Volume XV - Issue 4



# The NETWORK



## 5 CRITICAL IT TASKS

LEGAL ADMINISTRATORS MUST PERFORM (OR CONFIRM)



ALASOFLA Charity Golf Tournament



Judicial Focus: Professionalism & Civility



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## QUARTERLY BY

South Florida Chapter, The Association of Legal Administrators



CREATIVE: Laura Crovo-Lane Icrovo@netgc.com

#### THE NETWORK

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#### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

JUDITH H. PAWLOSKI, CLM PETERSON BERNARD

Whether your title is office manager, firm administrator, business director or controller, you are a leader in your law firm. Many of our members serve on our Chapter Board, hold committee positions and some hold positions with ALA National. These roles all require leadership qualities. Soon, our Chapter and its members will have another opportunity to be leaders in our community. Our Diversity and Inclusion Committee, spearheaded by Shundrallah Covington of Murray Law, P.A., and her committee, have undertaken to have our Chapter adopt Miami Carol City Senior High School. Our goal is to provide these young adults an opportunity to learn what legal careers, other than being a lawyer, are available to them and open their eyes to new career choices. We will do this through interactive workshops with the students in cooperation with the Business and Information Technology Department and through internships with law firms and business partners.

With this new opportunity ahead of us as Chapter members and leaders, we should examine our own leadership skills. Are leaders just born that way? Or can leadership qualities be learned and honed as we gain experience?

Below are several key elements of leadership:

Vision of success: Steve Jobs had a vision of an easy to use computer that everyone could have in their homes. His vision of success changed our world and how we manage our daily lives, educate and entertain ourselves. Define what success is to you. Picture your success whether in your profession or your life goals. See it. Taste it. Smell it. Then, make it happen!

Great communication: This does not mean just you talking or lecturing others. Be a good listener. Listen to those on your team or your committee. Henry Ford went down on the factory floor and he spoke to the workers on the assembly line, getting their feedback on problems they were experiencing and getting their suggestions on improvements to their products.

Good judgment: A good leader should possess good judgment. Judgment is rooted in your values and your core principals and beliefs. Be steadfast in the decisions you make, but don't be afraid to change course when necessary. Not everyone is going to like your decisions. Get used to it. No doubt, you are going to make mistakes. That is a certainty. And when it does happen, try not to blame others. Triage the issue, collaborate with your team, figure out how to correct it and move forward. Blaming others delays the time to correct the issue.

Inspire others: Everyone cannot be a leader. However, people can be "mini" leaders in their own right. Employees and attorneys in your firm will fill diverse roles. Everyone fills an important role whether they are finders, minders or grinders. Appreciate your team or committee and help each one to fulfill their role. You never know whom you might inspire!

Lastly, remember to be courageous, but humble. So dust off your leadership skills and together we can help the students of Miami Carol City Senior High School reach their leadership potential!





5 CRITICAL IT TASKS LEGAL **ADMINISTRATORS MUST** PERFORM (OR CONFIRM)



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## 5 CRITICAL IT TASKS LEGAL ADMINISTRATORS MUST PERFORM (OR CONFIRM)





Contributed by:

Josh Kotler

WESTERN DIGITECH

The job of a modern legal administrator is wide-ranging, with responsibilities across the spectrum of the firm's operations. Each of these responsibilities require a different amount of day-to-day focus. One area that often gets less administrator attention than it should is IT, perhaps because it requires a fairly distinct skillset to really understand, and perhaps because this is a responsibility that seems like it can easily be outsourced to an IT employee or a vendor. While the firm's IT resource should run IT on a day-to-day basis, administrators are not exempt from personally ensuring that certain IT tasks are tended to properly. Law firms, like most businesses, are completely dependent on IT and so it stands to reason that those who are responsible for the operations of a law firm pay particularly close attention to certain elements of IT management. The following is a list of five things that legal administrators must focus on in order to fulfill their IT responsibilities.

Note: For the purposes of this article when I refer to "IT" I am referring to a firm's IT resource, whether that is an employee or a vendor, or some combination of the two.

#### 1. Backups

We all know how important backups are, but few administrators take the time to understand how their backups work, when they are done, how long they are retained, and how the restoration process works. Understanding and verifying the backup process is the most important thing an administrator

#### **BACKUPS**

We all know how important they are, but have you taken the time to understand how they work?

#### END USER SECURITY TRAINING

Many lack the technical sophistication to spot security risks and unwittingly create problems.

can do, because your backups represent a hard floor for your business. An easy way to verify backups is by overwriting a test document and asking IT to restore it the following day. I routinely come across firms that don't have adequate backups and when I tell the administrator about it I find that the administrator had no idea that they weren't being done. This is Job 1.

IT MANAGEMENT

## 2. Documentation/ License Management

How many Firm Administrators have seen comprehensive documentation of their IT environment with their own eyes? Where are all of the IT-related accounts and the credentials for those accounts? Where are the administrative passwords? Where are your licenses, warranties, and other critical information necessary to

run IT? I have seen instances where law firms were provided counterfeit or evaluation licenses and the vendor pocked the money. Microsoft and others are stepping up audits and litigation around license compliance, and the penalties are often quite severe. Meet with your IT provider or IT staff and review the license inventories and requirements, and come up with a plan for getting your licenses in order. This is a once-every-six-months meeting that should take less than an hour.

### 3. End User Security

#### **Training**

While most of us understand how to spot and avoid phishing attempts, suspicious attachments, and questionable websites, many in your firm lack the technical sophistication to spot these security risks and

unwittingly create problems
for the firm that are absolutely
avoidable. Administrators
should identify those within
their organization that need
help and make their training
a priority. There is simply too
much at stake, and the level of
sophistication required is only
going up. Train now or be sorry
later.

#### 4. Ticketing

A well-deployed ticketing system is a must for proper management and supervision of IT. Every firm needs to implement a ticketing solution so that IT tasks are never forgotten, and so the efforts of IT can be transparent and measured.

#### 5. Brainstorming with IT

In our mind IT exists to make our clients' businesses better.

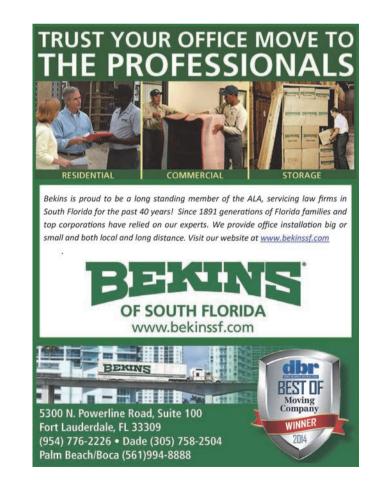
It shouldn't be seen merely as a cost center that can't be

avoided. It should be seen as a "force multiplier" that enables the firm's primary investment in its people. Unfortunately, in most firms the opposite is true. Fix this by scheduling regular meetings (quarterly is good) with key stakeholders (a legal secretary, an attorney, your IT resource, and you) and put one question

on the agenda: How can we
leverage technology to make the
business better? This question
should spark conversation that
will reveal inefficiencies, training
requirements, areas for process
improvement, and other items
that can be addressed by IT.
You'd be surprised at what can be
accomplished through technology

once the need is articulated and understood by all.

Josh has been involved with the South Florida ALA as a Business Partner since the early 1990's. His company, Western Digitech, is a managed IT services firm focused on helping its clients prosper by deploying and supporting IT solutions that improve business performance and generally make life better for the people involved. He can be reached at josh@wdigitech.com or by phone at 786-433-6906.





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#### **President's Comment**

Please join me in sending warm wishes and many thanks to Gary Smith for his work as Editor of our Newsletter for the last several years. Gary took the Newsletter post in 2010 and has provided hours of hard work to bring our members and business partners the quarterly publication. I know I always enjoyed reading the many and varied articles that Gary solicited and edited. Thank you, Gary!!



Our new newsletter editor will be Lilly Torres. I am sure Lilly will bring a fresh new approach in her own great style! Welcome aboard, Lilly!

-- Judith H. Pawloski. CLM



## SOUTH FLORIDA CHAPTER ALA **GOLF TOURNAMENT** To Benefit The KRISTI HOUSE

By Carole M. Sheets

On October 30, 2015 our Chapter's Golf Tournament was held at the Miami Shores Country Club. Great "hot" weather, plenty of food and drink, energetic and competitive golfers, enthusiastic business partner and member volunteers, raffle gifts and a cocktail reception resulted in a profit of \$6,500 for The Kristi House.

Kristi House, Inc. is a private, non-profit organization in Miami, Florida, dedicated to healing and eradicating child sexual abuse. Kristi House operates the Orlowitz-Lee Children's Advocacy Center responsible for sexual abuse cases in all of Miami-Dade County, population 2.6 million. Children served at Kristi House are ages 2 to 18 and come from every zip code in Miami-Dade.

Kristi was a 9-year old girl. She loved to play with her dolls, ride her bike, and help her

teacher erase the board after school. Kristi was also 8-months pregnant – impregnated by her stepfather - giving birth to a child at the age of 10. Sadly her case is not unique. Many of their clients find themselves in similar situations. Kristi's pregnancy actually brought her some attention and help she needed and couldn't ask for herself. However, there wasn't a Kristi House at the time. This was before wrap-around case coordination and mental health services were in place, before a multidisciplinary team addressed all the legal, physical and emotion needs of child victims and their non-offending parents. Consequently. Kristi has had a difficult life. More often than not, there is no physical evidence of sexual abuse, so the trauma children endure is locked away in the family's conspiracy to try to ignore, deny, avoid and forget. Kristi House provides a place for children to get the help they need and was named in honor of that 9-year-old girl.



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While our firms and business partners are still facing challenging economic times, the support we received was inspiring and we are grateful to all who participated. Not only did all the attendees, members and volunteers thoroughly enjoy themselves, but they had the pleasure of being part of this great cause. No one ever lost sight of our purpose – the fight against child sexual abuse and human trafficking. The funds raised by our chapter are kept in our community and will be used to purchase

holiday gift cards for the teenagers at the Kristi

House and for therapy services to help children get
past the shame and hurt they have experienced.

As Chair of the Golf Committee, I would like to personally thank Paula Lawson for coordinating such
a great group of volunteers who made the event
such a great success. Our energetic volunteers
quickly and efficiently registered all participants
and sold "fun packs", raffle tickets and mulligan's.

Congratulations to our tournament winners:

First Place Winner
The Gourmet Coffee Co & RICOH
Doug Carletta
Greg Levine
Cam Rogers
Romney Rogers

#### **Second Place Team**

COI access Carlos Arboleda Ed Feenane Gerry Litrento Al Vega

Longest Drive – Women Carole Sheets (Murray, Morin & Herman, P.A.)

Lance Hellring (Genovese Joblove & Battista)

Closest to the Pin – Hole #2
John Ellingworth (MyOffice Products - HiTouch)

Closest to the Pin – Hole #8 Carlos Arboleda (COI access)

Closest to the Pin – Hole #9 Christopher Arocha (Kristi House)

Putting Contest David Gianello (OTS Legal)



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A JUDICIAL FOCUS: THE
ELEVENTH JUDICIAL
CIRCUIT'S THIRD ANNUAL
PROFESSIONALISM &
CIVILITY ACTION SUMMIT



by Armando G. Hernandez Rumberger, Kirl Caldwell PA

On October 1, 2015, the Eleventh Judicial Circuit's Committee on Professionalism and Civility held its Third Annual Professionalism & Civility Action Summit at the Wolfson Campus of Miami-Dade College. This year's summit was distinct from prior years because it had a uniquely judicial focus or perspective. Designated speakers at the action summit included the Honorable Chief Judge Richard Suarez of the Third District Court of Appeal, the Honorable Chief Judge Bertila Soto of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit, the Honorable Andrea Wolfson (Eleventh Judicial Circuit Professionalism Committee Co-chair), the Honorable Thomas J. Rebull (Committee Co-chair), and Paul Lipton, Esq. (Committee Co-chair and Director of Professionalism at Rumberger, Kirk & Caldwell, P.A.).

The greater majority in attendance were judges from the state appellate, circuit, and county courts. Also in attendance were numerous members of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit Court's Local Professionalism Panel, local leaders in the professionalism initiative, representatives from various different law firms and the public sector, and Dade County Bar Association President Jason M. Murray.

Chief Judge Suarez touched upon the volatile situation in Tallahassee and the increasing pressures amongst the different branches of government. Chief Judge Soto discussed the need for an honest and introspective look as members of the judiciary to curb unprofessional conduct and lead by example. Paul Lipton discussed the role of attorneys and the judiciary as "crisis managers," "islands of sanity," and "faith keepers" for the public, clients, victims, families, and others in the community who turn to the courts in tumultuous times. Mr.

Lipton set the tone for the summit as "our summit" to address common problems and seek solutions.

During the summit, several topics were discussed in an open forum format including:

- the role of the judiciary in the professionalism effort;
- an in-depth discussion and comparison of professionalism issues between the different divisions of the court;
- judicial intervention to curb observable unprofessional conduct;
- the pressures judges face when

- dealing with inappropriate conduct;
- incorporating standards and/or making reference to the Local Professionalism Panel in trial orders;
- an exchange of ideas, tools, and suggestions for judges to deal with inappropriate or unprofessional conduct;
- implications and considerations pertaining to recusals;
- practicing with "elegance" (as Judge Beatrice Butchko indicated);
- the impact of technology on professionalism and civility;
- mentoring programs;
- screening for, addressing, and implementing a mental health component as part of the remedial action for unprofessional conduct; harsher penalties in attorney

- discipline matters by the Florida Supreme Court;
- current statistics on the Local Professionalism Panel since taking effect in September 2014;
- increasing the use of the Panels by judges as well as attorneys reluctant to point the finger;
- suggestions to improve the process of the Local Professionalism Panel.

The strong emphasis and dedication on the part of leaders and members of the local bar to professionalism, civility, elevating standards, accountability, and a collective and proactive approach to tackling the professionalism dilemmas currently plaguing the legal profession in South Florida remain constant and relentless. Professionalism is neither

ALASOFLA

voluntary nor merely aspirational it is an absolute, binding, intrinsic, affirmative, and active commitment on each and every one of us as members of the bar to be the tangible the Local Professionalism Panel manifestations of an intangible concept. As addressed during the summit, we must all endlessly labor to maintain the trust and faith in

the third branch of government and

For additional information on or instructions on how to file a complaint visit the Eleventh Judicial Circuit website.

Armando G. Hernandez practices in the areas of product liability, admiralty, premises liability, commercial litigation, and casualty defense. He is also a member of the Local Professionalism Panel and President of the Peter T. Fay Inns of Court.



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Wed., January 13, 2016 <u>Miami Dade Monthly</u> Lunch Meeting

Overtime Rules
Speaker: David Buchsbaum,
Fisher & Phillips
11:45 - 1:30 PM

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Thurs., January 14, 2016

Broward Monthly
Lunch Meeting

New FLSA Regulations and Overtime Rules Speaker: David Buchsbaum, Fisher & Phillips 11:45 - 1:30 PM The Tower Club

Sat., January 23, 2016
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7:00-11:30 PM Location: TBD Free to ALASOFLA members

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7:40 - 10:00 am

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Invitation Only
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Wed., February 10, 2016

Miami Dade Monthly

Lunch Meeting

State of the ALA - Benefits &

Mission Statement Speaker: President Elect Laura Broomell 11:45 - 1:30 PM Hyatt Regency, Downtown Miami

Thurs., February 11, 2016
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