Professional Development Consortium

Linkletter

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONSORTIUM

PDC

Fall 2017, Vol. 4, Issue 5

CHAIR'S NOTE

by Don Smith

Stepping into big shoes (or Texas-sized cowboy boots) is never easy, so with great respect and humility, I would like to say it is a privilege to write my first Chair's Note.

I would like to begin by thanking Amy Hancock for her tremendous two years of service as chair. Under her leadership, we saw an expansion of membership categories, a reconstitution of the organization's bylaws, an increase in membership of more than 200 people, the creation of salary and technology surveys, and terrific annual conferences in Naples, Florida and, most recently, Austin, Texas. Of course, it would be impossible to mention Florida and Texas without acknowledging the challenges both states are facing in the wake of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. Our thoughts are with our members who were impacted by these tragic events. You can read more about how Hurricane Harvey affected Amy and others (and what you can do to help) in the following pages.

Looking ahead and building on the PDC's strong foundation, the board aims to build on this momentum and accomplish several ambitious goals this upcoming year, including the following:

- Strengthening our new membership categories;
- Increasing the number of organizations represented in our Alliance Member Category;
- Improving the Trusted Advisor program to introduce our membership to valuable thought leaders in the industry;
- Creating policy guidelines to help position our organization for future growth; and
- Launching the "PDC Essentials" series of foundational professional development training programs.

Inside: PDC Linkletter

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CHAIR'S NOTE

(Continued from Page 1)

by Don Smith

We have a fantastic membership, a fantastic board, and a fantastic opportunity to continue to make the PDC the premier organization focused on professional development and talent management in the legal industry.

It was great seeing everyone in Austin in July. This year's summer conference continued a long tradition of presenting innovative, informative, and thought-provoking content. And, because we're never one to be without a little fun, the Summer Conference Planning Committee raised the bar this year with an incredibly comical event at Esther's Follies. (Pictures and highlights from the summer conference are included at the end of this issue.) Once again, a special thanks to Cindy Lindsley and the Summer Conference Planning Committee for preparing a successful and memorable conference.

Please be on the lookout for information about our upcoming winter meeting, which will take place on November 29 in Washington, D.C., and our next summer conference, which will take place on July 19-21 in Portland, Oregon.

Best,
Don Smith
Chair, Board of Directors

Welcome to Our New Members!

Please join us in recognizing the following PD professionals, who became PDC members between June 27, 2017 and September 13, 2017!

Georgia Sussman, Feinstein LLP

Herrick Wainger, Feinstein LLP

Colby Fraschilla, Shipman & Goodwin LLP

Amy Reilly, Barack Ferrazzano Kirschbaum & Nagelberg LLP

Maggie Owyang, Farella Braun & Martel LLP

Doris Fournier, Axiom Global

Rebecca Jackson, Blank Rome LLP

Louise Lewis, Steptoe & Johnson

Gabriela Anez, Baker Botts

Jennifer Thomas, The Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia

Sarah MacGregor, Baker Botts LLP

Debby Relkin, Seyfarth Sha LLP

Michael Tenenhaus, Brooklyn Law School

Carrie Marker, Dechert LLP

Courtney Dyar, Alston & Bird

Nancy Fraser, Dorsey & Whitney LLP

Bryn Vaaler, Dorsey & Whitney LLP

PDC Board

A special thank you to the PDC Board of Directors for their hard work and dedication! Pictured here are our incoming and outgoing board members for the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 year. Back Row (Left to Right): Don Smith, Larry Brown, Johnna Story, Jane Williamson, Debbie Atlas, Milana Hogan, Erin Walczewski, and Liz Tingey. Front Row (Left to Right): Lori Broderick, Amy Hancock, Jeanne Picht and Maggie Suender

TIPS/BEST PRACTICES FOR INTEGRATING AND ON-BOARDING NEW ASSOCIATES

by Michael P. Beltrán, Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP

Michael P. Beltrán

Michael is a Professional Development Manager at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP, working with 3 litigation practice groups. His 20-plus-year law firm career has spanned all areas of the attorney life cycle, including but not limited to: recruiting, orientation and integration, lawyer development (utilization, work allocation, performance appraisals, training, legal personnel, mentoring), and diversity initiatives. He holds a B.B.A. from Loyola University Maryland, an M.B.A. from the Lubin School of Business (Pace University), and has been a featured speaker at local and national conferences on various professional development topics. He has been a member of the PDC since 2008.

Now that fall is upon us, most of us shift into a higher gear of "busy mode." It's a perfect storm of so much going on simultaneously, including but not limited to the following: new associate arrivals (orientation, welcome events, integration, new lawyer academies and other training programs), mentoring programs, annual reviews, holiday event planning, subsequent-year budgeting exercises, ongoing staffing, utilization, and other work allocation responsibilities.

Having consulted with a number of colleagues around the country, I have developed a "hive mind" of ideas that you might be able to incorporate into your integration program for new attorneys.

New associate orientation is your best shot at making a good first impression as your new associates embark on their professional legal careers. It gives them ways to—

1. Learn and hear from the firm's leadership;
2. Learn about the firm's history and especially its culture;
3. Learn and hear from partners at the firm (often as presenters of substantive programs);
4. Earn CLEs, especially in those early months as newly-admitted lawyers;
5. Meet colleagues from practice groups (as well as the broader firm) at social events; and
6. Begin learning about practice group sub-culture (which is often different from one group to another) and how it fits into the larger firm culture.

Think strategically about the format of your orientation. If your firm has multiple offices that are able to conduct an in-person orientation, it is essential to schedule time for networking and team-building activities. Getting new associates to engage with each other will likely end up being the most rewarding and memorable part of the orientation for them.

For those of you who do not have an in-person orientation, think about how can you utilize other attorneys in your regional offices to make the program more interactive and genuine for new associates. Similarly, think about what is most important for them to know to be able to get to work immediately. Although it can be tempting to have every important partner talk about every important topic at the firm, orientations can sometimes provide too much information. It can be better to spread out the content that is shared with the new associates over the course of their first year at the firm.

One goal should be clear: to integrate new associates as quickly as possible. There is a need for both substantive and social integration to happen simultaneously. Substantive integration will happen more organically through formal training (technology and practice group training, for example). Social integration is where we as PD professionals can help facilitate meeting others, such as floor colleagues (administrative assistants and legal assistants) as well as mentors, group colleagues, and other classmates. Needless to say, larger office or firm welcoming events will also help in the social integration process.

"If your firm has multiple offices that are able to conduct an in-person orientation, it is essential to schedule time for networking and team-building activities."

Tried and True

- **Photo pages** or intranet pages devoted to new associate arrivals are one of the easiest ways to introduce new associates to your current employees. Consider distributing them firm- or office-wide and especially to your practice groups and floors where new associates are sitting. Nothing feels better than being identified and recognized by your tenured colleagues shortly after arriving.

- **Social events** soon after arriving are a nice way to put new associates at ease. You might consider events that don't necessarily focus on alcohol as the core reason to gather. A few ideas include holding a monthly floor or practice group pizza party, a welcome event outside the firm (such as bowling), or the popular escape-the-room type of team-building event.

- **Trainings** can give them the knowledge they need to know to get working (i.e., billing) ASAP. Again, consider spreading your training sessions over the first few months so as to not overwhelm new associates.

- **Resources** about I.T. support, knowledge management, practice groups, and other topics are typically shared in orientation sessions, but you should also think about things like help desk numbers and the "go-to" people who can answer "those" kinds of questions (office mates, administrative assistants, the PD manager or group manager, and mentors). Remind them that resources are always available to help answer any question they may have. I like to say if I don't know the answer, I know someone who does.

- **Tips sessions** with associates, both in a macro sense (general firm expectations) and micro sense (practice group expectations), can work in two different ways. During a firm-wide orientation, a tips session allows new associates to hear from mid- to senior-level associates about the firm's expectations and how to get by at the firm. Following a firm-wide orientation, I have worked with practice groups to provide a more compact and detail-oriented "practice group" orientation. In those sessions, I have found it beneficial when 2nd-year associates (those closest in seniority to the new associates) share their perspectives on the ins and outs of the group, how to get things done, practice-driven issues they may encounter, and how to deal with the different personalities. This orientation can also include tips on seeking out work and providing feedback on those first critical assignments when new associates are trying to make a good first impression. This type of session can also be offered in a more informal lunch setting and with a more intimate group—say, two experienced associates with two new associates. This, of course, will depend on your group size and whether there is an appropriate budget for this type of activity.

Mentors

The arrival of new associates is an excellent time to kick off the mentor/mentee relationship (this is often a carry-over from the summer associate pairing, but not necessarily). I've seen mentors purposely chosen from outside a particular practice group to expand an associate's perspective of the firm, but probably the most popular (if not practical) pairing is within the practice group. This is a good time to set up the first assignment for your new arrivals with a partner mentor within the practice group. (There are other ideas to keep the relationship flourishing throughout the year, but that's another article.)

Diverse Associates and Affinity Group Opportunities

The fall is also an excellent time to invigorate your diversity efforts by welcoming your diverse associates into the firm and giving them an opportunity to meet associates with similar backgrounds and interests. One popular event I helped create at a firm was a speed-networking event for the firm's affinity groups, where new diverse associates were paired with senior diverse associates. To help facilitate conversation, a set of topics was available at each one-on-one setting; pairs had five minutes to hold a discussion, then they moved on to the next pairing. (Topics could include a recent vacation you took, the senior associate's career path at the firm, and your favorite lunch special in the firm's cafeteria). The pre-set topics were usually not needed, but were available just in case. Typically, the senior associates stayed stationary, while the juniors switched seats. If too many seniors attended, we would switch some of them out to liven things up a bit.

Check-in Meeting

Down the road, after three or six months, it is a good idea to have one-on-one meetings with your new associates. This is a good time to assess how things are going and try to identify areas where an associate may be struggling early in the game. Topics to discuss should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- **Bar admission:** The bar admission process can be onerous; it typically takes months and requires a lot of paperwork. You want to confirm that the associate is moving this process along. The reward: Associates are always eager to remove the "Law Clerk" title from their e-mail signatures.

Check-in Meeting (Continued)

- **Work allocation:** Confirm how the associate is receiving work. Is it through formal or informal channels? To the extent possible, you want to be sure there is an equitable distribution of work among new associates. If there is no formal channel for work allocation, this is an important issue to discuss. Partner or senior associate fly-bys can be disconcerting. The associate may not have a sense of what it truly means to be occupied in a particular practice group. The associate may also be too timid to push back, and suddenly he/she is overwhelmed and focused on too many assignments at once.

- **Quality of work:** Is the associate doing work he or she expected to do, or are there other types of assignments that would hold more interest? Depending on the practice, there may be a number of directions in which an associate's career may lead. You want to be sure that the work the associate hoped to be performing is actually being assigned.

- **Pro bono work:** Pro bono work is often enthusiastically encouraged at firms, and this is an area where new associates can hone their legal skills by taking on responsibilities that might not be available to them in their billable assignments.

- **Time entry:** It is a good idea to inquire about the method the associate is using to input his or her time (enlisting the administrative assistant, using software timers or apps, or making manual records), especially if your firm penalizes associates for missing time entry deadlines.

- **Resources:** Firms provide valuable resources to help free up attorneys' time to really dig into their work. The associate should be finding opportunities to use these available resources, such as administrative assistants, legal assistants, interns, summer associates, word processing, conference services, and other firm departments. This is also a good time to remind new associates to work on professional skills such as managing others, supervising, and delegating. I like to say that these are the skills that the firm expects they will magically master, even at this early stage in their careers.

- **Time out of the office:** Depending on your firm's culture, it is a good idea to ensure that new associates are scheduling some "down time." My experience has been that most new associates have not scheduled any time away by the six-month point. I try to encourage them to think about when they will do that (and to keep me and their teams informed of upcoming absences).

- **Training suggestions:** Confirm that any training they have received to this point has prepped them for the work they are doing. If not, ask what the firm could be doing better to help them on-board more quickly. This is a great opportunity to receive feedback on what your firm offers and where there may be gaps in your orientation and initial training programs.

Informal/Formal Feedback

Speaking of feedback, it is a good idea to encourage associates to solicit feedback (at appropriate times) during their first few assignments. Without this feedback (formal or informal), it can be a guessing game during the first year. One way to combat this skittishness is to hold a mid-year review process—that is, collecting evaluations from lawyers who have worked with the new associates—sometime in the spring. This is a good check-in point in case there are issues to be addressed. This timing still gives the associate plenty of time to course-correct before a year-end annual review process.

These are just some ideas to consider as you search for ways to help integrate your new associates. The PDC is a wonderful, knowledge-sharing resource and community, with colleagues who are just a phone call or e-mail away to lend a helping hand and brainstorm with you when you are looking for ideas to overhaul or simply tweak your integration and on-boarding process. Take advantage of the brain trust available to you. Don't suffer in silence or alone!

PDC MEMBERS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

An Interview with Marni Becker-Avin, Director of Professional Development and Client Service, Becker-Poliakoff, P.A.
by Amy Hancock, Director of Professional Development, Andrews Kurth Kenyon LLP

Marni Becker-Avin

As the Director of Professional Development and Client Service for Becker-Poliakoff, Marni Becker-Avin is responsible for running the Client CARE Center and making sure all clients are satisfied.

Amy: What do you do in your free time?

Marni: LOL, my "free time" is at 3:00 a.m. I enjoy helping my son with Wuf Shanti because it is such a positive way to give back to the community and do some good in the world.

Amy: Who is Wuf Shanti?

Marni: Wuf Shanti is an adorable dog yoga character that travels the world and shares with children (through yoga, meditation, positive thinking, fun, and great music) how to live mindfully, look on the bright side, be kind to others, and live in gratitude. Wuf Shanti was created by my son for other kids, promotes health, wellness, and happiness in children, and encourages peace and positivity.

Amy: How did your son come up with the idea for Wuf Shanti?

Marni: His great-grandpa (my grandpa) was a yogi at heart and taught him all his mantras, like Think Well to Be Well, his positive thinking mantra, Smile and the World Will Smile With You, his kindness mantra, and Smile and Say Thank You, his gratitude mantra. When he passed away, my son wanted to honor him by teaching his mind-set to other kids.

Amy: What made your son want to teach other kids yoga and meditation?

Marni: He thinks it's important to teach kids the tools to deal with stress and emotions in a better way so they can grow up less depressed and anxious and become happier, peace loving, content adults. Our world could use some mindfulness right now.

Amy: Why do you think it's important to get Wuf Shanti's message out to kids?

Marni: Science has shown that yoga, meditation, and positive thinking can help the healing process. Wuf Shanti visits a lot of children's hospitals to help the kids smile and heal. That's really special to me.

Amy: What are your goals with Wuf Shanti?

Marni: (1) To teach the next generation to live in peace and gratitude, spread kindness, alleviate stress, and deal with emotions in a productive way so they grow up to be happier, loving, content adults, (2) To help children learn to think positively on a daily basis because science has shown that yoga, meditation, and positive thinking can help the healing process, and (3) To reach the kids when they are young in an effort to heal our planet.

Amy: What has been your favorite part of doing this?

Marni: Working with my son and seeing the kids smile when they meet Wuf Shanti. We got picked up by the Children's TV Network, which is the network in-house at the children's hospitals around the country, and they only take positive programming that can help the kids heal.

Amy: Who is in the costume?

Marni: Usually my son. He and I got certified together to teach children's yoga.

Amy: Tell me about the TV show?

Marni: It's on South Florida PBS stations every day Monday through Friday, twice a day, during the KidsVision block of hours. A really good production house in Toronto is going to make it a 40 week series, and we're very excited about that.

Amy: What has been your biggest challenge?

Marni: Some of the schools think yoga is a religion, but it isn't. It is secular and for everyone. It's only a religion if your religion is peace, love, and kindness.

Amy: What's next for Wuf Shanti?

Marni: We have our mobile app coming out in a few weeks. It will be free for people to download. The kids can learn positive thinking while playing fun games. One game is called the Happy Game—they can pick which pictures make them happy, so it trains their brain's early to focus on the positive. There's also great music, videos, and books.

Amy: What can we in the PDC do to support you?

Marni: We have to get as many people as possible to like our Facebook page and subscribe to our YouTube Channel (it's free) so we can keep Wuf Shanti on the air. The networks look at those numbers. So just click the links below and click the button to like the page, follow, and/or subscribe. Share the pages with everyone you know and ask them to do the same. If you want to post on your local PBS Facebook pages requesting Wuf Shanti in your area, that would be great, too. Thank you!

For more information on Wuf Shanti, check out the following links:

YouTube: www.youtube.com/c/WufShanti

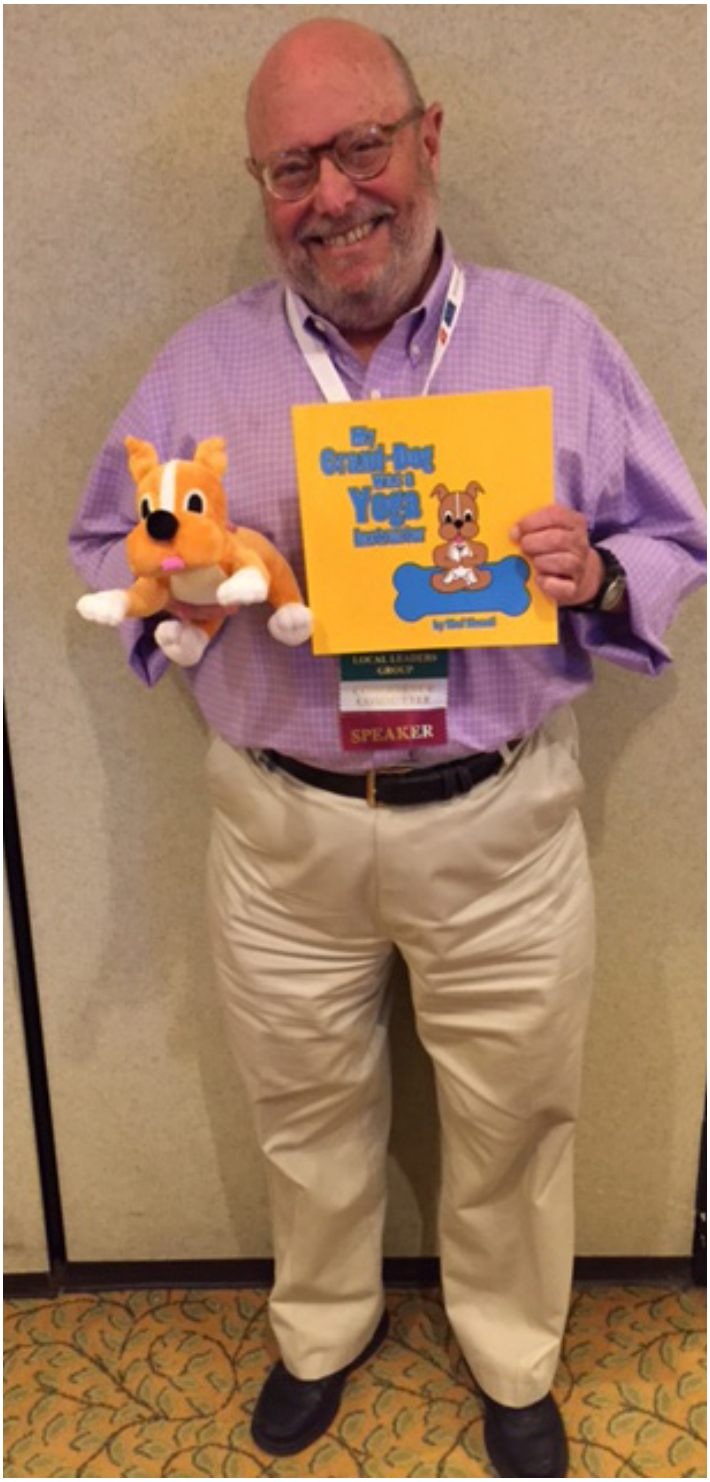
Facebook: www.facebook.com/wufshanti

Instagram: www.instagram.com/wufshanti

www.instagram.com/wufshanti_yoga

Twitter: www.twitter.com/wufshanti

Pinterest: www.pinterest.com/wufshanti



LIVING THE CONFIDENTIALITY RULES

PLI Interview with Alicia Aiken, Esq.

Alicia Aiken, Esq.

Alicia Aiken specializes in teaching professionals how to protect the privacy of crime victims. She also collaborates with the Practising Law Institute as a faculty fellow with the Interactive Learning Center to create innovative continuing legal education programming.

Ms. Aiken previously served as the Director of Training, Pro Bono and Client Support Services for the 150-person team at LAF (Legal Assistance Foundation) and as an instructor on the legal issues surrounding domestic violence and sexual assault. In 2003, Ms. Aiken was awarded LAF's Equal Justice Award, and she was honored with the Chicago Foundation for Women Founder's Award in 2006.

In a series of interviews and articles, our 2017 Visionary Corporate Partner, Practising Law Institute, is bringing four expert perspectives to our members. In this third interview, Alicia Aiken draws on her experience as a trial attorney representing survivors of domestic violence, people living in poverty, and others to share her expertise on client confidentiality.

PLI: Can you start by taking us through the distinctions between privacy, confidentiality and privilege?

ALICIA: You often hear these terms together, but they mean different things.

Privacy is an individual's choice about who knows what. How information is shared. How far and widely it is shared. How it is controlled. It's a privacy choice to never tell anybody about the incredibly stupid thing that you did in high school. But it's also someone's privacy choice to write a tell-all memoir. Both of these are privacy choices, because an individual is controlling what happens to his own personal information.

The second concept, confidentiality, is a professional promise. It's a professional saying, "Share your information with me so that I can help you, and I won't do anything else with it. You won't lose control over it. I won't use it for my own purposes, and I will respect your wishes about how this information gets shared."

This is the root of attorney-client confidentiality: you can trust your attorney and you can speak frankly. As a result of that, you can get good advice. You exercise your privacy rights in an informed manner because you have confidentiality with your lawyer.

The third concept is privilege. Privilege is a legal rule. It's either in the statutes or in the common law. It says that the court has to respect peoples' privacy choices about information they shared with their lawyer. Whatever is shared between the lawyer and the client doesn't get shared in the court case. Keep in mind that what's protected by the rule of privilege is narrower than what a lawyer promises to keep confidential.

So, to recap: privacy is a personal choice, confidentiality is a legal promise, and privilege is a court rule. I have a concrete way of thinking about this. Start with a deflated beach ball. A client gets to make a choice about how much air he wants to blow into that ball—with the air representing private information. The client hands the ball to the lawyer under a confidentiality promise that the lawyer is going to protect his privacy. The lawyer wraps her arms around that beach ball and promises to protect its contents. Privilege means that the court or law enforcement cannot take the beach ball away from the lawyer or pop it with a pin to blow it open.

PLI: But aren't there instances where the promise of client confidentiality can be broken?

ALICIA: There are some common exceptions. If the client is using the lawyer's services to commit fraud or a crime, that's an exception. Also, if there is an imminent risk of serious bodily harm, then generally the rules will give a lawyer permission to disclose information. We're seeing rules that say that lawyers can make a disclosure in order to do a conflicts check when you move to a new firm—but only if there is no injury to the client.

You are allowed to disclose certain confidential client information to address an ethics complaint or defend against a malpractice claim. Some states require a disclosure if the client makes a misrepresentation to the court and the lawyer becomes aware of it. Those are the most common ones.

PLI: Can you talk a little more about privilege and how it differs from confidentiality?

ALICIA: Attorney-client privilege means that the information was shared in confidence, and "in confidence" means there are no outsiders in the room with the client and attorney. The underlying idea of privilege is that we're all better off if people can go to lawyers and speak fully, frankly and with candor to get legal advice. If people are scared to ask for advice because they fear that their private information will be disclosed in court, then as a society, we'll all be worse off.

I said earlier that privilege is a court rule. The court is not allowed to force an attorney or the client to disclose privileged information in a court proceeding. And the court is not allowed to punish the attorney for not disclosing information if it is protected by privilege. It's an interesting rule, because the courts are very used to getting the information they want, and judges can get uncomfortable when they are told that information is going to be withheld.

PLI: Can privilege be waived?

ALICIA: Absolutely, privilege can be waived by the client. Some attorneys are tempted to tell clients whether they are allowed to waive privilege or not, but that choice to protect or disclose really belongs to the client, because privilege belongs to the client, not the lawyer.

Though it is ultimately the client's decision whether to waive privilege or not, we attorneys want that decision to be a knowing one. It is up to the lawyer to say, "I want you to have more information before you waive your privilege. I want to make sure that this is an informed decision."

PLI: You mentioned outsiders earlier. How does the presence of a third party affect the privileged nature of client-attorney communications?

ALICIA: It's an interesting question: what does it mean to have a third person in the interview or on the phone when you are communicating with a client? To be honest, the cases come down differently in different jurisdictions, but as a general matter, if you have someone else in the room who is an agent of the client, then that person can be present without it resulting in a waiver of privilege. Or, if you have someone in the room who is a co-participant in the litigation with the same interests as the client, that's typically not going to act as a waiver. The presence of third parties or the forwarding of attorney communications to third parties needs to be thought through carefully to determine whether or not it might waive privilege.

PLI: You mentioned that what is covered by privilege is narrower than what is covered by confidentiality. Can you elaborate?

ALICIA: Privilege is really about the communications between attorney and client that are related to obtaining legal advice and that a court is prepared to protect. Confidentiality is a broader obligation. It specifically includes secrets that would embarrass or injure the client or something the client has requested be protected; or, in other jurisdictions, it includes all information reasonably related to the representation. Under confidentiality, you are really promising to actively protect all the information the client gave you to the extent you are able to—even if privilege might have been waived and a court might be able to force disclosure.

For example, if a client decided to have a third person in an interview—knowing privilege would be lost—and the court came to you and demanded the information, you would have to turn it over. However, you wouldn't affirmatively start disclosing your client's information from that interview because you made a confidentiality promise to protect it.

Pay attention to that distinction between confidentiality and privilege and what it imposes on you as a lawyer. It's important to your thinking about how you're going to live out your practice and what is OK and an ethical thing to do—and what is not.

PLI: Thank you.

Practical Tips for Handling Client Confidentiality by Alicia Aiken

#1 When it comes to protecting your client's information, pay attention to what the rule is in the jurisdiction where you are practicing. That sounds obvious, but I have witnessed attorneys getting caught unaware that the rule changed or they moved and didn't realize that the ethical rule in the new state is materially different.

#2 Ask some people who are not lawyers what attorney-client confidentiality means. Use that as a guide to how you should communicate with your clients about confidentiality and how to practice confidentiality. You may be surprised to find yourself adopting a higher standard than what is required by your local ethical rule in order to meet the community's expectations.

#3 Establish a process for how you're going to handle situations where you have to make a disclosure. Here's mine: first, have a copy of the relevant rule easily available; don't work from memory. Second, having lined up another attorney with whom you can discuss ethical issues, talk out the possible disclosure with her. It is helpful to have somebody who is not emotionally involved in the case help you. Third, write out the minimum amount of information that you ethically need to disclose. Fourth, plan your communication with the client about the disclosure. Are you going to tell the client what you had to do before or after you make the disclosure? Script out what you are going to say. Fifth, document what happened. If the client files a complaint, you will be glad you had documentation. Use my process if you want, or adopt a process that matches your style, your comfort level, and your situation where you practice.

A TALE OF TWO FLOODS:

PDC members Kelli Lilienstern and Amy Sladczyk Hancock share their personal flood stories

Kelli: I'm a native Houstonian. My first hurricane experience was Alicia in 1983, when I was a baby. I've made it through Tropical Storm Allison, Hurricane Ike, the Memorial Day flood of 2015 and the Tax Day flood of 2016 relatively unscathed. When I heard a storm called Harvey was headed our direction, I made the usual preparations (bought water, filled the car with gas, stocked up on nonperishables and baby formula, and took my laptop home from work), but I thought the worst we might experience was a few days without power and being stuck at home. Our home had never flooded, so the thought that it might never even crossed my mind. I had no idea what was coming.

Amy: I lost my home in the Memorial Day flood of 2015, so as we were coming back to Houston from a recruiting trip at UTLaw in Austin and I started to hear from co-workers and friends that the stores in Houston were already getting picked over and received recommendations to purchase our rations for "hunkering down in our homes" on the road back to town because supply would be better, an ominous feeling began to come over me. I heard from Kelli, who said not to come downtown, she would bring my laptop home herself because the firm was asking employees to move items away from our windows, take portable computer equipment home, close the interior doors to our offices (we had a tornado go up the side of our building, taking out windows, during Hurricane Ike in 2008) and would be closing the Houston office at 1:00 p.m. on Friday to allow members to get prepared for the onslaught of Harvey.

When I got home and began to unpack, the ominous feeling became more of a nagging one and the voice inside my head said, "Don't unpack, get your daughter and get out of here!" I told my husband my thoughts and he said I was tired from being on the road, needed a good night's sleep, reminded me I had purchased the necessary rations and said I was overly paranoid based on what I had been through two years before. I didn't sleep that night, jumped out of bed at 6:00 a.m., looked at a text from Kelli and learned she was already up. I told her I was en route to her house to get my laptop (which we both thought was a good idea because we just assumed we'd be stuck in our homes for a few days due to normal street flooding and we'd all need to be plugged in and working as much as we could while stranded in our homes). The skies over her area of town in the southeast direction were turning green, and seeing them affirmed my decision to leave. What was coming wasn't going to be something I wanted to hang around for. Been there, barely survived that.

I will never let myself forget looking at Kelli holding her 8-month-old baby girl in her arms at her front door as it started to rain and asking, "Are you sure you're okay here, are you sure y'all should stay?" They had supplies, the house had never flooded, and I told myself my worry for her only came from being "overly paranoid," like my husband had stated earlier. I drove off, packed up our things once home, put every belonging and furniture piece that I could up and off the floor, took pictures of every single thing in our home, and hit the road for inland ground, three hours north.

Kelli: On Sunday, August 27, I awoke around 5:30 a.m. to a gurgling noise coming from the toilet. I opened the window to look in the backyard and found a lake in its place. My husband, Carl (who had been diagnosed with the flu two days prior and was sleeping in the guest room to quarantine himself) came running into our bedroom. "Kelli, we need to start lifting things off the ground, this water is going to come in the house." In that moment, I had zero time to panic - I glanced at the baby monitor to check on my sleeping 8-month-old daughter, threw on some sneakers, and we got to work elevating couches, stacking anything on the ground on top of furniture, and making sure any important papers were safe. A little after 6:00 a.m., the water began coming in through the master closet in the back of the house, and pretty soon, it was pouring through every room. My husband trudged through the waters in the backyard to turn off the breakers to prevent any risk of electrocution. At this moment, we didn't know how high the water was going to get and when it would stop raining.

Amy: The first call I received from our evacuation post at 5:30 a.m. was from a girl I grew up with calling to tell me her sister's house was flooding at that very moment and asking if I could walk her through the steps/protocol of which insurance (Homeowners? Flood?) and water remediation companies she needed to call first. As I did that, another call came in. It was the single mom of a toddler child that went to school with my daughter. She was flooding and needed to know what to do. From that moment on, I called my cell phone "Flood Command Control Center" and would literally tell the universe several times over the next many days that I would do all that I could to make something positive out of my flood experience by helping others, sharing all that I learned throughout the awful process, and paying forward the many kindnesses my family had received along the way. I began actively "consulting" and guiding 13 families (sometimes all on the same text chains!) through the current and post-flood process.

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Amy: We didn't know if our house had made it or not. Neighbors couldn't get in to confirm either way, but the pictures they sent showed water at our door eaves and one neighbor said she knew the garage had flooded. Another neighbor only one house over from our own had water in his home.

Kelli: A friend (who lives four doors down from our home) called to check on us. She let me know that her home had flooded and they had evacuated to another neighbor's home that was elevated many feet off the ground and had a second story. She told me to come over and that her husband would come to our house with a kayak to get us. I immediately accepted, and our mission at home turned to grabbing whatever essentials we needed to survive for the next few days with a baby and a dog.

At this time, the water inside of the house was at our knees, and the water outside was over waist-deep. Our neighbor arrived a few minutes later with his kayak, and we were forced to exit through the dining room window to prevent more water from coming in the house through the front door. We put all of our essentials in the boat (formula, distilled water, diapers, wipes, important papers, dog food, flu medicine, our wedding album, laptops, and a couple of changes of clothes). I strapped my baby to my chest in her carrier and slowly waded into the deep floodwaters.

Though our neighbors only live a few doors down, it felt like a million-mile walk. You could see patches of fire ants floating on top of the water, and I knew that snakes and other rodents inhabited the bayou waters that were now a part of our street. The water was dark and murky, so there was no visual of any obstructions in my path. I kept telling myself to go slow and hold on tight to our daughter - keeping her safe was the only thing that mattered to me. We finally made it to our neighbors' high porch (did I mention the first time we ever met them was that moment?) and the power on the entire street went out. And it was still raining.

We would spend the next day monitoring the rain and floodwaters (which eventually got over chest-deep on our street), watching neighbors in boats float by, taking in additional neighbors, and praying for relief. Approximately 30 hours after we were forced to evacuate our home, the water receded enough so that a family member was able to pick us up and take us to safety and power.

Amy: I stayed in touch with Kelli on a regular basis. I knew she was safe at the two-story house of a neighbor. She was there with at least two other families and their young children (who had also been strangers to the kind neighbors prior to the flooding). We knew many others had flooded. We knew friends who had lost everything. Some were insured, many were not. We sat glued to the TV three hours away, watching The Weather Channel and CNN and streaming local news stations to our various devices. We knew some of the people Anderson Cooper was interviewing. We recognized each area of town where rescues were taking place. It was hard to be so far away and not able to help, but it was where we needed to be to keep our daughter safe.

Kelli: During Hurricane Harvey, my family lost both of our cars, all of our furniture (three-foot floodwaters defeated our attempts to elevate furniture), anything that was in a low cabinet or drawer, everything in our garage, and many other personal items. We rode out the storm with what we now call our "flood family" – nine adults, two babies, four cats, and four dogs. Over a five-day period, 51.8 inches of rain fell over the Houston area. There was widespread flooding and damage to over half a million vehicles. In my tiny neighborhood of 146 homes, 120 flooded. Our street currently looks like a war zone, with debris strewn across yards and sidewalks. It's like nothing I have ever seen.

In the midst of all the sadness and damage, there has been so much hope. This city has come together and taken care of its own. I have personally been the recipient of incredible kindnesses - from my amazing flood hosts, the Snow family, offering us their home and everything in it to friends bringing lunch while we worked to demo the house and remove all of the wet contents to family that have taken us in and offered shelter and child care to complete strangers going from house to house offering assistance/water/food to my own PD department (and veteran flood survivor, Amy Hancock) showing up with cleaning supplies, toys for my daughter, and extra clothes and shoes for me. I am overwhelmed and thankful. My family is so lucky relative to others. We are safe, and we have everything we need. There are many in this city who are still living in shelters, unable to get back to their homes and not sure of their next steps. I'd encourage anyone who would like to support the victims of Hurricane Harvey to consider a donation to one of the many worthy causes listed below.

Donate Today:

Hurricane Harvey Relief Fund: This fund was established by Sylvester Turner, Mayor of Houston. Visit www.ghcf.org to make a donation.

Houston Food Bank: To help fund food supplies, the Houston Food Bank is accepting monetary donations. http://www.houstonfoodbank.org/.

Help Houston Pets: Help displaced pets by donating to the Houston SPCA. http://www.houstonspca.org/harvey/

For more information, please visit the **Andrews Kurth Kenyon Harvey resource page:**
https://www.andrewskurth.com/HarveyRecovery

Our city will rebuild, and we will be HoUSton Strong!

Amy: Seeing the outpouring of love and generosity our city has received gives me a newly heightened faith and belief in our collective humanity. Water may be powerful, but love still conquers all.

I shared the following tips with my human resources department at work, and the firm created a public survival and resources portal and put these very recommendations on it. So here I am, continuing my flood consultancy work! I am sharing these tips below as a veteran "floodie" with my fellow PDC members who may know and want to help others. If someone you love goes through a natural disaster, consider doing the following:

Suggested Questions to Ask/What to Say and Do: "It is painful to go from being self-sufficient one day to suddenly not having a pair of shoes, and without a car to take you to buy new ones. Loved ones will be uncomfortable being in such a position. Do not simply ask "what can I do?" Try to anticipate a need and resolve it."

- *Can I bring the following cleaning/packing supplies: heavy duty trash bags, masks (ventilator), paper towels, disposable gloves, bleach, lysol/clorox wipes, cardboard boxes, packing tape, sharpies, box cutters, hand sanitizer and hand soap, mosquito repellent, snacks, water bottles, fresh fruit/veggies (washed and cut , as flood victims eat a lot of processed food during cleanup and appreciate healthy options)?"*
- *Does everyone in your family have shoes? If not, can I pick some up? What size?*
- *Do you have anyone coming to help you cut out walls? If not, can I call a few water mitigation companies to get quotes for you?*
- *Can I call some storage facilities for you, rent you a unit and a U-Haul, or set up movers for you?*
- *Can I come by with baskets and wash your wet clothing at my house?*
- *Can I take your professional clothes to the drycleaners?*
- *My kids have hand-me-downs. What sizes would be helpful?*
- *May I pick up your kids, take them to my house to play, and then drop them off at the end of the day? Is 8:00 p.m. a good time?*
- *Do you have any medications you would like me to call about getting replaced?*
- *What groceries can I get for you?*
- *I am headed to the store, what are three things you need right away?*
- *Do you need a ride anywhere?*
- *May I take you to pick up your rental car?*
- *Can I come help today until 8:00 p.m. to get water out of your house?*
- *Can I bring you lunch/dinner at 1:00 p.m. today? How many people? Where would you like it delivered? (They are probably not staying in their flooded home.)*
- *Would you like to eat dinner at our house at 8:00 p.m.? We have clean towels if you want to shower here first. We are serving brisket, potatoes, and salad.*
- *I am on my way with an ice chest full of bottled ice, water, Gatorade, and lemonade. I will be there in 20 minutes.*

Check in with your loved ones a week or two later and then again in another month or two. They will be in need of a lot of help at the beginning. After a few weeks, the adrenaline is gone, the immediate needs are met, and life goes back to normal for most, but flooded families are still trying to find a new normal (and shoes that match!) and will still be in need of assistance.

Photos of Kelli's street

Amy: What NOT to say/do: I know 99.9 percent of the things people say are meant with love and concern, but some just plain sting:

- *"It's just stuff and you can replace people's stuff, but not their lives."* This is true, and I will eventually come around to accepting/appreciating that very correct statement, but at the moment, when I am still in shell-shock, post-crisis mode, it is still MY stuff. To see it piled on the curb or all over my front lawn, in piles that look like bombs have gone off to create them and those that I call the "vultures" come by what seems like every single minute to scavenge away my worldly belongings (that have now been contaminated with water that carried diseases and raw sewage in it!). . . . telling me "it's just stuff/junk" wasn't what I needed to hear at that very moment. It was still MY stuff and wasn't junk to me. It was my stuff that I had collected in the same home for the last 12 years, the first and only home I took my daughter home to from the hospital. It included some of my deceased parent's belongings, which are things I can never replace.

- *"You had too many things anyway, and doesn't it feel good to finally get rid of all that stuff you needed to clean out? Now you will realize how very little we all need in our lives."* YES, I needed to purge, but I would've much rather done it on my own time and within my own control than have had no choice but to load it all on a curb and eventually fill a driveway-sized dumpster with it! Just don't go there. I'm still angry the bike my mom sacrificed to buy me when I was in college went into that dumpster (and was taken by a vulture that same evening). Had I ridden that bike once in the last 12 years? Nooo, BUT that "stuff" had sentimental value to me, and that's why I still long for it.

- *"You are/aren't going to renovate or build back again, are you? Why would you want to live here if it floods?"* Home ownership is one of your greatest assets, and the decision to rebuild, renovate, or move is a huge one and one that is only for a flooded family to make.

- *"Aren't you worried there will be mold in the house?"* Of course we are, but there are ways to combat the mold growth with inspectors and a lot of bleach! Did people honestly think I would've let my child live in a house that was unsafe?!?

- *"Surely you had insurance?!? And if you didn't, why the hell not?!?"* No explanation needed. Better not to even ask the question. They can tell you, if they so choose.

Aftermath of flood at Kelli's home

Amy standing in the aftermath of the flood's destruction

Aftermath of flood at Kelli's home

"Interesting fact: *People are being kind to each other again. Such a bright light in all of the hurricane preparation & aftermath. People are reaching out, helping each other, lending a stranger a hand. Democrats, Republicans, Black, White, Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Baptist, Young, Old, Rich, Poor, etc. We are all One, & we are reminded what it means to be neighborly. Kindness still lives on. Humanity prevails."*

– Marni Becker-Avin

(Marni lives in Florida with her family and is still dealing with the aftermath of Hurricane Irma)

Esther's Follies Group Dinner

Each year the PDC's large group dinner is a highlight of the Summer Conference, and this year was no exception! PDC members enjoyed dinner this year and an entertaining show at Esther's Follies. Our large group dinner was a highlight not only because of hilarious entertainment, but also for the opportunity to catch up with old friends and even make some new ones!

Plenary: Innovations in PD

Friday morning got off to a great start with a presentation by Susan Schmitz, Dell, Tracy LaLonde, Xaphes, and Scott Westfahl, Harvard Law School Executive Education. This session addressed two topics within innovation - the process of innovation and a discussion of today's talent issues and opportunities.

Ask the Experts

A new session to the PDC Summer Conference. "Ask The Experts" provided an opportunity for attendees to sign-up in advance to meet with an industry expert. Discussion topics included: coaching, presentation skills, wellness, work-life balance and more.

Roundtable Program

The Roundtable Program continues to be one of the most popular sessions at the PDC Summer Conference. This year's roundtable program offered an extension of our conference sessions and provided attendees the opportunity to delve deeper into session topics presented at the conference.

Welcome Reception

Catching-up with friends and colleagues during the Welcome Reception is always a highlight at the PDC Summer Conference.

Thank You to the PDC Summer Conference Planning Committee!

Chair

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