonder what is important, why are they working, and how they want to spend their days. Their normal world is shattered. Do not wait for them to call you and ask for help. Acknowledge that the loss is forever and do not expect them to be the same as they were before. Listen in silence. It may be the hardest thing you have ever done.

How an organization handles this challenge can have long-lasting effects on the work environment, the company's image in the community, and most importantly, on the well-being of the bereaved. •

Sample checklist

- ***Is emergency contact information for all employees current?***
- ***Who maintains this?***
- ***Are there extra copies outside the office?***
- ***Where and who has access?***
- ***Determine which employees are most affected. (Who does this?)***
- ***What if it is an individual, a team, the entire work force?***
- ***Decide office procedures for sharing news (avoid emails, memos, impersonal communication).***
- ***Are there clients/customers to be notified and to be reassured?***
- ***Settle on a spokesperson for the business.***
- ***Interactions with the family of an employee need to be managed (i.e.: who clears the employee's workspace? Who delivers possessions to the family?).***
- ***In what ways can employers acknowledge the continuing bonds between their workers and the deceased?***





Special thanks to our Bronze Business Partner, Harvey Bilt Photography, for capturing images at chapter events and taking great headshots of our members.

Look for more nformation about Harvey in upcoming issues.

Harvey Bilt Photography
www.biltphoto.com

Member Spotlight

Meet Edgard H. Delgado
Office Administrator
Bercow Radell & Fernandez, P.A.

Years in Field: 20

What do you enjoy most about your job?: I enjoy being able to participate in the financial and operational development of the business. There is no greater feeling than the sense of accomplishment after a project has been completed, a policy has been implemented or a goal has been met.

What do you dislike most about your job?: For many years I thought working for boutique firms was holistic in nature. Eventually I realized that having the opportunity of being involved in all facets of the business was a professional advantage, not a detriment.

What impact has ALA had in your job performance?: The greatest impact has been the ability to collaborate with such highly skilled and specialized individuals. Administrators are as unique as the firms they represent. Often times I have found myself being captivated by their ideas and professional concepts. To be successful, legal administrators have to: Always remember you were chosen to manage a profitable business. Jack Welch said it best: "Number one, cash is king… Number two, communicate". Understand that message and you will undoubtedly be successful.

As a legal administrator, I never thought I'd have to: Endure the defeat or celebrate the victory of a case. Many of our clients become long term partners. These close relationships make us appreciative and obliged to producing the most positive outcomes.

If I weren't a legal administrator I would be: a Business Analyst. A role which I have deeply enjoyed performing in the past. Like many of my peers, I have also contemplated the thought of becoming an attorney.

Favorite Musical Artist: So many I will not try to list. Music motivates me. No matter how long my day has been listening to a great song gives me a solid boost of energy.

Last Book Read: The World is Flat by Thomas L. Friedman. Highly recommend it.

Hobbies: There is nothing I love more than spending time with my family. A sunny day on the boat, barbecue by the pool, playing basketball with my son, listening to my daughter sing. I also enjoy most local sporting events, poker game, motorcycle ride or the occasional drink in the company of good friends.

a client thinks you are overwhelmed with work because you are not responsive or you often mention your tight schedule, then they may chose not to burden you with more work. Teach your associates how to ask for work and not complain about their workload to clients.

GOAL SETTING IS BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Anyone who has run a marathon or purposefully lost weight can tell you the importance of goal setting. Planning smaller action steps in an effort to achieve a larger goal leads to success in most endeavors. Taking the time to write a business development plan, even for the youngest attorneys, will make the business development easier by setting a direction. All of the above ideas can be categorized or outlined in a plan to fit the individual's personality and skills level. Goals need to be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-oriented and within a Timeline. Teach your associates that the time they take to write a business development plan should be as important, or more so, than the time they take to complete year end evaluations.

Associate and partner, alike, should be focused on business development in this economy. The next step is to envelop the paralegal, secretaries, receptions and other staff in the business development mentality.

Dr. Abrahams has been training lawyers in major international law firms for over 20 years. She is a prolific writer with her second book "100 plus Pointers for the New Partner" published last year by the American Bar Association Young Lawyer Division. She is a regular speaker at top law schools, legal associations and for many non-profits in the areas of business development skills, management, leadership and business etiquette. •

This article first appeared in Marketing the Law Firm, April 2011.

SOUTH FLORIDA CHAPTER, ALA

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Holland & Knight, LLP

Calendar

October 19, 2011
2:00 - 3:00 pm
Webinar:
Your Firm's Risk Insurance Needs: Professional Liability Coverage
Free to members at two locations: Offices of Bilzin Sumberg OR Broward Bar

October 19, 2011
12:00 - 1:30
Monthly Luncheon - U.S. Legal Support presentation
Hyatt, Miami

November 4-5, 2011
Region 2 Conference
Charlotte, NC

November 11, 2011
12:00 - 1:30
Broward Lunch Meeting
Timpano's, Fort Lauderdale

November 16, 2011
12:00 - 1:30
Monthly Luncheon - Solomon Mansure Group presentation
Hyatt, Miami

November 16, 2011
2:00 - 3:00 pm
Webinar:
Safe Stress
Free to members at two locations: Offices of Bilzin Sumberg OR Broward Bar