



(From left) Jennifer Brand of Brand Solutions Group, Alicia Pappas of KPMG, LLSDC President Scott D. Bailey of Squire Sanders, and Margaret Bartlett of Locke Lord welcome Showcase attendees.

All photos courtesy of Premiere Photography by Jeffrey L. Cole.

## Empowering the Next Generation of Law Firm Librarians

### Projecting our value to law firm management

By Scott D. Bailey and Emily R. Florio

As information professionals, we are great at informing one another and communicating our value to each other, and we do it frequently in our everyday interactions. We are typically inquisitive and collaborative. We recognize these qualities in each other and the

significance that we bring to our sponsoring organizations and communities through this sharing of knowledge. We all have “go to” colleagues who help us out in a jam, give us just the right advice, or point us in the right direction when we are lost. We also have our “power users,” or clients who most frequently extol our virtues and are willing to evangelize for us to their peers.

Outside of our librarian community and our fan base, though, we have a challenge: visibility. While some of us are asked to formally report on our value using metrics such as budget savings, billable time, or circulation statistics, others are able to informally satisfy their management through anecdotes of a job well done. There are others, though, who have very little profile with their management or stakeholders for a variety of reasons. Change has brought a number of leadership models to the firm environment, and keeping track of our leadership structure and the strategic directions of our shifting industry is often a real challenge. In this climate,

it is critically important that we gain visibility with leadership, communicate our value, and become a more prominent and permanent part of the firm’s strategic direction.

Much has been written about getting a “seat at the table,” and, quite literally, we need to target that seat and envision how we would like our profession to be positioned. One model for this is the literal management table in a law office where administrative seats are typically occupied by an office administrator, technology manager, finance manager, marketing manager, and facilities manager. Large global or national firms typically have corresponding executive directors, CIOs, CFOs, CMOs, and CHRM’s. Regardless of what they are called, how the firm is structured, and the different needs of each, they are all connected and driven by the firm strategy. Our challenge with visibility has been to tap into that leadership strategy and embody that in our own projects. We should not expect these strategies and ideas to be handed to us; therefore, our ideas for an outreach and marketing



Kreig Kitts of Crowell & Moring captures the attention of some Showcase attendees.



(From left) PLL-SIS Chair Linda-Jean Schneider of Morgan Lewis, Robyn Beyer of Pepper Hamilton, and Scott D. Bailey of Squire Sanders

concept should focus on getting noticed by management in ways that they appreciate and understand.

In 2012, the Law Librarians' Society of Washington, D.C., (LLSDC) and members of AALL's Private Law Libraries Special Interest Section (PLL-SIS) began brainstorming ways to promote the value of law librarians to law firm management. Enter the idea for a new communication, marketing, and outreach experiment: the 2012 LLSDC Showcase.

#### Four Exhibit Areas

The LLSDC Executive Board hoped that if they structured the Showcase around law firm strategic priorities, they would find a receptive audience among attorneys and administrative leadership. Drawing from the talented pool of information professionals in the D.C. community, we assembled four "sales forces" to promote law librarians' skillsets to management. We broke down our skillsets to match up with administrative areas in the typical law firm. In an attempt to address administrative problems using the language of management, we eventually focused on the topics of budgets, facilities, marketing, and staffing strategy. We ultimately expanded on these topics to be more inclusive of strategic initiatives that were going on in the leading firms that participated, which led to the following four sales forces and topical areas:

- **Strategic Planning and Business Process Improvement:** supporting firm change through planning, staffing, and intelligent workflow management (aligned to resonate with COOs, CAOs, executive directors, and law practice managers/project managers or CHROs)
- **The Bottom Line: Controlling Costs and Managing Budgets:** reducing expense with dynamic research and resource management (aligned to resonate with executive directors, office administrators, and CFOs)

- **New Markets: Developing Business and Managing Risk:** growing the firm's business collaboratively with competitive intelligence and SWOT analysis (aligned to resonate with CMOs and business development/marketing directors)
- **Knowledge Management, Embedded Research, and Alternative Roles:** demonstrating value through practice group integration, strategic support services, portal development, and centralized resource management (aligned to resonate with executive directors, CHROs, and CIOs).

During the showcase, which was held November 8, 2012, at the law firm Pepper & Hamilton in Washington, D.C., each area was manned by experienced library professionals who demonstrated what they are doing strategically in their respective firms to provide top-notch practice support and positively impact their firms' bottom line. During the two-hour period, there were about 40 Showcase attendees, many of them librarians, though there were some members of the target audience in attendance as well. We consider the Showcase a success since it was the first program of its kind and serves as a stepping stone for further outreach endeavors between information professionals and law firm management. The Showcase could not have occurred without the dedicated hard work and generosity of the Planning Committee and sales force presenters.

#### Lessons Learned

Representatives from the target audience of attorneys and firm administrators were consulted during the planning phases to obtain their input regarding program content, scheduling, and communication. Even though liaisons to the Association of Legal Administrators and the Legal Marketing Association were appointed, we felt more could be done to accommodate their schedules. Hosting the showcase during one of their regularly scheduled meetings would provide a captive audience and would not require attendees to change their schedule or go out of their way to attend.

We also learned that it is extremely beneficial to have general "sales forces" topics from the start, but the exact areas and specifics should develop throughout the planning process as new speakers emerge.

Some of the most valuable discussion occurred among librarians as we prepared for this experimental presentation. Interaction and ideas flourished in the formation of the independent "sales force" concepts. As the volunteers networked and, in some cases, moved from team to team

with additional contributions, we learned more about what our group of librarians was doing across the administrative strategic areas.

#### What's Next?

The LLSDC Showcase Planning Committee is creating a toolkit that can be used by law librarian communities in other regions to hold similar events. The toolkit will serve as a resource to help plan and host a showcase, with specific attention paid to communication strategies, coordinating volunteers, and event logistics. This toolkit will allow any interested information professionals or organizations to host their own showcase.



Abigail Ross of Keller Heckman (left) and Cameron Gowan of Jones Day discuss controlling costs and managing budgets.

The enthusiasm for spreading the word regarding our value is contagious. A few non-D.C. librarians who attended the LLSDC Showcase have taken the lead in bringing it to their cities. As we write this article, an April 25 date has been set for the Law Library Association of Greater New York Showcase, titled *After the Evolution*, and members of the Association of Boston Law Librarians are planning a showcase for later this year. So stay tuned for more information, including a call for arrangements volunteers and speakers! ■

*Director of Research Services* **Scott D. Bailey** ([Scott.Bailey@squiresanders.com](mailto:Scott.Bailey@squiresanders.com)) works for Squire Sanders (US) LLP in Washington, D.C. *Manager of Libraries and Library Information Systems* **Emily R. Florio** ([florio@fr.com](mailto:florio@fr.com)) works for Fish & Richardson in Boston. *The authors wish to thank all of the contributors who made the Showcase a success. A special thanks to the following people for their contributions as sales force leaders, sponsors, or planning committee members: Alicia Pappas (KPMG), Kristin Geiss (Pepper Hamilton), Kreig Kitts (Crowell & Moring), Doug Tirpak (Thompson Hine), Jennifer Brand (Brand Solutions Group), and Phil Rosenthal, CEO of Fastcase.*