



Legal Practice Management News

...adding value to the business of law

And the Winner Is.....Sydney

Post 2004 conference, Jeanette Peters [ALPMA (NSW) President] was asked, "Well, how are you going to top that one?". Her response, with a very good impersonation of Juan Antonio Samaranch, "Sydney, best conference ever."

Well, Sydney has lived up to the Jeanette's prediction with a sensational line up of thought provoking and exceptionally entertaining speakers at the 2005 Legal Management Summit.

Testimonials to the event include:

"I really enjoyed it and I thought that the program was one of the more provocative ones I've seen in professional services."

"[My colleagues] agreed with me that it's an event we'll definitely be attending next year. Topics and speakers were great. Got some good ideas."

"It was truly inspiring and I have not stopped boring the Partners about issues raised. Speakers were the best I have seen."

See page 7 for a full conference wrap up.

Thank you to the law firms and societies who participated in "Wear Blue on October 10 in support of beyondblue". ALPMA has topped up these generous donations to contribute a total of \$1,000 to beyondblue.



Speaking of Winners...

The ALPMA 2005 Locus Business Improvement Awards were announced at the Summit Gala Dinner. Full details of the awards winners and honorable mentions are featured on page 4.

Dr. Peter Ellender of Carter Newell receives the Business Improvement Award for the <50 Lawyers from Mike Russell, Locus.



Mike Russell of Locus presents Clint Rodgers of Herbert Geer & Rundle with the 50+ Lawyers Award.

IN THIS ISSUE

- Page 2 Upcoming Events
- Tips on Selling the Summit to your MP
- Page 3 Presidents Page
- Page 4 Speaking of Winners
- Page 7 The Future – Challenge & Change
- Conference Wrap Up
- Page 9 Around the States

Upcoming Events

2006 First Quarter Road Show

Revenue=Relationships X Referrals X Revenue

Law firm marketing is generally driven by five words: "Do you know a good...family lawyer, litigator, IR specialist etc etc)?"

Our presenter, Mark Vincent will take attendees through a very practical workshop designed to cover a range of ways to ensure a client-focused culture can be adopted in any firm. This is achieved through constant development of key personal marketing skills.

Mark is the principal of Insight Plus, which specialises in strategic development, marketing, planning, communication, and executive development.

Make a note in your 2006 diary for this date:

Adelaide February 23rd

Melbourne February 24th

Sydney March 1st

Brisbane March 7th

Editorial details

Legal Practice Management News is the official newsletter of the Australian Legal Practice Management Association Limited.

Views expressed by contributors to Legal Practice Management News are not necessarily endorsed by the Association. No responsibility is accepted for the accuracy of information contained in either the editorial or advertisements.

www.alpma.com.au

2006 Legal Management Summit

ALPMA continues to provide outstanding presenters for the Annual Summit.

The 2006 Summit takes place October 27 & 28 at the Surfers Paradise Marriott.

Mark you diary now.

HELPFUL TIPS ON GAINING APPROVAL

TO ATTEND THE LEGAL MANAGEMENT SUMMIT

You might be asking, "How is the most appropriate way for me to present this conference to my **supervisor or the partners?**" The following are helpful tips on achieving sign off to attend the ALPMA Legal Management Summit in 2006. All managers are interested in improving efficiency and effectiveness. So it's important to show them just how this conference will help you in achieving these goals.

- Review the conference material and familiarise yourself with the conference program
- Highlight the sessions that address your firm's current challenges
- Prepare an outline of the advantages the conference presents your firm
- Prepare an estimate of the cost and make sure you include everything
- Present these advantages and costs to your Managing Partner in writing
- Follow up in a reasonable time frame Another approach could be along the lines:
- Make allowances in the budget to attend
- At performance review time, ask for registration to the conference to make up your package
- Offer to take 50% of the registration fee as a salary sacrifice. Ultimately the balance (25% after tax that you pay could be written off under your personal tax)
- Salary sacrifice (or pay for) your first conference and with the wealth of information you bring back to the firm, you can justify the expense to the firm next year.

PRESIDENT'S PAGE



Well, it's November and the year is drawing to a rapid close. It's been a busy year in the ALPMA and I'd like to take the opportunity to thank all ALPMA members, sponsors and presenters for their support throughout the year. By all

accounts, each state has had a fantastic year with a record number of events held. All of which keeps the ALPMA focus on "Adding value to the business of law".

My personal congratulations must go to the NSW Conference Committee for organising an outstanding Legal Management Summit. For those of you who attended, you must surely agree that the speakers were not only incredibly informative, but also highly entertaining. We had over 120 attendees at the Conference with almost the full number staying right through to 5.00pm on the second day (Saturday). A fantastic result! A full wrap up of the conference is detailed in the 'articles of interest' section of the newsletter. I had a number of discussions with both members and sponsors and the feedback was outstanding. Again, well done to the organising committee!

From a National perspective, the Executive is aiming to ramp up its involvement with the members and executive committees in each State with the aim being to give the Association a common 'look and feel' in each location. This is all a natural part of the evolution of the Association and can only bring benefit through a more cohesive approach to some of the offerings we have for members.

To that end, during this past year, the ALPMA rolled out two very well attended national road shows. Our web site has also evolved to offer resources to all member firms throughout Australia. One imminent addition is the long awaited Online Salary Survey which is undergoing some fine-tuning with the aim being to have this released prior to Christmas.

Still at the National Board level, our sincere thanks and appreciation goes to Liz Ryan who has stepped down from her role as Secretary of the National Board. Liz has been an incredible supporter of ALPMA over many years, both at the State and National Level. Liz was the driving force behind the highly successful 2004 Victorian Conference and has had a big hand in developing the upcoming UNEP Diploma of Practice Management. Liz is still around and we're going to call on her from time to time, but until then, we'll let her focus on her 'other' role as National HR Director for Maddocks.

Our relationship with UNEP is developing along with the course content for the Diploma of Practice Management. The first module is being reviewed by the board, and others are to follow shortly. It is envisaged that the course will be available in the 2nd half of next year. Liz Ryan, Bronwyn Pott and Mary Hockaday have been instrumental in the development of this program.

Indeed, Bronwyn's involvement in this and other strategic projects has led to the creation of a new role on the National Board, that of Director of Education, a role that Bronwyn fills very ably. You'll be hearing more about this initiative from Bronwyn and the Board over the coming months.

Still on National Executive matters, I'd also like to welcome two new board members:

Paul Ferguson joins the Board. Paul has been an ALPMA member since 1999 and has held positions on the Victorian Executive and Learning and Development Committee during this time and brings experience through his role as Chair of the Victorian Learning and Development Committee.

Deborah Hann, our second new addition has practiced law for ten years both as a solicitor and barrister. A long standing ALPMA (VIC) member, Deborah has a strong background in professional development and law. She is presently completing a PhD full-time at the University of Melbourne in the area of professional learning with a particular focus on work-based management and leadership learning for lawyers.

The National Board wishes you all the very best as we move into the festive season. There's a big program in store for next year, culminating in the ALPMA Legal Management Summit in Surfers Paradise in October. We're going for 200 attendees at next year's Conference (almost double our past attendances). To achieve this, we're going to have a major membership drive through next year. No doubt, you'll hear more about this later as well.

Until then, best regards,

Steve Sampson – ALPMA President

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The Future: Challenge and Change Empowering Law firms to innovate

Law firm managers, partners and lawyers from firms around Australia gathered at the recent Australian Legal Practice Management Association (ALPMA) Legal Management Summit in Sydney on 22 & 23 October.

The Summit, themed *The Future - Challenge and Change*, presented delegates with a glimpse into the future of the business and management of law firms by way of an outstanding group of thought provoking and entertaining speakers. The program was designed to provide management professionals with tools to shape the future of law firms by challenging current practice and identifying emerging trends.

The Gala Dinner included the presentation of the ALPMA 2005 Locus Business Improvement Awards. The Awards aim to support initiatives in both smaller and larger law firms and are offered in two categories: firms with fewer than 50 lawyers and firms of 50 plus lawyers.

Winner of the "less than 50 lawyers" category, Queensland based firm, Carter Newell provided an extranet solution tailored to their individual clients' needs. This innovation allowed the firm and its clients to share all information relating to matters in a visible and secure environment.

The firm's collaboration with clients, the speed at which the solution was delivered and the significant benefits the package brought to both the firm and its clients were identified as the major factors in judging Carter Newell's entry in this category.

Melbourne based firm, Herbert Geer and Rundle, winner in the "more than 51 lawyers" category acquired, developed and implemented a range of technology solutions. These included a new practice management system, customer relationship management system; document management system and communications systems, all integrated using Outlook and other applications.

HGR also developed Blackberry 7730 / v4.1 wireless communications in collaboration with Telstra, RIM (Revolution in Motion) and Schepsi, and was the first organisation in Australia apart from Telstra to possess this technology. These solutions enabled a fundamental business transformation to support new and consistent business processes benefiting both the firm and its clients.

Two firms received an honorable mention for their innovation in law firm management. Sydney firm Swaab Attorneys, uses Airtime, an interface between a blackberry and the firm's practice management system. Judged as an excellent tool to assist the lawyers and firm to track, record, bill and update time.

Melbourne firm, Macpherson & Kelly, dramatically improved its business through the implementation of a leadership development program. This program identifies, nurtures and develops leadership skills within the firm. The program has benefited the firm and the lawyers who participate enabling both to achieve success in the long term.

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The Future – Challenge & Change

Conference Wrap Up

by Shelley Dunstone

“Change Developing” is the forecast for the legal profession following the recent Legal Management Summit in Sydney. The Summit is presented annually by the Australian Legal Practice Management Association (ALPMA) and this year’s host state NSW.

Futurist Craig Rispin set the scene, demonstrating the velocity of change in the business world. Who would have expected Sony to lose its market to Apple? “Sony blinked” and i-Pod technology has superseded not only the Walkman but is also affecting commercial radio, and is even starting to infiltrate the business market. Did you know that you could use your i-Pod to back up the hard drive of your lap top computer, or as a voice recorder, or to listen to audio-books? Craig also offered a myriad of other innovative and money-saving ways to use new technologies. Amongst Craig’s predictions was a warning of a massive worker shortage in the developed world. Low fertility rates are an obvious cause, but Craig also pointed to a trend of young people wanting to be free-agents rather than employees. The result, he says, will be increased outsourcing of work, both to developing countries and locally. The internet is facilitating these contracting arrangements, through web-sites such as www.guru.com and www.elance.com. These are on-line market places where service providers from around the world can tender for work projects.

Internet referral networks have reduced the famed “six degrees of separation” to four, according to Craig. www.linkedin.com is an on-line networking centre which could be used by law firms to pool their contacts so as to facilitate introductions to potential clients.

Peter Williams is “Deloitte’s most inspiring partner”. Peter’s message is that “Innovation is the number one factor contributing to growth”. Because new solutions are found “at the intersections of disciplines”, it is essential to facilitate communication between specialist teams. He commented that Deloitte had struggled for years to get cross-selling happening “but once they got teams talking to each other, it just happened”.

Peter’s key ingredients for innovation are leadership, a creative culture, commitment, execution, communication and collaboration. He says that having a culture of innovation means every day hearing the words “I’ve got an idea”. People need space, time and permission to generate new ideas. Deloitte’s on-line Idea Forum enables everyone in the firm to contribute, share and build on ideas.

In an assault on the impending worker shortage, Jonathan Gill, Managing Director of Cicero, offered weaponry for winning the “war for talent”. He recommends managing performance, rather than just examining time sheets, giving recognition for work well done, and offering education, which is particularly valued by younger people (the enigmatic Generation Y).

Alternative billing strategies provided a hot topic. Chartered Accountant Paul O’Byrne, of the VeraSage Institute, achieved the seemingly impossible, entertaining us with a discussion about pricing. Paul challenged us with what he calls “the question everyone dreads – How Much Is This Going To Cost?” “How happy are your clients with the answer?” asked Paul. “Can you even give them an answer?”

Paul states that customers are value-sensitive rather than price-sensitive, so it is important to focus on the value that is created for the client. Choose clients who value what you do. By focusing on value, Paul’s accounting firm reduced its client list from 500 to 74, whilst maintaining the same revenue.

The Future – Challenge & Change (cont.)

Venturing further into the lion's den, Paul asserted that legal work should be done at fixed prices. He makes the point that it makes sense to fix the price before you render the service, because in the client's eyes, the value of a service is diminished after it has been performed. He suggests asking clients what they think the service is going to cost. If their expectation is unrealistic, it is better to find that out and have a conversation about it before you render the service, than have an argument after you have done the work. It is very important for firms to learn what a job should cost, advised Paul. I suggest that this is crucial, even if fixed pricing is not adopted. Lawyers are required to provide estimates of fees, and it is no good for the profession's reputation if those estimates are unrealistic.

At the ensuing panel discussion, client representatives agreed that getting the desired lawyer and skill-set are often more important than low price. There was also discussion of lawyers' frustration with time sheets, and the possibility that time sheets could be abandoned if fixed pricing is used.

Peter Sheahan, expert on Generation Y (people currently under 27 years of age), asked the audience about their experiences of "young people today". Responses ranged from comments about visible underwear to young people's propensity to ask "Why?" The younger generation certainly seems to present a challenge for law firm managers.

Peter's message is that these young people comprise the new workforce and we must learn how to get the best out of them. On the positive side, they are creative, confident, tech-savvy, sociable, passionate, willing to

take risks, socially-minded and open to change (all great assets for a culture of innovation!). They tend to change jobs often, and therefore we must learn how to get the best out of them while they are working for us. Requiring them to work long hours on uninspiring tasks is not the best way to do this.

Peter recommends speeding up the recruitment process to satisfy their impatience. Offer variety in their work. Generation Y like to keep their options open, but specialisation (which is often forced upon lawyers) closes down options. Perhaps we have to make it easier for people to switch fields of practice. He says that the best training model for Generation Y is mentoring (a combination of telling and asking). Embrace their desire to work smarter rather than harder – this approach will serve us all better.

Peter emphasised that the key to working with Generation Y is the quality of relationships and trust in the workplace. You cannot change other people; you can only change your own approach and behaviour. A young person who leaves your firm might come back one day with experience gained at somebody else's expense, or they may even start their own business and become a client.



**Paul O'Byrne, Vera Sage,
Challenges the billable hour**

The Future – Challenge & Change (cont.)

A panel discussion with representatives from three generations followed, which provided some revealing insights into the needs of the younger generation. Young people seek mentors to provide guidance about career direction. They want to be entrusted with good quality work. They have been taught that they can be whatever they want to be, and don't want to see their dreams thwarted. Young people also want to see the Law remain a profession, rather than become just another business.

Peter's research shows that young people want control over their life and career, a boss who is nice to them, a workplace where they feel welcome and the feeling of making a positive difference in their work. In fact, he says, everyone wants these things, but it is young people who are demanding them, and these young people will vote with their feet.

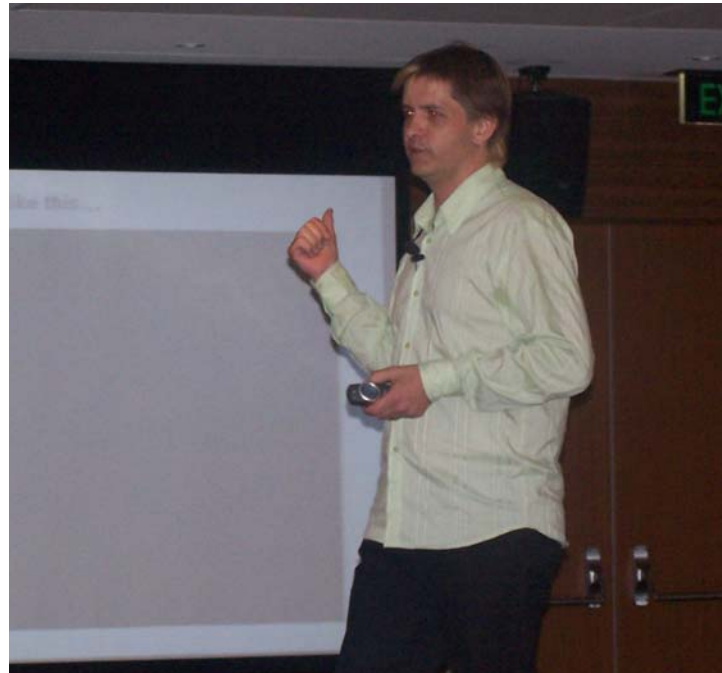
If change is afoot in your firm, how can you best introduce it for a successful outcome? Catherine Smithson provided some sound advice. People do not like change which is imposed on them or that they do not understand. People in your organisation need a short answer to the question "What is this change all about; why are we doing it?" You must also communicate openly with your staff about what the consequences might be, anticipate and respond to potential objections and concerns and admit it if there are things that you do not know. Catherine says that change must be communicated face to face, not by memo or email –

"If it's not face to face,
it's advertising!"

Shelley Dunstone
is the SA Director of
ALPMA and is the
principal of **Legal Circles** in Adelaide.



Futurist, Craig Rispin claims that the internet referral networks have reduced the famed "six degrees of separation" to four



Peter Williams of Deloitte's claimed that once they got teams talking to each other, cross selling just happened



The Fabulous Peter Sheahan mediates between the X's, the Boomers and the Y's.

AROUND THE STATES

Throughout the states many different programs have been undertaken. All of which clearly identify the Association's ability to coordinate the sharing of knowledge with the focus of improving the quality of the management of law firms in Australia.

Queensland

The Queensland Association have been very busy in the last quarter with a considerable number of activities.

The October and November monthly meetings have had a strong IT flavour with Kate Hart presenting on IT strategies in October followed up by Deborah Power in November speaking on precedents and how to tame them. A good turn out for both sessions indicated the relevance of these topics to a cross section of membership.

Queensland had an exceptionally good turnout at the annual conference in Sydney this year. Those that attended were rewarded with an exceptionally good program. Everyone seemed to leave with some new thoughts and felt the trip to Sydney was well worth while. This has enthused everyone in Queensland for conference 2006 to be held at the Marriott, Surfers Paradise on 27 and 28 October 2005.

In November, Queensland is hosting the next Locus Breakfast Series in which legal practitioner, Anne Milner is going to talk about the impact of the new Industrial Relations Legislation on Law firms as employers.

With the year coming to a close very quickly, the annual Christmas party is being held on the 30 November 2005 before the Association goes into recess for a well earned rest.

A road show in March is already planned as are the monthly meetings for February and March.

The Association will start up again in February well rested from their Christmas vacation. We trust all members will enjoy a break over the Christmas period and come back enthused for another busy year with the Association.

New South Wales

As 2005 draws to a close we would like to review some of the events that we consider were highlights for our ALPMA (NSW) members this year:

Monthly Meetings

Judging by the attendance numbers, the real standouts in the past 12 months were those sessions that were directly focused on updating members on the latest changes to legislation and practice management. Particularly successful were the June meeting with Ian Ramsay-Stewart presenting "Legal Profession Act (NSW) 2004 - Costs Disclosure Update" and the September presentation by the Attorney General's Department on E-Court.

Although these types of sessions are crucial to our day to day running of our firms there is real merit in developing personally and professionally and there was a good balance of this sort of session also in the last 12 months. Coming to mind are the Leadership Authenticity workshop (August) and the Balanced Scorecard presentation (July)

AGM

The AGM for NSW was delayed until the November meeting to allow conference business to be finished by the various committees intact. We are thrilled to announce the successful election of the following members:

Jeanette Peters - President

Gail Edmonds - Vice President

Margaret Janiszewski - Treasurer

Anne Reynolds - Secretary

Cate Shailer, Warrick McLean & Stephen Burke - Learning & Development

Jude Bettens, Leah McKenzie & Karen Kelly - Events

Cath Murphy & Monica Hallahan - Sponsorship

Social Events

The Events Committee have worked tirelessly this year adding to their agenda the entertainment and theming of the national conference.

This year's Law Week Breakfast Great Debate was enormously successful. The Sofitel Grand Ballroom was filled to capacity with 450 representatives of the legal industry who turned out to hear "We need to put the LA back into Law". Chas and Julian of the Chaser Team lived up to our expectations and their performances were up to their Gold Logie winning standards. We were honoured to welcome back Sir Laurence Street as adjudicator and also to again support Giant Steps Sydney with our charity fundraising at this event.

This year's Christmas lunch was a sumptuous banquet at The Malaya at King St Wharf attended by around 40 revellers. Thanks to the Events Committee for their efforts.

AROUND THE STATES

NSW (cont.) National Conference

The highlight of the year has to be the 5th Annual Legal Management Summit held for the first time in Sydney. The feedback from delegates, speakers and sponsors has all been extremely positive, with a number of delegates rating this as the best conference they had ever attended. The speaker program was provocative, relevant, and brilliantly presented. The networking opportunities were fantastic and complemented by the Hot! Hot! Hot! gala dinner and entertainment.

We are currently investigating a CD production of the conference speakers that will be available for sale through our website. This would be an invaluable resource for those that attended as well as those members who were unable to make it this year.

In closing we wish you all holiday cheer for the end of 2005 and a vigorous, prosperous & productive new year in 2006.

South Australia

The Human Resources Discussion Group has continued to meet regularly for discussion and networking. Lunchtime seminars have been held on *Market Research – Improving Its Value for You* by Anne Sharp of the University of South Australia Marketing Science Centre, *Building Trusting Relationships in the Workplace* by Inta Sellick and *Reward and Recognition Preferences* by Kerrie Akkermans. Members met at the Rendezvous Allegra Hotel for New Financial Year Drinks. The Committee worked with the Law Society to arrange a Charity dinner, held on Friday 19 August to benefit the homeless. Entertainment was by the SA LawStars, a specially-formed group of lawyer/musos. If you have suggestions for issues you would like your Committee to address, please contact one of your Committee members:

Shelley Dunstone (Chair)
Ron Bellman
Robert Gunn
Dan Mitroussidis
Trevor Stanbury
Lindy Donaldson

Legal Circles
Windevere Bellman
Meister Belperio Clark
Innovation Plus
Andersons
Australian Government
Solicitor
Scammell & Co
Pederick & Co

**Shelley Dunstone
Chair,
Practice Management Advisory Committee
Law Society of South Australia**

Victoria

Victoria continues to aim and achieve in providing a worthwhile program to both members and the broader legal community. Several seminars throughout the year have boasted attendances in the 90's and membership is at a record high. Recent lunchtime seminars have included *A Holistic Approach to Debt Recovery, Practice Management Systems – An Independent View, and a Management Checklist for Recent IR/HR Reforms*.

At the recent AGM, the members voted to increase the general committee members from 2 to seven members. The aim of this increase was to add further depth to the committee and allow subcommittees to form for Membership, Marketing and Learning & Development.

Welcome to the Vic Executive:

Steve Sampson – Convener

Mark Cannon – Treasurer

Christine Rodan – Secretary

Paul Ferguson – Learning & Development Chair

Deborah Hann – General Executive

Nicole Donegan – General Executive

Harvey Ashton – General Executive

Craig Stapleton – General Executive

Shirley Errey – General Executive

Valmai Trudgen – General Executive

Our thanks to Harvey Ashton, who held the position of both Convener and Treasurer for the past 5 months. Harvey has done a sterling job and we thank him for his commitment to ALPMA (VIC).

The last function of the year is the Christmas Function – Blue Fire Grill, Docklands. With over 80 members, sponsors and special guests in attendance, it's sure to be a great close to the 2005 Vic Calendar.

Make sure you keep the 3rd Tuesday of the month free and an eye out on the events calendar for more great events.