

Nov/Dec 2014

Volume 2 Issue 6



Palm Beach County Chapter

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President's Message



Sue Recchia
Williams, Leininger & Cosby, P.A.
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It's hard to believe that 2014 is almost over! The year has flown by in a blur... Rather than recap the year, I would like to look forward to 2015. We have some great meetings planned! In January, John Remsen will be coming to speak to us once again – and in February we will be having a Roundtable discussion. Start to think about the challenges that you would like to discuss in order to get suggestions and insights from your peers. We will be sending out an email request in January to get your questions – so start making a list!

March brings us to the Expo once again. It's a great opportunity to meet with multiple vendors in a short time. I have made contacts at the Expo that have saved my firm thousands of dollars. In addition, the Expo is a LOT of fun AND you have the opportunity to win PRIZES!

The New Year is also a perfect opportunity for a fresh start and new challenges. I don't make resolutions because they always seem to be focused on the negatives – the things you want to change about yourself. Instead, I make a list of the things I want to accomplish for the year. I have a list of personal challenges and one for work goals. It's a great feeling to accomplish something and cross it off that list!

What would you put on your list for the year? One thing to consider is to move into a leadership position in ALA... Why not serve on a committee? We have positions with all levels of commitment and

time requirements. Let's look at some of our committees; maybe there is one that is a great fit for your skills and availability:

Community Connection – Plans and runs our events where we raise funds for various charities. This year we are running multiple small events and in recent years we have held one large event. The tasks and commitment level can vary based on your availability.

Education – Manages the Scholarship project. Sends out applications, reviews submissions, interviews candidates and makes recommendations for awards. Most of the activity is in the first half of the year. There is also the opportunity for someone with desktop publishing skills to update the brochure we provide to high school students.

Legal Expo – The Expo is arguably the largest event of our year. However, we have been holding it for enough years that we have the process streamlined well. As the next Expo is in March, there are a lot of tasks (both large and small) that will be coming up soon. After March, there is a lull through the summer, with plans for next year's Expo starting up in the fall.

Membership – Our Membership Committee is quite small and could certainly benefit from some additional help. Membership is responsible for maintaining our roster and e-group. They also plan and coordinate our Happy Hour events. Join the committee and join the parties!

Speakers – Our wonderful Speaker Committee takes our vague ideas of topics to address and finds available experts to educate us on those topics. It's an excellent opportunity to utilize your business network and all those connections you have made in your career.

Take a look at your skills and interests – see where you can help your Chapter in the new year!

Happy Holidays and Happy New Year to all of you! I look forward to seeing you at the upcoming meetings!

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November Member Meeting



Kim Ayers and Jim Campbell

Our speaker at the November member meeting was James Campbell, CLU, ChFC of James Campbell & Associates.

Mr. Campbell's presentation focused on the ever-changing landscape of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), otherwise known as "Obamacare".

A very spirited discussion broke out when the topic of "affordability" came up, which means that the cost of coverage cannot exceed 9.5% of an employee's household income. As Mr. Campbell explained, employers will be required to obtain this information directly from their employees in order to comply with the law. This sparked a discussion of employee privacy and the logistics of implementing this area of the law.

Even as the U.S. Supreme Court is pondering the subsidy issue contained in Obamacare, Republicans have sued the Obama administration for not enforcing parts of the law. Stay tuned for more questions than answers in the coming months!

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L-R: Susan Goldstein, Michele Parcels, Susan Paulin, Jim Menendez, Debbie Giordano, Jodi T. Weddington



L-R: Sandra Bolin, Gloria E. Hernandez, Ed Radtka, Dorothy R. James

2015



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Plan your education and networking.

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
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JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
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PLAN YOUR EDUCATION FOR 2015

- > NEW! Managing Partner/Executive Director Forum, February 23-24, Orlando, FL
- > NEW! Finance Conference for the Legal C-Suite, May 17, Nashville, TN
- > 2015 Annual Conference & Exposition, May 17-20, Nashville, TN
- > Chapter Leadership Institute, July 23-25, Grand Rapids, MI
- > Large Firm Principal Administrators Retreat, August 6-8, Colorado Springs, CO
- > Business of Law Conference – Central, September 10-12, New Orleans, LA
- > Essential Competencies for Legal Administrators, September 16-18, Chicago, IL
- > Business of Law Conference – East, October 1-3, Atlanta, GA
- > IP Conference for Legal Professionals, October 8-9, Washington, DC area
- > Business of Law Conference – West, October 22-24, Las Vegas, NV
- > Corporate Law Department Symposium, TBD

alanet.org/events

Humor on the Job:

Nobody Is Going to Shoot You While They're Laughing

By Barry Maher

What do you do when you're making a presentation or just having a discussion and everything goes wrong, when you fumble or stumble, when you can't find the numbers you need to refer to, when the numbers you do find are wrong?

Try Laughter

Try making a joke out of it, using self-deprecating humor. It shows confidence. It shows that you're amazed things went wrong. It makes what could be a problem fun for the people you're dealing with.

Humor Sells

In one study of humor in negotiation, "buyers" who made their final offer with a smile and a quip, "Well, my final offer is x dollars and I'll throw in my pet frog," were able to make the buy at a lower price. Sellers who laughed out loud were even more likely to grant concessions than those who didn't. Imagine if the joke had actually been funny.

You can use humor to get attention, to build rapport, to break down resistance, to make a point more memorable: to get people to listen and to enjoy listening. The old dictum is true:

when you're funny you don't have to yell. Always makes sure the humor is appropriate, of course; and always use it with care. Some people will throw up barriers if you appear to be getting overly friendly too fast.

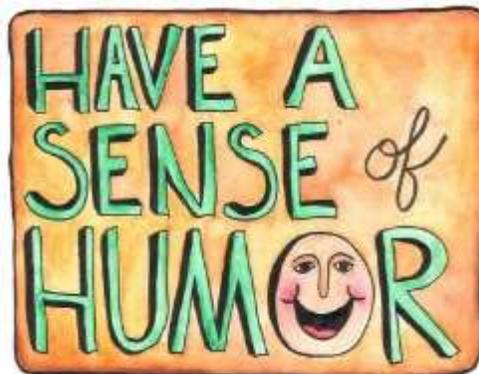
"If you would rule the world quietly," Emerson said, "you must keep it amused." You can rule the office the same way.

In *The Light Touch*, humor expert, Malcolm Kushner tells a story of Adelle Roberts, a police officer called to the scene of a domestic disturbance. As she approached the house, a TV came flying out a window. She knocked loudly to be heard over the yelling.

"Who is it?" an angry male voice snarled.

"TV repairman," Roberts replied.

The man burst into laughter, and opened the door. She probably wouldn't have gotten quite that response if she'd said, "Police."



Humor's effectiveness in diffusing anger and breaking down resistance can be particularly important in today's work environment. In one study, 49 percent of the respondents said they're usually at least a little angry on the job. Forty-nine percent say they are usually angry.

I've known premise salespeople who have been threatened with guns. Some of

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them deserved it. Though that's carrying sales resistance to an extreme.

Tip: Nobody is going to shoot you while they're laughing.

Tip: Long after people have forgotten what was said, they'll remember how they felt about the person who said it.

Self-deprecating humor is also a great way for executives and managers to put themselves on the same level as their subordinates. It shows they can take a joke, that they too put their pants or their pantyhose on one leg at a time.

When Jack Kennedy wanted to defuse the issue of his family's wealth, he told everyone he'd just gotten a telegram from his father. "Dear Jack," he read, "Don't buy one more vote than necessary. I'll be damned if I'll pay for a landslide."

A new manager was obligated to post a lengthy list of rules right after being promoted to the position: hardly the best rapport builder. He posted the list all right, but he signed it at the bottom, "A. Hitler, Gruppenfuehrer." His superior snatched it off the wall as, "inappropriate." Perhaps. But by then everyone had already seen it.

"We'd read the rules," one worker reports. "We figured the Gruppenfuehrer was going to enforce them. We knew the iron fist was there, and we appreciated that he'd stuck it in a velvet glove and used it to poke a little fun at himself. Otherwise we'd have seen it as a new guy coming in and throwing his weight around."

Another mid-level manager had a grumpy looking doll with a tape recorder inside that he'd programmed to say, "Get your mangy butts back on the job and stop wasting the company's time." The doll would deliver the message whenever the

manager decided it was needed. People took the hint, and nobody was offended.

As humor expert Kushner says, "Learn to take your work seriously without taking yourself so seriously. No matter how serious your work or topic, it's always safe to poke fun at yourself."

*Barry Maher, www.barrymaher.com, speaks and writes on communication, leadership and management. His clients range from the American Bar Association and the Association of Legal Administrators to IBM and Wells Fargo. You may have seen him on the Today Show or CNBC. And his book, *Filling the Glass*, has been cited as "[One of the Seven Essential Popular Business Books]."*



Holiday Party!



**Kim Ayers
Sue Recchia**



**Dawn Tasca
Susan Gavsie**



**Ed Ratka
Debbie Giordano
Jim Menendez**

Holiday Party Cont...!



**Susan Goldstein
Sherry Zabriskie
Brenda Danaei
Gloria E. Hernandez**



**Susan Guilbert
Sherry Zabriskie**



**Ilene Bennett
Lana Schrode
Dina M. Lotz**

Community Connection Operation Angel Tree!

...[W]e delivered 300 bags filled with gifts to Peppi Head Start and Excel Charter School in Belle Glade. We cannot thank the ALA enough for their generosity!

The ALA provided the gifts to 130 students at Excel Charter School which educates children K through 5th grade. There were tears in the eyes of the director as she saw all of the gifts for her students. The teachers and administrators know how great the need is for many of their students. Some of these students struggle with AIDS. Other students struggle with extreme poverty and the teachers know the students will not eat over the weekend, so the staff buys snacks for some students to take home on Friday. The smiles on the students faces is priceless.

I have thank you notes from each of the students. I will work with Sue to make sure the ALA sees these notes.

A special thanks to your president and our administrator, Sue Recchia. Her skills with Excel spread sheets, labels, and general organization help us coordinate this massive project.

We wish all of you a very special holiday. - Carri

Carri S. Leininger, Esquire
Williams, Leininger & Cosby, P.A.
11300 US Highway One, Ste. 300
North Palm Beach, FL 33408





You're Invited!

Join Lan Infotech and Wines for Humanity for Don't Wine About Your Technology! A Fun Evening Combining the Latest Technology Trends & Wine Tasting!

We're pleased to invite you to join us for don't wine about your technology - an event that combines the latest technology trends with a wine tasting; and you're guaranteed to have a great time while learning a lot of valuable information about technology AND wine!

During the event, you're able to learn about some of the hottest technology topics and trends, including:

Data Backup: What are the risks associated with failing to prepare for disaster? How can you make sure your data is accessible in the event of a disaster or malware infection?

The Cloud: You've heard of the cloud, but what does it really mean for your business? How can you leverage the cloud for data and application accessibility without putting your security at risk?

IT Security: Cybercrime is evolving, and its becoming more sophisticated than ever before! How do you minimize the risk of a malware infection? What should your employees know to stay safe online?

We'll answer all of these questions and more! Interested in attending? Register Now! When it comes to information technology and wine, there's a lot to learn about both topics

and we look forward to seeing you at the event!

About Wines for Humanity

Wines for Humanity conducts in-home wine tasting to entertain, as well as educate hosts and guests on the joy of fine wines. Wines for Humanity donates approximately 12-17% of their revenue from guests at a paid wine tasting to local charities, specifically ones that work to prevent homelessness in our communities.

THREE CHANCES TO ATTEND!

Register Your Preferred Date Below

Wednesday, January 14, 2015

5:30 -7:30 PM

Broward County Bar Association
1051 Se 3rd Ave, Fort Lauderdale

Thursday, January 15, 2015

5:30 -7:30 PM

Greenberg Traurig
333 SE 2nd Ave, Miami, FL

Tuesday, January 27, 2015

5:30 -7:30 PM

Caldwell Pacetti
250 S. Australian Avenue, Suite 600
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

Ready to **RSVP**? Interested in learning more?

Give us a call at **954-717-1990** or send us an email to Info@LANInfotech.com.

Smart Growth: How to Increase Profits per Partner

By Michael Moore, Moores Law

Lawyers can make more profits even in this challenging economic climate. Unfortunately, law firms frequently cut what is required to get the kind of clients and work that would improve profits. A 2009 Altman Weil survey of law firms found that 46% had reduced support staff; 33% cut paralegals; 32% thinned their associate ranks, and 24% cut non-equity partners. Lawyers also absorb administrative and management tasks they could inexpensively outsource. This takes them away from billing time and getting clients, two activities that increase profitability. Many firms also eliminate training programs and hold back on key technology investments. These actions only create a temporary windfall and fail to address the real issues contributing to lower profits.

Measuring Profitability

The starting point to improvement is always measurement. The standard formula for measuring law firm profitability was created by David Maister, noted expert on law firm management, where Net Income

[Go to Page 2](#) Per Partner = (1 + Leverage) x

(Blended Hourly Rate) x (Utilization) x (Realization) x (Margin). These factors, expressed as ratios, are interdependent, meaning one of them cannot be changed without affecting the others. For example, if you doubled your billing rate, profitability would also double, by definition. Of course, if you doubled your billing rate, realization would suffer as clients objected to the higher cost by not paying bills timely and utilization would suffer as clients switched to cheaper competitors. Therefore, understanding each factor is key to executing the right steps to increase profitability.



Leverage

Leverage is the ratio of non-equity fee earners to equity partners. The most profitable firms in a 2007 LexisNexis survey had the highest billable hour leverage. The goal is to increase leverage once partners reach or exceed the target billable hour threshold. Since there are only so many hours an individual can work, once the threshold is reached, it is imperative that work be passed to another fee earner if you want to increase profitability. Delegation is one lawyer behavior that needs to be rewarded by compensation committees.

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Blended Hourly Rate

Blended Hourly Rate is the ratio of total fees earned divided by the total hours charged. In the Altman Weil survey, no firms planned on reducing their billing rates in 2009. Instead, most firms made “smaller than normal” increases. While it is important to increase billing rates annually to avoid devaluing your rates due to inflation, the real secret to beating inflation actually isn't rate –it's productivity. High productivity creates the gap (margin) between cost (which includes inflation) and revenue. The higher your margin, the less inflation hurts you.

Utilization

Utilization is the percentage of available capacity that is chargeable. For a law firm to be highly profitable, all fee earners must be fully utilized. Increasing the headcount of non-equity fee earners to handle accretive work (as opposed to absorbing work that could be handled by others) increases partner income. Attaining maximum productivity means getting the most output from your fee earners. The top performing firms had both associates and paralegals with productivity numbers closer to their partners. The best way to increase productivity is through incentives to partners to share work with associates.

Realization

Realization is the percentage of chargeable time actually billed and not written-off. How efficient are you at converting your work to cash? Each percentage point lost represents money out of the pocket of the firm. If you can get control over pre-bill adjustments, your revenue will increase. Your work product is your inventory, and it loses value every day that it sits on your desk. Send out bills in a timely fashion. Stay on top of receivables. Be efficient in how you work, how you bill and how you collect. Tracking realization at every step in the process will help your firm become more efficient and, thus, more profitable.

Margin

Margin is the firm's net income, expressed as a percentage. It is the partners' profits divided by firm revenues. A common mistake is to assume that better profits come simply by reducing costs, increasing hourly rates and increasing billable hours. Often, these tactics fail to achieve the desired results, while resulting in client dissatisfaction and problems with lawyer and staff morale. Increasing revenue, while maintaining the same expense structure, is the most direct approach to improving the firm's bottom line.

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Get the Right People on the Bus

Many lawyers make less money because they either don't have the right people or they don't help them maximize their potential. They struggle with frequent turnover and spend time hiring, supervising, training and, eventually, firing people who just aren't the right fit. Getting a new hire through the door is only the beginning. Substantive training also provides a powerful incentive for people to stay with the firm. Firms where people learn to work together effectively and develop complimentary skills have an advantage over their competitors.

Do the Math

Managing, recruiting, hiring and training both staff and other lawyers is called "lost time." A lawyer with an average hourly rate of \$200 who loses 1 hour each day, 5 days per week, 50 weeks per year loses \$50,000 annually. If a committee of 5 lawyers gets involved, their firm loses not only \$250,000 each year, but 1,250 hours when they could have been billing time and getting more clients. In addition, the failure to outsource effective recruiting and development creates turnover, which can cost a firm in excess of \$100,000 per occurrence. Lawyers make money by doing what they do best – practicing law. They should turn to other professionals to do what they do best, thereby maximizing available resources.

Lawyers can make more profits even in a recessionary economy. This goal requires leadership from partners and a willingness to invest in people and technology. In many firms, the majority of the lost profit potential lies in the high level of reinvention among the lawyers. Lawyers should strive to increase their firm's collective knowledge base, leverage their time, and strategically move beyond temporary solutions. As Will Rogers correctly observed, "Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there."

Reprinted with permission from "Class Action," the newsletter published by the Wisconsin Chapter of the Association of Legal Administrators, Fall 2011

Michael Moore, J.D., is a professional coach for lawyers and the founder of Moore's Law, Milwaukee. He specializes in marketing, client development and leadership coaching for attorneys at all levels of experience. Moore also advises law firms on growth initiatives, strategic planning and resource optimization. He has more than 25 years' experience in private practice as a general counsel, in law firm management and in legal recruiting.





By: Sandra Bolin



As our Business Partners are renewing their affiliation and new ones are signing up, I am reminded of how important these relationships are and what they bring to both sides.

As I am sure you all know, but I still feel the need to remind you, our chapter is financially supported by our Business Partners. Our activities and opportunities would either cost us all more to participate or be outright prohibitive without the support of our Business Partners. But in addition to that, they are a great source for many of the items we need in our offices, a ready-made referral list.

In return (you knew this was coming), they need access to us. Yes, they want to sell us things, but they don't expect to sell everything to everyone. In most cases, they don't have the infrastructure to do that! Frequently, they have quotas to fill; just having us answer the phone will frequently help them satisfy that. It is not the "no" that they may hear but the refusal to even answer the phone that turns them away from supporting us.

With this year's business partner renewals, I am being told that many budgets are being cut, so some are just not able to renew. The business partners need to see a return on investment. Fortunately, others have stayed with our chapter and a few new ones have joined. But, of course, more is better here. Please continue to respond to our current Business Partners, and certainly share our information with other vendors or just send me their information.

You can contact Sandra Bolin at (561) 655-0620 or bolin@caldwellpacetti.com.



Member News!



Congratulations to Margarita Diaz on her 10th anniversary with Gordon & Doner! Margarita started as an Intake Specialist in the firm's call center and was promoted to Legal Assistant. She graduated from New England Tech at the top of her class. Margarita has an impeccable work ethic and is very detailed. She is a very active and dedicated member in her church.



The Law Office of Rosenthal, Levy, Simon & Ryles is proud to announce that James (JC) Solomon, III was sworn in by Judge Gerber at the Fourth District Court of Appeal on Tuesday, December 2, 2014.

James will concentrate his practice in the area of Personal Injury.

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

November

- Nicole Cutsinger
- Joyce Johnston
- Beth Myers
- Wanda Perez
- Donna Riuttanen
- Benita Maupin-Koch
- Nilda Roos
- Jan Weimer

December

- Michelle Winfree
- Gail Fredrickson
- Jean Ann Corrao
- Tiffany Child



The Association of Legal Administrators (ALA) was formed in 1971 to provide support to professionals involved in the management of law firms, corporate legal departments and government legal agencies. ALA provides educational opportunities and services to more than 10,000 members representing more than 5,300 employers in 21 countries. ALA is structured into six regions with more than 100 chapters in the United States, Puerto Rico, Canada and New Zealand.

ALA’s mission is to improve the quality of management in legal services organizations; promote and enhance the competence and professionalism of legal administrators and all members of the management team. The Association’s members are law office administrators who manage such areas as finance, human resources, systems and technology, facilities, marketing and practice development.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Sue Recchia, President
- Susan Goldstein, Vice-President
- Kim Ayers, Treasurer
- Michele Parcels, Secretary
- Debbie Giordano, Immediate Past President
- Gloria E. Hernandez, CLM, Past President

Please contact:
 Dina Lotz
 Membership Chair
 for membership information
 (561) 625-8311
 DLotz@Labovick.com

Calendar of Events

- November 12, 2014** Member Meeting (Wednesday!!)
- November 25, 2014** Board Meeting
- December 9, 2014** Holiday Party at Grandview Gardens B&B
- January 13, 2015** Member Meeting
- January 27, 2015** Board Meeting
- February 10, 2015** Member Meeting
- February 24, 2015** Board Meeting
- March 12, 2015** Legal Expo
- March 24, 2015** Board Meeting
- April 14, 2015** Member Meeting
- April 28, 2015** Board Meeting
- May 12, 2015** Member Meeting
- May 17-20, 2015** Annual Convention - Nashville!
- May 26, 2015** Board Meeting
- June 9, 2015** Member Meeting



Visit our website!
www.pbcala.org

If you have news you’d like to see included in the newsletter, please email geh@flappellatelaw.com