

Attitude, Creativity, Collaboration, and Tech

The new success formula for law librarians

By Monice M. Kaczorowski and Jaye A. H. Lapachet

As the legal industry continues to develop new models of efficiencies in a tightened economy, legal librarians also must adjust and rethink their craft. It's time to abandon any traditional views of library services. No longer can we be seen as just catalogers and information providers. To survive and thrive, we need to cast ourselves as intelligent, critical, active players who not only add incredible value to client service but, in fact, can even serve as profit centers for our firms.

Presenting at the 2012 Private Law Libraries Special Interest Section PLL Summit, The Path to 2020: A Vision for Change, Paul Morton, executive director at Burns & Levinson LLP in Boston, gave a talk titled *Monsters Under the Bed and Overdue Library Books—What Keeps the “C Suite” Up at Night*. He explained, “The only constant that we seem to have in law firms these days is change. Things are different than they were yesterday, and certainly we can look forward to things being different tomorrow. Obviously, we all see this. But law firms and lawyers historically do not react well to change . . . the law is based on precedent. Whenever we look to see what we should do, we look back to see what was done.” That's actually the crux of what a law firm library system is about—helping us find ways to utilize what has been done in the past to help us decide what to do in the future.

We, as law librarians, need to embrace the changing business of law and position ourselves to be ahead of the curve as we assess the needs of our organizations. By carving out new roles in competitive intelligence (CI) as knowledge managers and embedded

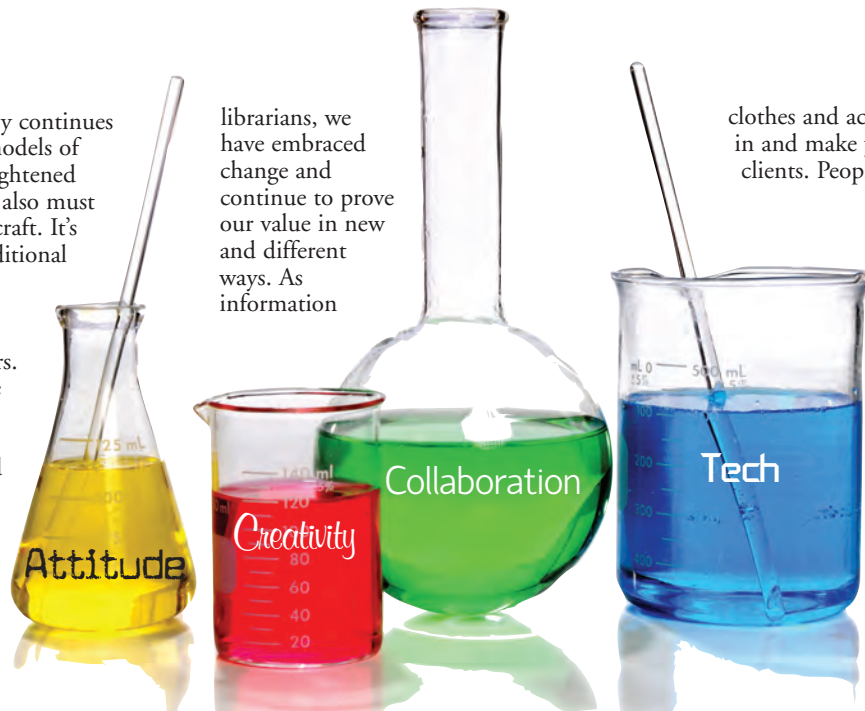
librarians, we have embraced change and continue to prove our value in new and different ways. As information

clothes and accessories that blend in and make you look like your clients. People want to interact with people like themselves. These choices have the added benefit of making us feel better.

Once you've begun to change your style, begin to work on your attitude. If you don't like your job, by all means, change it. If you need a reminder as to why you chose this profession or your

particular job, grab a piece of paper and write down all the reasons why this job is special, put it in a prominent place, and read it several times a day. Life is too short to spend it being unhappy.

Walking around and talking to people is underrated. You can drum up more business by checking in on people who haven't been in the library for a while. Be visible within your organization. Hand delivering results to people is a great excuse to walk around. Sometimes during my elevator conversations with partners, they will joke, “Do we still have a library? I haven't been down to use the books in months!” I always answer, “The library is everywhere you need us to be. It's those CI reports we provided you last month when you pitched client X. It's librarian attendance at practice group lunches. The library isn't just a place anymore, it is service everywhere. It is you calling us on the phone or requesting information via email 24/7. The library is all around you.” This is the kind of answer we all need to give when faced with a joke about print materials.



professionals, we track trends and monitor industry changes for our clients. It is time that we as librarians harness those same skills and look to the future of our own profession for new challenges that will benefit our firms.

Positive Attitudes in Tough Times

If you come to work with a less-than-stellar attitude, it doesn't go unnoticed. We all have bad days, but if the bad days turn into weeks, months, and years, you are certainly affecting the way your attorneys will interact with you and your staff. Taking up space is not included in our job description; to be successful, we must be innovative and enthusiastic to set the tone for the Gen X and Gen Y workers on staff and provide a positive succession plan.

Dressing professionally, choosing a new hair style, looking your best, and basically feeling good about your appearance presents a level of confidence and professionalism that draws people toward you. Think about choosing

Brand Your Value

Several years ago, the library at Neal, Gerber & Eisenberg LLP was completely renovated, and we gained 20 percent more space. I am often asked how we managed to increase space during a time when library real estate almost universally continued to shrink. My answer is simple: we gained space because of the positive effect that our branded CI reports have on the firm's bottom line. We were not adding stacks for books. We added space to increase CI staff. Nobody in power understands or cares about the importance of backroom operations like cataloging or routing, but they do understand the glossy vellum-covered reports branded with the NGE CI tagline "Intelligence—Analysis Results—CI: Your Business Edge." We were using our CI brand to reinforce our value.

One small step in adding value is to make sure that every work product that leaves the library is labeled with branded library notepaper, a sticker, or a stamp—no exceptions or excuses. No anonymous yellow sticky notes. Your customers can give you the kind of advertising that you can't buy. To reinforce the library staff, make sure they know where the work is coming from. Your goal should be to have everyone leave your library happy, even if you can't give them what they want.

Start with creating a logo. This task can be as simple or as elaborate as you want. The key is to make it usable. Use simple clipart, use the Wingdings font (turned into an image), or create something fancier. Pick a color that will stand out on a busy attorney's desk, and stick to it. Reproduce your logo for your internal email signature, notepads, reference request forms, and library signage. Ask your marketing department for creative input, and leave production to your copy center. Make sure everything matches and that it goes on everything produced in the library.

Next, create what our academic colleagues call pathfinders and what we at Coblenz, Patch, Duffy & Bass, LLP call Quick Start Guides. Put them on your internal web server, and then create QR codes leading to them. There are free, easy-to-find online tools to create the little boxes of techno magic. After you brand and laminate the QR codes, stick them to your stacks so your clients can find the information they need as they research in the library. No stacks? No centralized shelving? Create a laminated deck of Quick Start Guides and give them to new hires. Include your logo and library contact info.

Give your staff cell phones and teach them how to text if they don't

know how to already. Then encourage your customers to text them. Put branded signs up on or near bookshelves providing the text code with which to text library reference or administrative staff. If an attorney can text a request and have the material waiting when he or she returns to the office, efficiency is improved.

Create and brand a social media presence for your library. Be where your customers are. If your customers are using social media, you should be too. Assign one librarian to update your social media presence, friend attorneys and staff, and monitor feeds. Assign your entire staff to help create content. Remember to always send cheerful, informative, and professional tweets. It is also critical to write appropriately professional Facebook updates and blog posts. This is a great opportunity for staff to explore some topics of interest to them.

New Roles Bring Value

Jordan Furlong puts it this way: "Lawyers tend to shrink or cut anything whose function or value they don't really understand. So if your lawyers don't clearly understand the work or readily perceive the value of your library professionals, you've got cause for concern." So what must we do in order to deliver efficient and superior services to our attorneys? For some, the answer lies in the changing role of the embedded librarian.

At Neal, Gerber & Eisenberg, we currently have embedded librarians in eight of our 20 practice groups. We embraced the embedded concept two years ago, and it has been well received. The intent was to create a go-to librarian with in-depth knowledge of a specific area of law. To promote library staff buy-in, librarians were encouraged to choose a practice area that interested them. Unlike some firms, the librarians would remain in the library and not physically move to the practice group. With the approval of the practice group chair, we introduced the embedded librarian to the group and explained the new concept of support. Being embedded allowed the librarian to really get to know the client base and the type of research support needed. This concept also gives the librarian permission to delve into a specific subject. In order to curb write offs of library time and billing, we worked with the attorneys to develop templates for client billing descriptions.

Many times, the embedded librarian interacted with the client directly, which helped to enhance the value of our support to the client. As part of the firm's project management initiative, the embedded librarian worked with the firm's attorneys to create checklists for reference requests to maximize efficiencies of routine research. The checklists were a guide for the librarian regarding costs and resources to be used.

At Neil, Gerber & Eisenberg, the embedded position attends practice group meetings. He or she is responsible for collection development of print and electronic resources, mobile apps, and changes to existing resources, features, and functionality. The librarian also provides current awareness to the group and clients via news, docket, and legislative alerts monitoring clients and industry trends. The attorneys have learned to rely on this service extensively.

Another opportunity for embedded support is within the marketing department. The need for CI in law firms is growing. Librarians possess great research and analytical skills, which are important in the CI process. As the economy continues to tighten, law firms are ramping up business development

initiatives and looking to identify cross-selling opportunities. These days, many librarians find themselves working with their marketing departments to provide research support for the requests for proposals (RFP) process.

At Neal, Gerber & Eisenberg, we

recently had a shining example of collaboration between marketing and the library. A nationwide financial-related professional association sought a legal liaison primarily for monitoring regulatory and legislative developments pertinent to its industry. Not only did the library take an active role in the RFP process, as we typically do as the firm's provider of client intelligence, but we essentially pitched our own business. A substantial proportion of the RFP response touted our library services department and its professionals for their legislative and regulatory monitoring capabilities. We discussed the watch services at our disposal and the alerts that could be used to effectively track developments, along with other technology and services. We even included biographies of select library personnel. If the client engages our firm, under the services sought, the library—not the attorney—would actually be the

Assign one librarian to update your social media presence, friend attorneys and staff, and monitor feeds. Assign your entire staff to help create content.



Isn't it Time to Establish Library-Related Social Media Best Practices Guidelines?

By Bobbie Studwell
tinyurl.com/a553p7m

Social media can be both a boon and a bane to our users. It can enhance someone's reputation online, but it can also affect his or her future professional life by taking away privacy protections. Since librarians are in the best position to inform those users about information practices that could affect them in the future, shouldn't we be the logical producers of some type of social media best practices guidelines? Aren't we encouraging students to write local reviews of books we place in our online catalogs, follow us and comment on our blog and Twitter posts, and notify us of the need to keep our web presence up to date? This article proposes a list of best practices to guide our users toward making the best social media and privacy choices possible.



Sweet e-Freedom

By Bret N. Christensen
tinyurl.com/becyasy

Who doesn't like free? Freedom from debt, taxes, and tyranny, and freedom from those nasty little calories found hiding in delectable chocolate truffles. Librarians the world over undoubtedly get calls everyday asking whether there is a free site for this or that. Turns out there are hundreds of legal and general productivity websites in cyberland just waiting to be discovered and used—all free of charge! The kicker is knowing which sites are junk and which are golden. This article lists 24 productivity and legal websites frequently used by the author and, likely, by many of you.



top biller to the client. Legislative analytics from the library would power the representation. It's through tables-turned scenarios like this that librarians will secure a prosperous future and demonstrate the value we bring to our firms.

At Coblentz, we track dockets extensively. For one client, the lag time between us sending the docket to the busy partner and him receiving it created too much of a delay. Now we send dockets directly to the client and fulfill his requests. We are always professional and courteous. Yes, we copy the partner on every email, but we no longer wait for the partner to approve.

Creativity is Your Culture

You need librarians on your staff who are not afraid of technology, especially technology that doesn't yet exist. They need to be excited about trying and evaluating new websites, mobile apps, and online services. You need someone to be able to speak about Sharepoint and databases at a level that IT will respect. Most of all, you need tools that work for your team and for the firm. Testing and willingness to jettison tools that don't work (for REAL reasons, not just because they are new and different) are key. Retrain your staff. Shuffle staff around who are less tech-savvy and, if necessary, hire people who are comfortable with technology.

At Coblentz, we try the free version of tools when we can so that we can play around and familiarize ourselves with some of the features and functionality in order to determine how we can use the new, hot tech. It is important to be familiar with new tech in order to sell it before bringing it to the attention of IT. If you throw it to them to figure out, they will get the credit. We tried out PBWorks and, after a few years, the firm adopted it. While we have not yet achieved firm saturation, it is a valuable tool for the departments that use it. Getting out of our library box is fun!

Create a culture of creativity in your library that embraces creative problem-solving and creative reference solutions, as well as using old tools in new, innovative ways. As librarians, managing knowledge is second nature, and we should make sure that we are capable of managing the intellectual property of the firm through knowledge management initiatives.

At Coblentz, we looked at the tools we had available to see how we could move toward a knowledge management program. We were creating and managing a lot of different datastreams. Not just the regular online search results, but tables of contents

were being sent via email, summaries of news on specific clients, client and issue tracking reports, etc. We needed a way to bring like content together. We decided this idea was a knowledge management project. We decided to use a wiki with our intranet as a backup. What we found was an opportunity to introduce wikis to the firm while creating a new way for attorneys to access content. We started by sorting

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all the information we send out into practice groups. Then we organized the information into topics using one practice group as a test case. At the same time, we copied some of what we were doing to the Intranet Practice Group pages so we had an alternative to show the attorneys. We had our Lexis and Westlaw reps create lists of relevant files and databases and added those to our platforms. Our next goal is to embed canned catalog searches into these resources and identify other ways that we can connect other data silos.

Figure out what knowledge management means for your firm, show your creative solutions to management, and make a proposal to manage and combine disparate data silos. If you can combine these silos and create a go-to resource that enhances the bottom line, you will be golden.

Embrace Change

The legal profession continues to experience great change. If we hope to remain at the forefront, we must rethink our attitude, strategy, and value. We need to modernize the library's support of the business of law. We need to get to know our firm—both its culture and business—in order to figure out what role we play in the way our organizations deliver efficient and superior client services. ■

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