

Zen & The Art of Legal Networking

INSIGHTS & COMMENTARY ON RELATIONSHIP BUILDING WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL LAWYERS NETWORK

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Social Media - Why Are We Still Afraid of it?

Sometimes, I read someone else's posts and am so inspired by them, I just can't keep my mouth shut.

Such is the case this morning with [Nancy Myrland's](#) latest post, "[Social Media: It's Time...Embrace it Already!](#)"

As Nancy said:

Social Media are being used by employees of all ages and interests. You can no longer keep these communication tools out of their lives during the work day just as you can't keep email, telephone and face-to-face communication away from people. These are tools that are here to stay, and will become a large part of every business around you, so it's time to:



- Become familiar with them.
- Frame them.
- Train people on them.
- Monitor them.
- Integrate them in to your business and marketing plans.
- Then repeat all of these steps regularly.

I liked and agreed with Nancy's post so much that I left her the following comment:

Nancy, as I'm sure you can guess, I completely agree with you. I've heard from some of our firms that they've tried to ban social networking sites at work, but the problem is that so many employees have smart phones these days, that that's just not practical anymore. It's a nice idea to think as an employer that you can control your employees' use of social media, but if they can still access it on their non-company/firm-provided phones, there's no way to regulate it. So as you suggest, the better answer is to learn about the tools, and then educate your employees on what the company/firm expects from them in terms of their usage of the tools and the messages they send out if they're affiliated with the company or firm.

And the benefits, for me, far, FAR outweigh the negatives - [our Executive Director] recently visited a potential member firm, who knew about us already because of our social media efforts and blogging.

Hopefully they'll become a member firm, in part because of these efforts and the way we highlight our firms, and what a benefit to us as a Network! People can access a whole other world of potential business development through social media - they just need to figure out their goals and come up with a plan, that they then communicate with the rest of their employees. And yes, mistakes and gaffes can and WILL happen - so include in part of your plan a crisis communication component that addresses how to respond to these, both internally and externally. Then, social media won't be so scary.

Nancy's right:

It's your responsibility as managers, partners, business owners and leaders to do what needs to be done to make your organizations run safely, effectively and efficiently, to drive the internal and external forces that help you accomplish your business goals, and to be responsive to your clients and potential clients.

So what's stopping you from learning more about social media and integrating it into your business/client development efforts today? ILN firms in particular - let me know, and I'm happy to talk to you about your concerns and figure out what your next steps can be.

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