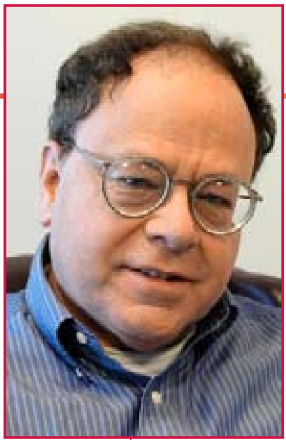
ACC AMERICA
Association of Corporate Counsel
Western Pennsylvania Chapter

FOCUS

President's Message

Ken Christman



Spring – at last!

Over the past few weeks, residents of Western Pennsylvania have finally seen the first welcome signs of Spring. Temperatures are rising, the days are getting longer and the snow has finally melted. For most of us, the winter was challenging, to say the least. It included record snowfalls, extensive power outages, hazardous driving conditions, school closings and two-hour delays, and numerous other cancellations and postponements. For the first time in recent memory, we had to postpone one of our CLE programs due to inclement weather.

Chapter CLE Programs

We are nearing the end of our first program year that featured a new format — more CLE programs at different times and locations. This was intended to better meet the varying needs of our members, especially those whose offices are not located in the downtown area. Judging from the attendance at these programs, the new format appears to be a success.

In March, for example, we held an evening, cocktail-hour program at the Carnegie Science Center. The presenters were Peter Mansmann of Precise Inc. Litigation Technologies and Jennifer Keadle Mason of Mintzer, Sarowitz, Zeris, Ledva & Meyers LLP. Their topic was "Proportionality: How to Control the Costs of E-Discovery." While members were attending the program, their families and guests were given the opportunity to tour Roboworld™ — the world's largest and most comprehensive robotics exhibit. Among other things, visitors could test their skills by playing air hockey with a robot. After the conclusion of the program, members and their guests were treated to a special presentation in the Buhl Planetarium entitled the "Skies over Pittsburgh."

There is one remaining CLE program before the traditional summer break. On June 8, our luncheon program will feature a presentation by Meyer, Unkovic & Scott LLP entitled "Drafting Effective Dispute Resolution Agreements for International Commercial Transactions." The speakers will be Russell J. Ober, Jr., and Patricia L. Dodge.

This program promises to be interesting and informative. I encourage you to attend.

ACC Docket

In addition to our local CLE programs, one of the benefits of chapter membership is our national magazine, the *ACC Docket.* It is available in both printed form and online. Each monthly issue contains a variety of articles of interest to in-house counsel.

The March issue, for example, contains an article which was co-authored by Larry Silverman, general counsel for the Pittsburgh Pirates, on "How You Can Safety Use Social Media with Employees." Among other things, it discussed the importance of having a carefully-crafted corporate policy on social networking by employees using company computers. It also listed a number of points that such policies should include.

ACC Annual Meeting

Another benefit of ACC membership is the opportunity to attend the Annual Meeting (am.acc.com). This year's Annual Meeting will be held in San Antonio, Texas, Oct. 24–27. In addition to offering unparalleled opportunities for networking, the meeting provides a wide assortment of CLE

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Strategic Planning for Law Departments: Top Ten Nuggets from the Knowledgeable

Frederick J. Krebs, President of ACC, Deborah M. House, former Vice President & Deputy General Counsel, ACC

In these days of extreme competition and corporate belt cinching, chief legal officers, like other heads of corporate business units, are increasingly being asked to engage in the corporation's strategic planning process. The corporation's business goals, and the internal departmental goal of providing the best and most economical legal services possible drive this process.

We recently interviewed nine current or former chief legal officers based in Europe, Canada and the US, from a wide variety of industries to gain their insight into the law department strategic planning process. We gleaned the following nuggets of wisdom from their planning experiences.

1. One size does not fit all.

Your strategic planning process should take into account that the needs of companies/organizations (clients) will differ significantly and will constantly be subject to change. As a result, what they need and what you do will vary greatly. For example, if a company is in an aggressive acquisition mode, or implementing a new brand, or downsizing—all of those needs will drive the legal department's plan. The strategic plan for the legal department should also take into consideration the history/status/structure of the department (what it is and what it should be) and how that will affect the delivery of legal services.

Creation of the strategic plan also provides a valuable opportunity for in-house counsel to not only respond to their clients' needs, but to be pro-active as well. Moreover, client input can help determine how in-house counsel respond to client needs (e.g., how important legal news should be communicated). It can also be used to manage client expectations.

2. There is no substitute for careful thinking and planning.

Although approaches may vary, traditional strategic planning contemplates a progressive analysis and undertaking that typically starts with the creation of clear mission and value statements, identifies strategic issues, progresses to the development of strategic goals and objectives, and finally to the creation and implementation of an action plan to meet the identified objectives. While the process should not be tortuous or any element belabored—it does require some important work that should not be avoided. Perhaps most importantly, you should understand the end goal and what you need to achieve. As one CLO put it: "plan from the future backward" and another said simply: "think before you plan!"

3. Align with and participate in the company's (client's) strategic planning.

While the level of sophistication of strategic planning may vary from company to company, as a general matter our business partners are ahead of us in the strategic planning department. This fact can be used to the distinct advantage of the legal department because aligning with the corporate goals facilitates the creation of the strategic plan for the legal department (to say nothing of enhancing counsel-client relationships). For example, if the client determines that one of its goals is to invest in a new foreign market, that goal will direct the legal department's plan as it determines how it will support that endeavor.

It is important to stress, however, that the legal department's strategic planning should not be simply a reactive endeavor. Rather, it is vital that the legal department secure a chair at the table of the corporate planning process and contribute to that process. For example, if the client's strategic goal is to move into a new foreign market that is subject to a legal and regulatory framework that makes outside investment very difficult—that fact needs to be brought to the attention of the client during the strategic planning process- not afterwards. That will not happen unless counsel is at the table. On a more mundane note, several CLOs noted that the department's plan should be written in the same style and format as the company plan to facilitate communication and alignment.

And make sure you have the right people at the table when you do your internal department planning. You should involve appropriate staff in your planning process. And once you develop the goals, objectives and action plans make sure that all staff generally understand the where, why, how, what, and when that underlie those plans, and align their goals and activities appropriately. Note too that outside counsel may be appropriate participants in this process especially if you anticipate they will be important participants in achieving your goals.

4. The right horse for your course.

While we hesitate to compare in-house counsel (as one of our interviewees did) to equines, the underlying analysis attached to this phrase makes a good point. Your best attorney may not be the best attorney for the jobs required by your strategic planning. It does not mean existing staff is not competent. Rather, consider this--even a Kentucky Derby winner is not going to perform well in the Grand National Steeplechase or as a performing Lipizzaner Stallion. As corporate goals and legal department goals change, you must constantly reassess your department. Do you have access to the right skills sets to get the job done and if not, how will you get them? Perhaps you need more generalists and fewer specialists or vice versa given new corporate needs. And do not limit this evaluation just to in-house counsel; it applies to outside counsel as well.

5. Understand your client's business.

This cannot be said often enough as it applies to everything that you do. If you do not understand how the business works then you cannot help your client go where it needs to go; you cannot be a true business partner. And this applies from start to finish, including how your client makes money, the business climate in which it

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operates, and the legal and business risks that it faces.

For example, say your client engages in a particular type of transaction that by sheer numbers is profitable for the company, but on an individual basis runs on tight margins. In your strategic planning you will need to provide legal services that match those characteristics (e.g., by securing one outside law firm to do all of the transactions, but at a below market fixed price that would not be profitable for several firms splitting the business.) If you did not understand how the business operates your analysis about how to provide legal services may be faulty.

6. The bottom-line counts.

As a general matter, lawyers have a bad reputation as budget planners who traditionally argue that you cannot predict or control legal costs, especially litigation. In today's business environment many (if not most) clients do not tolerate this position. Good legal department strategic planning requires good budget planning. Part of this process requires understanding how you spend your legal dollars and determining whether you spend them in the right places. For example, you may find that others may handle the work done by your lawyers more cheaply and more effectively, such as paralegals or even clients with the right training and support. In other cases you might pinpoint areas of high risk and greater need for legal services.

Data from past activities will be useful in making this analysis. One CLO said he intended to develop a metric based on "the cost of failure" with failure being defined as anytime the company gets into a dispute where the company paid more than originally obligated including for legal services, settlements or because of contract disputes, or even to address employee disgruntlement. Lawyers do not like to project and adhere to proposed expenditures—but it can be done.

7. You are what you track; get the data, analyze, and apply it.

The importance of securing and applying the appropriate metrics cannot be underestimated. One of our interviewees noted he works off a pyramid structure to demonstrate this. At the bottom of the pyramid is data, the next layer up is facts, the next ascending layer is knowledge, and the pinnacle component is wisdom. Data may come in many forms—crunching of numbers from outside counsel, numbers relating to transactions provided by clients, estimated hours to accomplish projects, timelines, client surveys, legal spend inside and out as well as the number and types of lawsuits. Collect the data and then use it in the strategic planning process.

8. Culture matters.

Strategic planning cannot be conducted in a vacuum. The existing culture of the company—or perhaps the absence of an appropriate culture—must be taken into consideration. For example, if the culture of the company is to marginalize lawyers or to view them as obstacles—that fact should be taken into consideration in strategic planning. In fact, part of the strategic planning in such an instance may be to establish an action plan to turn this culture around since the ability of the legal department to be effective is going to be directly affected by such a culture. Similarly, if the culture of the company is that business units work in competitive silos, and the goals of the company contemplate maintenance of the status quo, that also must be taken into consideration in planning and providing legal services.

9. Do not overanalyze.

The traditional strategic planning process contemplates a certain analysis. However beware of getting bogged down in the details. For example, do not torture yourself over whether something is an objective or a goal or whether your mission or values statement is perfect. Avoid a never-ending search for the appropriate data that may not exist or overspend your energies on compiling it. Dive in and get started with your planning and recognize your first time through the process may not be perfect. You can always start creating the data you now know you need; do not spend time bemoaning the fact that it doesn't exist currently. Moreover, the strategic planning process is not stagnant. You will have plenty of time to correct course as you move forward, and in fact should do so regularly.

10. Strategic planning can be more than strategic planning.

Use the planning process to achieve other goals. For example, one CLO saw it as a great tool for team building. It might also present a chance for an attorney to step out of his/her comfort zone and act as a leader where they otherwise might not have such an opportunity. Finally, it can be a way to direct and implement change in a manner that allows staff to understand the reasons, and gives them an opportunity to climb aboard or remain behind.

Additional Resources

Strategic Planning for In-house Counsel (ACC InfoPAK)
http://www.acc.com/resource/v6813

Law Department Management (ACC InfoPAK)
http://www.acc.com/resource/v6014

Leadership Training for Attorney Managers: If You Lead, Will They Follow? (*ACC Docket* Article)
http://www.acc.com/resource/v8492

Triple Time: Three Hot Ideas for Improving In-House Law Departments (*ACC Docket* Article)
http://www.acc.com/resource/v7172

Metrics to Creating & Fostering a Successful Law Department (Program Material)
http://www.acc.com/resource/v8441

A View from the Top: CEOs Forecast Their Vision & Plans for In-house Counsel (Program Material)
http://www.acc.com/resource/v5586

In-house Counsel Legal Department Ethical and Professional Conduct Manual: Chapter One: Legal Department Mission/Vision/Value/Roles/Goals (Quick Reference)
http://www.acc.com/resource/v8413

Performance Improvement Plan (Sample Policy)
http://www.acc.com/resource/v7196

Managing to Motivate and Maximize Productivity in the Law Department (Webcast Transcript)
http://www.acc.com/resource/v7606

How (and When) Health Reform Will Affect Employers

By William H. Maruca[1]

Now that health reform has finally arrived, what will it mean to employers? The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA)[2] was signed on March 23, 2010 and is now law. Much of the Act was targeted toward making insurance available to those who need to purchase it directly. Other portions impose new restrictions on insurance carriers. But many employers and the health plans they sponsor will also be subject to a variety of incentives, restrictions, mandates and penalties intended to expand and improve coverage for their employees. Over the coming months and years, as regulations emerge, the Act will have wide-ranging impact on employers and benefit plan sponsors.

The following is a quick reference guide to the most significant provisions relevant to employers in the order in which they become effective.

Note that some provisions are delayed for so-called "grandfathered plans," defined as group health plans or health insurance coverage arrangements in which an individual was enrolled on the date the law was enacted.

Immediate impact:

- Small employers who have fewer than 25 full-time employees with average annual compensation levels not exceeding $50,000 per FTE (full-time employee) may claim a tax credit for up to a portion of their employee health care coverage expenses. The credit is phased out based on employer size and employee compensation. This credit is effective for tax years beginning after December 31, 2009. The credit is equal to 35% of the total nonelective contributions made by the employer for payment of premiums for qualified health insurance coverage of its employees, but not more than the average premium for the applicable small group market in the employer's state as determined by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The maximum credit is available to employers with 10 or fewer employees with average compensation of $25,000 or less. PPACA §1513, 10106; HCEARA §1003
- As of March 23, 2010, all employers must provide break time and an appropriate location for nursing mothers to express milk for children up to one year of age. Such break time is not required to be paid time. PPACA §4207
- Effective on June 21, 2010, employers are prohibited from encouraging individuals to elect the newly-offered high-risk pool coverage instead of employer plans. HHS is also required to create a program to reimburse employer plans for certain medical expenses incurred by early retirees ages 55-64. PPACA §1102

Plan Years Beginning on or After September 23, 2010:

- Health plans which offer dependent coverage must offer such coverage though age 26. Grandfathered plans are not required to cover adult children through age 26 if the dependent is eligible for other employer-sponsored coverage. Note that there is no obligation to offer any dependent coverage, nor are there any details about how a plan may classify a subscriber's child as a "dependent," other than to prohibit age caps lower than 26. PPACA §1001
- Lifetime limits on health benefits will not longer be permitted, excepting specific non-essential benefits. PPACA §10101
- Health plans (other than grandfathered plans) must implement an approved internal and external appeals process. PPACA §10101
- The Act extends IRC §105(h) non-discrimination requirements to non-grandfathered insured plans. PPACA §10101
- No pre-existing condition exclusions will be permitted for children under age 19. PPACA §§1201, 10103
- Non-grandfathered plans must provide preventative care (such as immunizations and preventative screenings) on a first-dollar basis (no co-pays or deductibles). PPACA §1001
- Non-grandfathered plans must cover emergency services without prior authorization and at in-network benefit levels. PPACA §10101
- The controversial practice of "rescission" is limited — Coverage cannot be cancelled except for fraud or intentional misrepresentation. Anecdotally, some insurers were alleged to have engaged in detailed "scrubbing" of applications for minor errors or omissions as the basis for cancelling coverage, particularly for patients who experienced costly claims. PPACA §1001; HCEARA §2301
- All non-grandfathered plans must allow employees to select their own primary care doctor and cannot require that a woman receive permission before seeing an OB/GYN. This is already the law for managed care plans in Pennsylvania under Act 68. PPACA §10101

2011

- As of January 1, 2011, over-the-counter medications will no longer be eligible for reimbursements under health Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs), Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) or Medical Savings Accounts (MSAs) without a prescription. PPACA §9003
- Adults with pre-existing conditions will be eligible to join a temporary high-risk pool, which will be superseded by health care exchanges once they are established in 2014.
- In 2011, employers with more than 200 full-time employees must automatically enroll eligible employees in their health plans, or provide notice of opt-out options. This requirement is subject to the issuance of Department of Labor regulations.

2012 – 2013:

- By March 23, 2012, non-grandfathered health plans must report whether plan

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1. William H. Maruca, Esquire is a partner with Fox Rothschild LLP who concentrates his practice in healthcare. He can be reached at *wmaruca@foxrothschild.com*
2. H.R. 3590, Pub. L. No. 111-148, as amended by the Health Care and Education Affordability Reconciliation Act (HCEARA) of 2010, H.R. 4872, Pub. L. No. 111-152 on March 30, 2010.

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satisfies quality of care measurements to be developed by the Department of Health and Human Services. PPACA §1001

- By March 23, 2012, notices of material modifications must be distributed to plan beneficiaries within 60 days of changes; plans must provide an HHS-approved summary prior to enrollment. PPACA §2715
- As of January 1, 2013: Health FSA contributions will be limited to $2,500; the employee compensation deduction under IRC Section 162(m) is capped at $500,000 for certain health insurance providers; the tax deduction for Medicare Part D plans is eliminated. PPACA §§ 9005, 10902; HCEARA §1003
- By March 1, 2013, employers must notify employees of their coverage options, including exchanges and the possibility of subsidy assistance. PPACA §1512

January 1, 2014:

- The year 2014 is when the teeth of the Act start to bite. An assessable payment, sometimes called the "Free-Rider Penalty," may apply to employers who had at least 50 full-time employees during the preceding calendar year. "Full-time employees" are defined as those working 30 or more hours per week, excluding full-time seasonal employees who work for less than 120 days during the year. The payment will only be assessed if at least one full-time employee obtains coverage through one of the new exchanges and receives a premium credit. Those credits will be made available to individuals who are not offered employer-sponsored coverage and who are not eligible for Medicaid or other programs. To be eligible, the individuals must have income between 138% and 400% of the federal poverty level. (Employees who are offered employer-based coverage at premiums that exceed 9.5% of their household income, or with the employer picking up less than 60% of the cost, may also get credits). The credits can be applied toward purchase of coverage through an exchange. The effect is to incentivize, but not require, employers to provide a minimum level of affordable coverage to employees who do not have the opportunity to join other employer-based group plans, such as through a spouse's employer. Employers whose credit-eligible employees get non-exchange based coverage elsewhere will not be penalized. PPACA §1513, 10106 HCEARA Sec. 1003

  The monthly penalties start at the number of full-time employees in excess of 30 employees who get premium credits multiplied by 1/12 of $2,000 for any applicable month. A premium adjustment index applies after 2014. Large employers can have up to 30 employees claiming credits without penalty.

  The penalty may be avoided if the employer offers a "free choice voucher" to qualified employees equal to the amount the employer would have paid for individual or family coverage, as elected by employee.
- State-based Health Benefit Exchanges will replace the temporary High Risk Pool; qualifying individuals will be eligible for credits that can be used to purchase insurance through the exchanges. §1311.
- No pre-existing condition exclusions may be imposed on any participant. PPACA §§1201, 10103
- Waiting periods cannot exceed 90 days. PPACA §1201; HCEARA §2301
- The tax credits for certain small employers increase up to 50% of the premium costs. PPACA §1421, 10105
- No annual claims limits in health plans except for specific covered benefits that are no "essential health benefits" PPACA §10101; HCEARA § 2301
- Annual out-of-pocket maximums limited for HSA-compatible High Deductible Health Plans (HDHPs) to $2,000 single coverage/$4,000 family coverage. PPACA §1302
- Annual reports to the IRS and participants regarding minimum essential coverage including the amount paid by employer will be required. PPACA §§1514, 10106, and 10108
- Employers with an average of 100 or fewer employees will be allowed to purchase insurance through the exchanges. States can treat employers with 50 or fewer employees as small for plan years beginning before 2016. PPACA §§11304(b) and 1312(f)

January 1, 2017

Large employers (with at least 101 employees) will be allowed to buy coverage through exchanges. PPACA §§ 1304(b) and 1312(f).

January 1, 2018

The "Cadillac Tax," a 40% excise tax on high-end coverage valued in excess of thresholds to be established, will begin to apply. PPACA §9001; HCEARA §1401

The Devil is in the Details

The two laws that comprise the health reform package total 961 pages of small print, but that's just the tip of the iceberg. Administrative agencies including the Department of Health and Human Services, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the Department of Labor, the Government Accountability Office, and various state agencies will need to implement these changes by issuing regulations and policies. Such regulatory efforts often take years after legislation is passed. In the meantime, midterm elections may shift the balance of power in Congress and further legislative tinkering is possible, although outright repeal is unlikely. Make no mistake: change is coming, and some changes are already here.

Chapter Photos

International Connection: **On April 6, 2010, the chapter co-hosted with Leech Tishman Fuscaldo & Lampl LLC, a CLE lunch program entitled "Mergers & Acquisitions: The International Deal," in the newly opened Farimont Hotel in Downtown Pittsburgh. Feature speakers included (l-r) Douglas L. Rabuzzi; Jon E. Evans; Ann C. Bertino; David V. Weicht; and Wesley Yang.**

Annual Board of Directors Retreat: **The Board of Directors held their annual planning and strategic meeting at the offices of Alcoa on January 1, 2010. Pictured (l-r): Ken Christman (President); Christopher Eck (Director) ; Linda Schneider (VP, Pro Bono Initiatives); Leslie Britton (VP, Communications); Kevin Whyte (VP, Programs); Susan Shin (Director); Susan Apel (VP, Membership); Edward Jones (Director); Barbara Dudeck (Chapter Administrator)**

Governance Game Changers: **Morgan Lewis sponsored a breakfast CLE program entitled "Risk and Temptations: Governance Game-Changers in 2010," at the Duquesne Club. Some of the panelist included (l-r): Leslie R. Caldwell; Marlee S. Myers; Robert M. Romano; Gretchen R. Haggerty; Marc J. Sonnenfeld; and Linda L. Griggs.**

Duane Morris was our sponsor for the February CLE program entitled, "Recent Developments in Employment and Immigration," held at the Rivers Club. Pictured (l-r): Denyse Sabagh, John Glicksman, James P. Hollihan, and Ken Christman.

Charles A. De Monaco, (pictured left), whose article appeared in last quarter's edition of Focus, was the featured speaker on March 2, 2010, for a CLE program entitled: "Creating and Maintaining an Effective Compliance Program," which was sponsored by Fox Rothschild LLP. Also pictured (right), Ken Christman.

On March 16, 2010, the Chapter's CLE program, sponsored by Mintzer Sarowitz Zeris Ledva & Meyers LLP, was held at the Carnegie Science Center. Speakers included: (on the left) Jennifer Keadle Mason, a partner in the firm of Mintzer Sarowitz Zeris Ledva & Meyers LLP and (on the right) Peter Mansmann, the founding partner of Precise, Inc. Litigation Technologies. The program was entitled "Proportionality: How to Control the Cost of E-Discovery." Both attendees and their families were invited to visit the Science Center's ROBOWORLD and selected other exhibits.

Upcoming Programs

Drafting Effective Dispute Resolution Agreements for International Commercial Transactions,
Sponsored by Meyer, Unkovic & Scott LLP
June 8, 2010
11:30–1:00 PM
The Rivers Club
One Oxford Centre
Suite 411
301 Grant Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

For more information on chapter activities, please contact the chapter administrator, Barbara Dudek, at 412.366.2686 or *bmdudek@comcast.net.*

Welcome New Members

Elizabeth Baran, Dick's Sporting Goods, Inc.

Eric Billings, rue21

Metthew Clark, Dick's Sporting Goods, Inc.

Maureen Creehan, Travelers Insurance

Jill Denesvich, Medrad, Inc.

Brian Fetterolf, TriState Capital Bank

Daniel Gantt, Dynamics Inc.

George Long, The PNC Financial Services Group, Inc.

Joan Marshall, Thermo Fisher Scientific Inc.

Scott Seewald, Alcoa Inc.

Patrick O'Leary, Thermo Fisher Scientific Inc.

Lisa Pitell, Ibis Tek, LLC

John Sabo, Thermo Fisher Scientific Inc.

ACCA News

Find Counsel. Drive Change. Improve Value. Use the ACC Value Index to:

- Leverage your ACC network to find the best law firm representation available.
- Search for firms that excel in specific practice areas and markets.
- Read helpful comments about firm attributes and value practices.
- Ping reviewers to get more information or initiate direct conversation.And, for the firms you've engaged, review them and help transform the legal landscape.
- Score firms on six value-based criteria – it only takes a few moments.
- Opt-in to permit firms to receive your anonymous feedback.
- Help ensure that law firms are judging their success on your satisfaction.

Contribute law firm evaluations today to the *http://www.acc.com/valuechallenge/valueindex/index.cfm*.

NACD offers Free Trial Membership to ACC Members

ACC has partnered with the National Association of Corporate Directors (NACD) to offer a free individual trial membership. NACD is the largest national membership organization by and for directors and the leading provider of board and director-level education, evaluations, training, resources, and community for the exchange of ideas on leading boardroom practices.

Enrollment in the free trial membership is open until June 30th. NACD is also offering discounts on full board memberships, in-boardroom training, evaluation services, and more. For more information on the available offers, contact Cyrus Alexander at *cdalexander@nacdonline.org* or 202.572.2097. To sign up for a free trial, visit their website at *http://nacdonline.org/acc/* or call 202.775.0509.

New Online Video Tutorials for Legal Resources

If you just can't find that *ACC Docket* article, survey, Top Ten or other legal resource, let us show you where it is! With ACC's new two-minute online tutorials, learn how to navigate through ACC's website to get the information you need quickly and easily. You may even stumble upon some of ACC's hidden resource treasures! Access the tutorials page at *http://www.acc.com/aboutacc/tutorials.cfm*.

Mini MBA – Bring More Than Your Legal Skills to the Table

Strengthen your business and management skills this year and bring added value to your company — ACC's Mini MBA program, scheduled for June 9–11, helps you achieve that goal! Presented in partnership with the Boston University School of Management, The Mini MBA explores the essential business skills that enhance and sharpen your management knowledge in critical MBA disciplines: accounting, finance, strategy, and organizational behavior. Visit *www.acc.com/minimba* for more information.

Read, Hear, and Share — Express Your Opinions at In-house ACCess

Connect with your peers today and share your thoughts about the hottest issues impacting the in-house community. In-house ACCess, the ACC blog, is the perfect place for you to jump in! You can comment on ACC President Fred Kreb's blog entry on "2010, The Year of Cautious Optimism for In-house Counsel," or comment on other recent postings. Check out the blog at www.inhouseaccess.com. If you write a blog and would like to share it with other in-house counsel, email your link to Michael Henderson at *Henderson@acc.com*.

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programs. For members whose location or work schedules do not permit them to attend our local CLE programs, the Annual Meeting presents an opportunity to cover an entire year's CLE requirement in a few days. And the meeting also provides an opportunity to visit some of the attractions in and around San Antonio, such as the Alamo and the Riverwalk.

Details about the Annual Meeting, including registration procedures, are on the ACC website. I urge you to consider attending.

Welcome Kathleen Dohmlo

Finally, I want to welcome Kathleen Dohmlo back to the chapter board. Kathleen is currently senior counsel for LANXESS Corporation. She recently re-joined the board, after an absence of several years, to fill an unexpired term. We appreciate her willingness to serve, and look forward to working with her.