



# AND THE ART OF LEGAL NETWORKING

BY: LINDSAY GRIFFITHS OF THE ILN

INSIGHTS & COMMENTARY ON

*Relationship Building  
within the International  
Lawyers Network*

POSTED IN [SOCIAL MEDIA](#)

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## Happy 7th Blogiversary to Zen & the Art of Legal Networking!

BY LINDSAY GRIFFITHS ON FEBRUARY 25, 2016



Although it's officially tomorrow, I thought I'd use today to mark Zen & the Art of Legal Networking's **SEVENTH** "blogiversary." It's hard to believe that it's been seven years since I started blogging, and even more, that I'm still enjoying it. Here's a roundup of the anniversary posts that I've done:

- [Two Years](#)
- [Four Years](#)
- [Five Years](#)
- [Six Years](#)

The 7th anniversary gift is typically copper or wool, and a fun fact for those of you who may not know me well is that I am a very fast crocheter. It's a skill I learned from my grandmother at a young age, and one I've kept up through the years, often making gifts for family and friends. A GREAT way to take advantage of a love of crocheting is by donating your time (and wool!) to some excellent causes, which is something I do on a yearly basis. Two things I do are crocheting scarves for our troops (although it's often warm during the day where they're deployed to, the dramatic temperature drops at night, and in the winter, mean it can get a bit cold, so they do actually need scarves) and crocheting hats for cancer patients undergoing chemo who have lost their hair. Here are the links for those who'd like to use their own knitting or crochet skills to do the same, or who'd like to make a monetary gift to support these awesome causes!

- [Operation Gratitude](#)
- [Hats Off for Cancer](#)

As I mentioned in [Tuesday's post](#), I spent several hours yesterday back at my high school, which was just as familiar and strange as I expected it to be. I got to see my favorite teacher (Mr. Mac!) who is retiring this year, and talk to a fresh-faced group of 55 sophomores, along with 7 other brilliant and accomplished panelists, including lawyers, teachers, entrepreneurs, and women in the entertainment field. Every woman agreed that staying open to opportunities was the key to their current success, but there were two other themes that came out of the afternoon that I wanted to share as well (neither of which will be a surprise to this audience, I'm sure):

- Things don't always happen in your time frame.
- Your reputation is everything.

The latter point was made by the assistant counsel to the Governor of New Jersey, who pointed out that your reputation is entirely within your control, and that the law (along with many other professions) is a pretty small community. She said that when you treat people well, and fairly, in all your dealings, that reputation will precede you, and wherever you land in life, people will know that what they see is what they get. She illustrated this with her own career path, saying that she graduated from law school with no connections in the legal industry – her family was in the medical field, so she wasn't jumping into the profession with a built in set of relationships that she could leverage. As an introvert, she struggled with networking, but worked at it anyway, making sure to work hard and be genuine.

First, she clerked for one judge, and based on her work there, was recommended to clerk for another. She translated that work and those relationships into a position at the state attorney general's office, and ultimately, the Governor's office sought her out, because she's someone that people know, like and trust. Lawyers looking for clients know that it's the same way with business development – when you're a staunch advocate for someone, with a strong work ethic and trustworthy reputation, those clients will pass your name along to other clients. There are, of course, other things you can do to augment that, but in a nutshell, that's where it starts – with your reputation. I loved her point to the girls that even at this age of 15/16 years old, they are making decisions that in their interactions with each other, with their families, with their faculty, on social media, are setting the stage for the type of person that they will be as adults – not to say that they won't (and even we adults!) make mistakes, but that there's even more motivation to build bridges and community.

I chatted with her, a former Bergen county prosecutor, and one of the students afterwards, and she was asking us for advice and whether we thought it would be okay for her to reach out to people for counsel. All of us agreed on two things – that people, for the most part, are more than happy to help each other out (surprisingly so sometimes, and especially students) and that the important thing is to be genuine in building your relationships. You don't meet and get to know people to see what they can eventually do for you, but because you have a genuine interest in them, and want to get to know them better. In the case of the alums there, and the students, we all have the common focus of the same high school, which binds us for life, and gave us a familiarity with each other that brought a level of comfort into the room almost immediately.

The former point, that of time frame, was raised by the girl next to me, the youngest grad in the room, having left high school in 2009. The three preceding speakers, myself included had all said how important it was to stay open to opportunity, and she agreed, but went a step further, saying that opportunity may mean that you still have to work hard for a number of years before you see the results of your labor. I suspect anyone who's been through law school knows that already, but it's easy to forget it when it comes to business development – I can't even count on two hands the number of times I've heard someone say "I went to a conference and I didn't get a referral out of it."

I wish that was the way that it worked – that you showed up at a networking event, and immediately were handed business. But like anything else, you have to put in the time and energy before the results pay off. It's rare that anyone meets someone on a first date and gets married that same evening. So it's just as unlikely that you'll meet a new business contact over drinks and have them hand you a big piece of business – there has to be some romance and a "getting-to-know-you" period involved, along with some hard work. Patience pays off in business development, as it does in many other areas of life, even in this age of short attention spans (maybe especially in this age of short attention spans).

So thank you to everyone for the warm wishes on this seventh anniversary of Zen – it's because of this great community of readers that I keep blogging and engaging with everyone, and will continue to do so! And thank you to my fellow IHA alums! I enjoyed myself immensely yesterday, and learned a few things too!

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