

Make It Easy, Make It Work, and Make It Worth It

LEJLA PEKARIC, Owner, Kolibri Consulting

Headlines around hybrid work may have quieted down, but it is far from resolved. As the moderator of a panel focused on hybrid work at this year's BCLMA conference, I led a discussion with business leaders who generously shared their experiences, lessons learned, successes, and ongoing challenges with hybrid work.



- » Sara Forte, who leads Forte Workplace Law, which offers full flexibility to employees and focuses on employee wellness as the primary KPI.
- » Shalisha Senkow, VP Workplace Advisory at Colliers, who has advised law firms through space planning and adoption to new ways of working.
- » Chad Garrod, COO at Whitelaw Twining, where employees can choose whether to work in the office, remotely, or in a hybrid arrangement.

THE EVOLUTION OF WORKSPACE

Our panellists agreed that space is becoming more purpose-built than ever. This includes assigned spaces for those who are regularly in-office, shared spaces for those in hybrid arrangements, hotelling offices, and phone-booth style spaces that provide short-term privacy to professionals who work through the day at a benching station.

bclma

FEATURES

- 1 MAKE IT EASY, MAKE IT WORK, AND MAKE IT WORTH IT**
A panel discussion replay on hybrid work
- 6 FIVE TIPS FOR LAW FIRM LEADERS**
Essential leadership advice
- 10 BCLMA SUMMER SOCIAL '24**
- 13 HOW NOT TO HIRE**
Court rules in favour of employee
- 20 SO LONG, LORRAINE!**
Cheers to Lorraine Burchynsky on her retirement

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

WELCOME & KUDOS	9
SAVE THE DATE	15
MEMBER SNAPSHOT	
Jessie Mitchell	16
THE SOUNDING BOARD	17
RECIPE	18
SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT	19

Who We Are

Founded in 1972, the BCLMA is a non-profit organization with 185 member law firms represented by 595 representatives and affiliates across BC. The BCLMA's goal is to provide educational and networking opportunities, enhance skills as legal administrators and managers, and provide professional and personal benefits to its registrants.

Member Services

The BCLMA provides opportunities to network with other law firm administrators and managers at annual spring and winter socials, and monthly subsection meetings. We host an annual Managing Partners Event, and a large conference every other year.

Newsletter Services

TOPICS is a public newsletter. Contact the Editorial Committee to provide comments on articles, to offer suggestions for articles in future issues, or to augment the circulation list. We welcome your feedback! Please send comments to general@bclma.org.

Editorial Committee

Heather Orchison, Chair
BCLMA
general@bclma.org

Stephanie Marsh, TOPICS Editor
Pier Blue Consulting
Direct: 613-857-8053
stephanie@pierblue.ca

Lorin Birnie, TOPICS Advertising
Virgin Law Group
Direct: 604-633-4252
lbirnie@virginlawgroup.com

Janiene Chand
McEwan Partners
Direct: 604-283-7783
jchand@mcewanpartners.com

Lifen Lee
Hastings Labour Law Office
Direct: 604-609-6699
ll@hilo.ca

TOPICS Production

Doris Pfister Murphy
DPM Word Projects

LOOKING FOR A VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY?

The TOPICS Editorial Committee welcomes new volunteers to help us connect with association members through our informative newsletter! Our fun and collaborative group seeks BCLMA members to suggest ideas and help source thought-provoking articles that will benefit all subsections.

We meet formally at four lunch-hour planning meetings per year (lunch provided) to plan the next edition. We also host meetings virtually for volunteers who live and work in the valley or the interior, or on the island or the coast!

Don't miss this rewarding opportunity to build valuable relationships, and contribute to the BCLMA and to our legal community across the province.

No business writing skills required – just your enthusiasm!

Contact Committee Chair Heather Orchison at general@bclma.org if you have any questions, need additional information, or feel ready to join!

Submissions

If you have an article or story idea you would like to submit, please email Heather Orchison at general@bclma.org. Please note that our prescribed article length is 1000 words. All submissions will be subject to review by the editorial board.

Copyright Reproduction Rights

TOPICS is copyrighted. However, we encourage you to circulate or copy this newsletter unmodified for your own internal or private use.

The newsletter, its contents or its material may not be sold, intact or modified, nor included in any package or product offered for sale.

©2024 BCLMA, CANADA. This issue and the newsletter's archive are all available in PDF format at www.bclma.org

Lunchrooms have started to transform into café-style spaces that invite conversation and collaboration. One panellist summarized these changes as the ‘democratization of space’ meaning that giving employees a choice of different zones and space styles enables different people with different working styles to feel equally productive at the office.

What’s critical to get right? Understanding how your teams use space to do their work, aligning the design to the use case, and minding the details (like ensuring quality soundproofing and adequate space to leave some personal items when sharing an office).

IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY

Panellists agreed that a critical enabler of hybrid work is a seamless technology experience. Investing in infrastructure, digital solutions, as well as quality hardware and peripherals pays dividends in productivity, employee satisfaction, and client experience. Accomplishing this can include fully leveraging Microsoft 365 capabilities with a specific focus on Teams and Copilot.

What should firms keep in mind? Technology alone does not solve hybrid work challenges. Getting underlying operations aligned and layering on the right digital solutions are vital.

ON INCLUSION AND MENTAL HEALTH

Research has shown that hybrid work has opened up opportunities for a significant proportion of women, which they feel they would not have had otherwise. This is especially true for those in minority groups.

Similarly, those living with mental health conditions have reported improved mental health well-being and a positive impact on their careers resulting from hybrid work. As employees play varying caregiving roles in their personal lives and manage a variety of their own physical and mental health conditions, having options and flexibility allows them to stay engaged in their work.

Panellists confirmed that, as employers, offering a variety of work arrangements to their employees rebounds into tangible benefits of keeping their top talent. Without it, those



With the most experienced
recruiters and the largest
network of lawyers,
paraprofessionals, and
legal leaders, you can
rely on us to find
exactly who you need.

hunterwest.ca
(604) 609-6188



HUNTER WEST
LEGAL RECRUITMENT

YOUR TRUSTED LEGAL
SEARCH EXPERTS

employees might have chosen to leave the firm or even the industry.

What's encouraging? Workplaces that offer flexible and hybrid options also have open dialogue about employees' mental health, personal goals, and aspirations. Evidence exists of de-stigmatization of mental health conditions and non-traditional career paths, which keeps more people in the workforce, and has the potential to be transformational to the legal industry.

CULTURE, LEARNING, AND MENTORSHIP

A big question for law firms has been how to nurture culture and ensure junior or up-and-coming lawyers get quality mentorship without a consistent in-office presence. Panellists correctly pointed out that physical attendance does not equate to good mentorship taking place, although there is something to be said for spontaneous learning opportunities and junior lawyers observing more senior lawyers in action. We emphasized the importance of being deliberate about how, when, and where mentorship takes place, and to not assume that attending the office at the same time means it is occurring.

And it's no different with culture; the most effortless-looking outcomes actually require a lot of purposeful effort.

What's working? Making deliberate and creative efforts to connect on a personal level, like including a fun opening question at a team meeting or organizing team events that allow colleagues to connect outside of the office. Also, laying structure into mentorship to ensure—whether in-person or remote—activities that align with learning and growth actually take place.

ON THE AUDIENCE'S MIND

While our panel discussion covered a myriad of topics, there was a lot for our audience to dig into and they delivered with excellent questions. A couple that stood out include:

What about roles that cannot happen remotely or from home? For example, reception?

One idea included having a couple of colleagues share working at reception a few days a week combined with performing administrative work from home the other days. Another option included providing growth opportunities such that while reception may be in-office full-time for a period,

the employee has options to grow into other roles where hybrid work is possible.

While no one-size-fits-all answer exists, the key is the will to get creative and experimental while focusing on what is possible in the context of a particular firm's operations.

How do you manage proximity bias (an unconscious tendency for those in leadership to favour those who are more frequently physically present or closer to them)?

The potential for proximity bias exists even without hybrid work, and while it may be difficult to eliminate, much like other unconscious biases, it can be safeguarded against. Try:

- » Educating the firm about the presence of biases and how they manifest themselves.
- » Including HR, the COO, or another party in the review process in a role of observer and challenger to ask the tough questions around equity and objectivity in how promotions are awarded and performance is assessed.

A WORK IN PROGRESS

While each panellist shared a lot of wisdom and hands-on experience regarding hybrid work arrangements, many of us in the room agreed that it remains a 'work in progress'. This can include:

- » Determining how to stay informed about employees' workloads, as well as how to promptly recognize when employees may be struggling if they are not attending the office and able to observe the physical signs.
- » Identifying more objective and quantifiable ways to assess what elements of their hybrid work approaches are working (and which are not).

We did all agree on one thing, however. If we want our professionals to attend the office more regularly, two things work like a charm: workplace puppies and a super-fancy Italian coffee machine!



As senior leader and owner of Kolibri Consulting, Lejla Pekaric provides fractional COO services, specializing in matters of strategy, leadership, and operations for law firms. As an executive coach, Lejla works with numerous leaders across Canada. She is a CPA-CA with a Master of Professional Accounting (MPAcc) and 15+ years of advisory experience, including 10+ years in senior leadership roles in prominent professional services organizations. kolibriconsulting.ca

Where Legal Professionals Do Work



World's #1 Trusted Cloud Platform



- Built & Optimized for the Cloud
- Access Documents Anywhere at Anytime
- Highest Security of any Cloud-Based DMS
- Internal & External Built-In Collaboration
- Industry Leading Tech Support 24/7/365

Call BCS to Request a Demonstration
(916) 677-4277

Baker Cadence Solutions is here to help with any & all of your NetDocuments needs



baker+cadence | solutions, llc

www.bakercadence.com | (916) 677-4277 | info@bakercadence.com

Offering Industry-Leading Legal Software Implementation and Training Since 1997

RICOH

Unleash your inner legal eagle

Modernize workflows
and get back to the
business of law

Learn more



Five Tips for Law Firm Leaders

DEBBIE FOSTER, Partner, Affinity Consulting Group

As law firm leaders, our role extends far beyond just keeping things afloat. Partners entrust us with the responsibility of guiding our firm toward success, cultivating impactful leaders, and fostering a thriving culture.

Many of us did not receive any formal training. We learned on the job, and we did the best we could. But today's law firm requires a more intentional kind of leadership that can be a differentiator enabling us to attract and retain team members that make the firm better.

We all need practical insights and actionable steps that will support our journey as a leader. With a relentless pursuit of improvement and a commitment to developing our teams, we can create a healthy firm with a healthy culture.

Let's delve into five essential leadership tips that will empower us all to become truly remarkable leaders.

TIP ONE: EMBRACE CONTINUOUS LEARNING

Leadership is not a destination; rather, it's an ongoing journey of growth and development. As the dynamics of the legal industry constantly evolve, you—as a leader—must adapt accordingly. You can do this successfully by embracing learning opportunities, investing in yourself, and continuously striving to enhance your leadership skills. So much information is available, and so much of it is free! Between videos, TED Talks, podcasts, and more, you will never run out of opportunities to sharpen your skills. Of course, there are also leadership programs and workshops for purchase, as well as services that offer opportunities to engage with mentors and coaches and explore innovative approaches to leading.

Your commitment to self-improvement will inspire those around you, as well as enable you to navigate the evolving legal landscape effectively.

TIP TWO: PROVIDE TOOLS AND ONGOING TRAINING TO FUTURE LEADERS

As leaders, we owe it to our future leaders to set them up for success. Although not everyone is a natural leader, leadership skills can be developed. When promoting individuals into leadership positions, it is crucial to equip them with the necessary tools and offer chances for ongoing training. Let them shadow you, and walk them through how you think about solving problems. Let them make mistakes (on low-risk matters, of course), and then clean up their own mess.



That's the best way to learn, right?

Every firm is unique in its culture, so make sure to emphasize essential skills such as effective communication, decision-making, conflict resolution, and strategic thinking.

Investing in your future leaders' growth empowers them to lead confidently, drive success, and nurture their respective teams.

TIP THREE: GIVE CLEAR AND KIND FEEDBACK

Effective leaders understand the importance of providing clear and constructive feedback. People need to hear what they are doing well and how they can improve. Embrace the principles of Kim Scott's *Radical Candor*, which emphasizes a combination of caring personally and challenging directly. By delivering feedback kindly and honestly, you create an environment built on trust and growth. It also raises the bar when it comes to accountability. And remember to celebrate your team's achievements while offering guidance on areas that require development.

Lay the foundation for continuous improvement by fostering a culture of open and honest feedback.

TIP FOUR: HONE YOUR FACILITATION SKILLS

As a law firm leader, your ability to facilitate effectively is invaluable. Whether it's a team meeting or problem-solving session, facilitating with finesse can elevate collaboration and productivity. Create an inclusive environment where all voices are heard, encourage active participation, and guide discussions towards fruitful outcomes.

Call for Submissions

Do you have an idea for an article that you think would benefit BCLMA members? Are you itching to put pen to paper (or more likely fingers to keyboard) or do you have an article already written that you'd like to share? We are always looking for submissions!

If you have an article or story idea you would like to submit, please email Heather Orchison at general@bclma.org. Please note that our prescribed article length is 1000 words. All submissions will be subject to review by the editorial board



BUILDING STRONG TEAMS

LEGAL AND ACCOUNTING & FINANCE RECRUITMENT

forgerecruitment.com

@forgerecruitment



Facilitation skills come in handy when there is conflict, and there is no better way to sharpen your skills than by leading a group through conflict resolution. Effective facilitation harnesses the collective intelligence of your team, driving innovation and cultivating an environment of teamwork and mutual respect. When you elevate your facilitation skills, watch your firm's potential unfold.

TIP FIVE: SET THE TONE FOR SUCCESS

There's a saying: 'Leaders bring the weather'. The attitude and energy you bring into the workplace will significantly impact your team's overall morale and performance.

Approach each day with optimism, positivity, and enthusiasm, and your team will follow suit. Be mindful of your demeanour and its influence on others. Even when you think you are doing a good job hiding it, they can tell when you are struggling. During challenging times, exhibit resilience, provide stability, and instil a sense of purpose within your team.

Your leadership sets the tone for your firm's culture, so make it a positive one.

INSPIRE SUCCESS

Being a law firm leader can be challenging. Getting the support you need from lawyers and other leaders across the firm is not always easy. But it is important work, and it requires constant growth and a commitment to continuous improvement.

1. Embrace the journey of leadership, seeking learning opportunities and investing in your personal development.
2. Equip emerging leaders with the tools and ongoing training they need to excel in their roles.
3. Provide clear and kind feedback to foster growth.
4. Hone your facilitation skills to drive collaboration.
5. Consistently set a positive tone for success.

Remember, your leadership journey extends far beyond where you work. Implementing these five essential leadership tips will inspire greatness, cultivate a healthy firm, and guide your team toward long-term success.



Debbie Foster is a nationally recognized thought leader on efficiency and innovation in professional legal organizations. Her 20+ years of experience, combined with a mix of strategic management and strong leadership skills, has enabled Debbie to develop a unique ability to work with law firms and legal departments to help them navigate the ever-changing legal services delivery landscape. Particularly, Debbie works with legal professionals to help them understand the importance of accuracy and efficiency in their processes, along with inspiring them to focus on innovation – or simply put, finding the better way.



SMALL BUSINESS BC AWARDS
BEST WORKPLACE WINNER



Cloud Services for Lawyers

Delivered by People Who Care

Looking for technology that enhances teamwork? Hosted Desktops allow teams to easily connect and work together no matter where they are - office, court, Hawaii



making I.T. work for you

Call for more information (604) 639.6300 | www.i-workx.ca

HOSTED DESKTOPS . HOSTED EMAIL . HOSTED FILE SHARING .

WELCOME & KUDOS

New Member Firms and their Representative

Kelly Gamble **Cote & Evans Trial Lawyers** Surrey

Kelly Austin **Mosaic Forest Management Corporation** Nanaimo

New Representatives for Existing Member Firms

Gretchen Rose **Cozen O'Connor LLP** Vancouver

Carmen Kreutmayr **MLT Aikins LLP** Vancouver

Brian Scime **LaBarge Weinstein LLP** Vancouver

Carly Beatty **Pulver Crawford Monroe LLP** Vancouver

Lorin Birnie **Virgin Law Group** Vancouver

New Individual Members

Elizabeth Kocur **Alexander Holburn Beaudin + Lang LLP** Vancouver

Rhonda Heffernan **Bennett Jones LLP** Vancouver

John Tsiofas **Cozen O'Connor LLP** Vancouver

Tirtha Shetty **Dentons Canada LLP** Vancouver

Lera Wilson **DLA Piper (Canada) LLP** Vancouver

Carolyn Switzer **FH&P Lawyers LLP** Kelowna

Geeta Krishnan **Gowling WLG (Canada) LLP** Vancouver

Pavanpreet Athwal **Hamilton Duncan Law Corporation** Surrey

Brittany Fazio **Mandell Pinder LLP** Vancouver

Derek Wong **McCarthy Tetrault LLP** Vancouver

Nancy Kao **McCarthy Tetrault LLP** Vancouver

Jocelyn Dalocanog **Norton Rose Fullbright Canada LLP** Vancouver

Juliet Valova **Ratcliff & Company LLP** Vancouver

Kayleigh Slobody **Richards Buell Sutton LLP** Vancouver

Rachel Rabinovitch **Roper Greyell LLP** Vancouver

Marketa Rumlena **Slater Vecchio LLP** Vancouver

Lori Hart **Terra Law Corporation** Vancouver

Christopher Spiker **Watson Geopel LLP** Vancouver

Elaine Danigeles **Whitelaw Twining (DWF)** Vancouver

Marissa Bauzon **Whitelaw Twining (DWF)** Vancouver

Staffing Issues?

R•JOHNSON

LEGAL RECRUITMENT



BCLMA SUMMER SOCIAL '24

The BCLMA held its annual Summer Social on June 6 at the D/6 Bar & Lounge at the Douglas Hotel in Vancouver. Generous contributor sponsors treated 140 members to a cocktail networking soir  e combined with delicious hors d'oeuvres.

People had a lot of fun popping balloons! Attendees randomly selected to pop a colourful inflatable won the BCLMA-donated prize indicated on the ticket inside.

The BCLMA thanks our generous sponsors for helping us to host this always well-attended event to kick off sunny summer!

- » • **Premier Sponsors:** AXIS (insurance); COM-PRO (managed business solutions); RICOH Canada (office equipment)
- » • **Event Sponsors:** BMC Networks Inc. (IT solutions); OptiNet Systems Inc. (computer networking); Dye & Durham (legal software)
- » • **Contributor Sponsors:** R. Johnson (staffing); Wright CPA (accounting)

The BCLMA board of directors and event organizers thank the many members who attended. We enjoyed welcoming all of you!





WORKPLACE DESIGN + BUILD

We Understand Legal

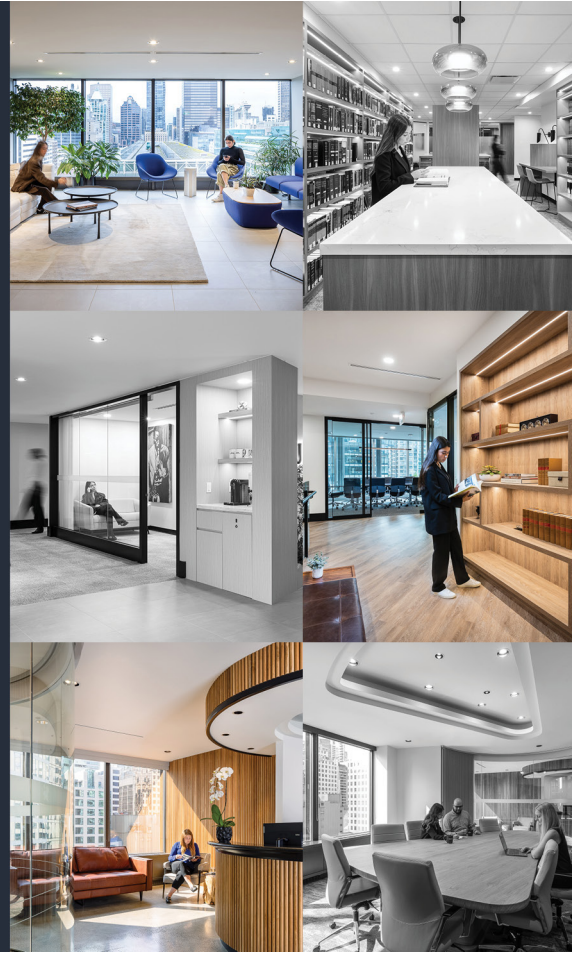
With over 45 years of design and build experience, we have collaborated extensively with Canadian law firms, tailoring offices designed to support your team's unique needs with precision.

Experience the Aura difference, and let us help craft a personalized, strategically designed workplace that elevates productivity and **empowers your legal team**.



EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITIES OF A TAILORED LAW OFFICE DESIGN. INQUIRE TODAY.

auraoffice.ca | (604) 510 - 7101 | info@auraoffice.ca



Photos by Anna Beaudry Photographic Design annabeaudry.com



How Not to Hire

PRESTON PARSONS, Partner, Overholt Law LLP

As the summer months recede, employers start looking at onboarding new hires to fuel the uptick in work in the fall. It is, of course, best practice to have those new hires agree to the terms of a well-drafted employment contract before their start date. However, is it necessary, or advisable, to provide the new hire with a comprehensive employment contract if they have already accepted an offer of employment extended by email or letter?

A June 2024 decision from the BC Supreme Court serves as both a caution and a good reminder for employers about the risks of taking a two-stage approach when hiring new employees.

In *Adams v. Thinkific Labs Inc.*, 2024 BCSC 1129, the defendant employer sent the plaintiff an offer of employment by email. It was a detailed offer, covering points including but not limited to the plaintiff's proposed compensation, stock options and vesting, health or personal spending account, hardware bonus entitlements, a learning and development stipend, a parental leave program, vacation and leave entitlements, work schedule, and extensive benefits information. Altogether, approximately 60 pages of information were provided for the plaintiff to review and consider. Interestingly, the email offer requested the plaintiff's full legal name and her desired start date. It indicated that upon receipt of those details, the employer would provide her with the official employment contract.

The plaintiff responded the next day. She accepted the offer and provided her full legal name along with her desired

start date. Later the same day, the employer responded providing a "Protection of Corporate Interests" document, which included just over five pages of new terms, including non-competition obligations, intellectual property restrictions, and a termination clause. None of the details in this new document were included with the email offer that she had already accepted, but the plaintiff signed and returned the document nonetheless. The Court found that the Protection of Corporate Interests document "contained almost nothing save for additional burdens, limitations, and obligations on the plaintiff" (para 9).

The plaintiff commenced work for the defendant employer one month later. She was employed for two years and eight months before her employment was terminated without cause. In doing so, the employer relied on the termination clause in the Protection of Corporate Interests document. The plaintiff argued that the email offer that she accepted constituted the full employment offer, and since it contained no termination clause, she argued she was entitled to reasonable notice at common law.

The defendant employer refuted that argument, taking the position that the plaintiff knew she could not start working for the defendant unless she signed the Protection of Corporate Interests document. In other words, the defendant argued that the email offer was incomplete, and the plaintiff knew she had to sign the full employment offer in order to accept the role.

The Court found that the employee needing to provide her full legal name and desired start date were minor administrative matters that did not leave the email offer open-ended, and that her acceptance of that offer formed a binding employment agreement. By presenting the Protection of Corporate Interests document consisting of entirely new terms, without consultation or fresh consideration, the defendant employer effectively induced the plaintiff to accept an offer of employment with all the sugar up front, and then surprised her with everything sour afterwards. The Court refused to enforce the terms of the Protection of Corporate Interests document, and awarded the plaintiff pay in lieu of a five-month notice period at common law.

Despite the employer having indicated in the email offer that the employer would follow up with the official employment

contract after receiving her full legal name and desired start date, the Court did not consider that language enough to make the email offer conditional upon the future execution of the Protection of Corporate Interests document. The stark difference in the terms may have led the judge to that conclusion. While a conditional offer pending the execution of a comprehensive and complete contract is possible to extend, the risk of a result like in this case remains present.

It is always best practice for employers to provide the complete employment contract to prospective candidates up front for their consideration, and that of their legal advisors, prior to their acceptance. Providing two-stage employment offers runs the risk of the second document being found unenforceable.



Preston Parsons is a partner at Overholt Law, practicing in the areas of employment and labour relations, human rights, and privacy law. Overholt Law is a boutique employment and labour relations firm located in downtown Vancouver, British Columbia. For more information regarding Overholt Law, please visit overholtlawyers.com.

Want to move your law firm to the cloud **securely?**

WE CAN HELP





(604) 789-3401 | www.bmcnetworks.ca

Save The Date

BCLMA Educational Presentation

Topic: The Science of Success

Speaker: Dr. Catherine Sanderson

Date: Thursday, October 3, 2024

Time: 11:45 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Location: Terminal City Club, Vancouver

bclma
BC Legal Management Association

BCLMA Annual Winter Social – Buffet Dinner

Date: Thursday, November 7, 2024

Time: 5:15 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Location: Sutton Place Hotel, Vancouver

Visit bclma.org for more information and to register.

sai
systems auditing

We Understand your Business



Systems Auditing (SAI) markets and supports Secured Integrated Workflow Solutions for products such as Copitrak (Cost Recovery Suite with Advanced Scan workflow, Secure Print Management), Matter Experts from Nth Degree, and other products.

nth Degree Technologies has developed software, that seamlessly integrates with legal financial systems to streamline tedious and time-consuming workflow processes.

Expense & AP Automation

Automate your expense management processes, eliminating costly errors, reducing paper usage and relieve staff of inefficient manual tasks.

New Business Intake Designed to automate your firm's business acceptance process while extending a flexible model adapted for your business environment.

Paperless Proforma/Pre- Bill for Aderant and Elite. Intuitively designed to meet the needs of all users / functions in the firm. Paperless Proforma / Pre-Bill will adapt to your unique workflow requirements with ease

bundledocs Bundledocs is a cloud-based document bundling solution. Bundledocs organizes them into a neat, numbered, indexed, and sectioned booklet in minutes. Instantly ready to save, share, integrate to firms document management system or print.

No matter how big or small, you can change in seconds.



Copitrak continues to lead the industry by offering revolutionary user-friendly features and functionality to boost productivity. The Copitrak solution today is a fully integrated cost recovery system, with full Secure print plus Advanced Scan Routing technology to integrate seamlessly to your firm's Document management Solution.

sai
systems auditing

Call or visit us at WWW.sai.ca
604.685.1078 email: info@sai.ca

MEMBER SNAPSHOT

JESSIE MITCHELL



Q
&A

Where do you work?

Human Resources Generalist, Stikeman Elliott LLP

Describe your current role at your firm.

My role is dynamic and requires a broad range of skills, including communication, problem-solving, interpersonal, and organizational abilities.

I help support the firm's human capital needs and foster a productive and positive work environment in efforts such as recruitment, benefits administration, arranging for training and development, policy compliance, HR data management and digitization, employee engagement, and legal compliance.

I am currently a Co-Chair of both the Joint Health and Safety Committee, as well as the Social Committee for the Vancouver Office.

What do you enjoy the most about your role?

My team! I feel so lucky to have a wonderful mentor and colleagues to work with every day. My team trusts my judgment, allowing me autonomy of tasks and independence while still supporting me and my learning and my goals. We share in each other's successes and work through challenges collaboratively with open and honest communication.

When did you join the BCLMA?

I attended a few events as a "guest" last year, but officially joined in 2024.

What is the greatest value you receive from the BCLMA?

Networking! I find it crucial for career development. The ability to connect with professionals in my industry through networking events has certainly benefited my growth in the legal field. Building relationships can lead to valuable opportunities, mentorship and advice, and the BCLMA provides that to me.

What advice would you give to young professionals developing their legal career?

Career development is a journey – not a destination. Stay proactive, adaptable, and committed to continuous growth, and you will find yourself well on your way to achieving your professional aspirations.

If you could pick a movie title or song title to describe your legal career, what would it be?

Takin' Care of Business by Bachman-Turner Overdrive

My dream vacation:

The Maldives

THE SOUNDING BOARD

YOUR BCLMA.
YOUR NEWS.

We welcomed summer with the ever-popular annual Summer Social at the D/6 Bar & Lounge at the Douglas Hotel in Vancouver in early June. Find the fun photos in this edition!

Thank you to all members who participated in BCLMA's summer surveys: (1) Business Services Compensation & Benefits and (2) Charge-Out Rates. The reports will become available this fall.

Save the Date! The annual Winter Social will take place on November 7 at the Sutton Place Hotel. Visit the Events page at bclma.org for details about this event and other sessions scheduled for the fall.

Finally, the Board of Directors wish Lorraine Burchynsky a very happy retirement and thank her for the many years she dedicated to the BCLMA through her strong leadership and warm friendship. Read about Lorraine's journey in this newsletter.

Enjoy the full [President's Message](#) on our website.

bclma
BC Legal Management Association



MAXIMIZE
PRODUCTIVITY

OPTIMIZE
WORKFLOWS

COLLABORATE
SECURELY

LEVERAGE AI
RESPONSIBLY

INTEGRATE
SEAMLESSLY

netdocuments®

#1 Trusted Cloud Platform Where Legal Professionals Do ***Their Best*** Work

Document
& Email
Management

Intelligent
Automation

nd

165+
Integrations
(Including M365)

Security &
Governance

LEARN MORE >

RECIPE

Elevated Fall Cheese Board

CHEESE:

- Mimolette
- Autumn Chimay
- Triple Cream Brie
- Cheddar
- Stilton
- Blueberry Vanilla Chèvre

PRODUCE:

- Persimmon
- Blueberries
- Blackberries
- Raspberries
- Pomegranate
- Thomcord Grapes
- Dried Orange slices
- Mini Pumpkin for garnish

MEAT:

- Salami
- Calabrese
- Salame Secchi

CARBS:

- Cranberry and Hazelnut Crackers
- French Bread, sliced

ACCOUTREMENTS:

- Raw Honey
- Walnuts
- Chocolate Acorns
- Rosemary for garnish
- Cornichons
- Pistachios
- Castelvetrano Olives
- Hazelnuts
- Marcona Almonds



Recipe from ainttooproudtomeg.com

DIRECTIONS:

1. Start with small bowls to anchor the board. Place the bowls of honey, olives, and cornichons evenly spaced in the centre of the board, then add the larger pumpkin(s) to help set up your design.
2. Next, fan the sliced cheeses and crackers out around the bowls.
3. Use the berries and pomegranates to fill in any holes, being sure to break up similar colours, then tuck in the salami, calabrese, and salame secchi. Add the grapes, walnuts, persimmons, dried oranges, and chocolate acorns to the empty spots around the edge of the board.
4. Finish off with rosemary and any other festive decorations.



Get to Know... MNP LLP

The BCLMA values its many important relationships with vendors across the province. These service providers co-fund our social events, sponsor learning sessions, support our newsletter, and much more! Our Sponsorship Spotlight brings you highlights of their portfolio of professional services and their generous support of the BCLMA.

About us

MNP is a full-service accounting and business-consulting firm. With more than 100 offices from coast to coast, including 23 offices across British Columbia, we help professionals manage their practice from start-up to succession, empowering them to meet both career and personal goals.

Our core services

- Accounting and tax compliance and planning services to law firms, law corporations, associates, partners and their families
- Specialty tax and cross-border services
- Litigation support and valuation services
- Corporate finance and due diligence

How our services benefit legal firms

We believe our clients deserve the support of an advisor who understands their practice and is as committed to success as they are.

That's why one of MNP's largest areas of practice is our professional services niche, where we have direct experience working with many local and national law firms.

We work collaboratively with our clients to build customized strategies in areas including assurance, tax planning, advisory, forensics accounting, cybersecurity, and much more.

Our differentiator

Our business advisors commit to understanding the industry dynamics affecting all legal practices, as well as the unique influences and trends involved.

We not only provide tax and accounting support, but operational advice too. We help legal firms navigate the complexities of today's accounting and tax landscape and provide tailored solutions to meet unique needs.

Coordinates

mnp.ca | E: May.Ashraf@mnp.ca | P: 604.685.8408

Follow us





SO LONG, LORRAINE!

After a nearly 50-year career in the legal industry, Lorraine Burchynsky will welcome retirement this fall.

Although, ‘welcome’ might not be the right expression. Lorraine loves what she does, always has, and thinks about the things she will miss about her firm – Boughton LLP – and the BCLMA. “Contributing is the number one thing I will miss. I always put my hand up. It’s in my DNA!”

You could call Lorraine a ‘frequent flyer’ when it comes to volunteer service positions with the BCLMA!

Facilities Chair	Two terms
Topics Editorial Committee – Advertising	Several years
Board member	Several years
Conference Committee Chair	2016 and 2024
President	2016/17 and 2021/2022

Accomplishments Lorraine feels particularly proud of include working with Bob Waterman on the implementation of confidentiality agreements for surveys and working with Elizabeth Jackson on the introduction of a strategic plan to help the association focus on essential policies, updating bylaws, defining the pillars of approach, and establishing terms of reference. Expanding the

membership was also a focus area, challenged by COVID. “We had to pivot from in-person events and innovate to become more inclusive across the province. We embraced the virtual space, and successfully hosted lunch & learns and annual general meetings online – effectively maintaining the collective culture of the BCLMA.”

How did Lorraine get here in the first place? “I knew I wanted to work in the legal industry as I watched the Perry Mason TV series. I wanted to be Della Street!” With her mother’s support, Lorraine switched from her high school’s academic program to a commercial one. In Grade 12, she took a US law course, which included two weeks of co-op at a downtown firm. Six months later, she was asked to join the firm as a partner’s secretary. Lorraine worked for that lawyer for seven years (until he retired) then she joined Boughton Law Corporation.

“When Lorraine retires at the end of this year, she will have been with us for 40 years, in a range of roles,” says Boughton Law Counsel George Cadman K.C. “When Lorraine accepted the challenge of becoming the firm’s Director of Administration, it came at a time when the firm had grown from less than 20 lawyers when she first joined to more than 50, with as many support staff. Lorraine flourished in that role and maintained the necessary stability and efficiency of operations the firm required. She has remained an integral part of the firm’s management team.”



Lorraine brought that same pulse to the BCLMA. “When Lorraine and I served together on the board, I watched her consistently demonstrate the leadership qualities I greatly admired and aspired to,” says Elizabeth Jackson, formerly of Farris LLP. “She was always open-minded and respectful of everyone’s opinions, yet I often felt we were on the same wavelength, even seeming to read each other’s minds at times.”

Lorraine shared enthusiastically, “One thing that has pleasantly surprised me about the association over the years is the amount of information that gets shared amongst members. This is a truly collaborative environment. I feel like we all genuinely want each other to always succeed. And then we share our successes to encourage our peers and help them develop and thrive.”

“I wish Lorraine all the best in retirement. I am sure that she will find new outlets for her boundless energy!”

-Leslie Green,
Drysdale Bacon McStravick LLP

There is no doubt that Lorraine led by example. “She became a source of wisdom to every board member,” says Jane Kennedy. “Lorraine was always keen to share insights and encourage collaboration, all of which have greatly helped shape our association.”

Leslie Green of Drysdale Bacon McStravick LLP served on the board with Lorraine for three years. “I can honestly say that I have never worked with anyone who was as dedicated to the smooth operation of the BCLMA. Lorraine has been its cornerstone for more than a decade, and we all owe her a huge debt of gratitude for her enthusiasm and dedication.”

While Lorraine worked hard, she also had some fun and made sure those around her did so too. “When Boughton celebrated its 75th anniversary,” tells George Cadman, “Lorraine had the opportunity to share some funny stories of past firm events. Lorraine always brought a great sense of humour.” Elizabeth Jackson shared a similar sentiment: “Lorraine has an amazing sense of humour!”

“Lorraine is a true professional and wonderful person. It has been my privilege to know her and work with her. Lorraine’s level of contribution to the BCLMA will be missed.”

-Catharine Rae,
Bennett Jones LLP

Now, Lorraine can share the laughs with her family and friends full-time. “I have two grandchildren, aged 16 and 13, so I’ll be watching them play a lot of sports!” And of course, travel. Over the last five years, Lorraine has enjoyed some voyages, including cruises to exotic locations such as Dubai and India, Singapore and Australia. “My retirement cruise is planned – Italy and Croatia! – and in summer 2025, I plan to visit Spain, Portugal, and Morocco.”



“I find her willingness to take on projects for the benefit of our association truly admirable. She’s the ultimate volunteer!”

-Jane Kennedy, BCLMA Administrator

Lorraine will step into her new role of Retiree in October. On behalf of all BCLMA members – both recent past, and present – we thank you for your leadership and your friendship. You have organically raised the bar on what it means to give, share, encourage and support.

Thank you, Lorraine! Enjoy your well-earned retirement!



THE BCLMA TEAM

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Rubyna Jinnah, President
Harris & Company LLP
604-684-6633
rjinnah@harrisco.com

Dorothy Cheung, Director / Treasurer
DuMoulin Black LLP
604-602-6815
dcheung@dumoulinblack.com

Keith Cassidy, Director
Borden Ladner Gervais LLP
604-640-4157
kcassidy@blg.com

Alexa Kingsmith, Director
Harper Grey LLP
604-895-2907
akingsmith@harpergrey.com

Sandra Lowe, Director
Jenkins Marzban Logan LLP
604-681-6564
slowe@jml.ca

Priscilla Martindale, Director
Richards Buell Sutton LLP
604-661-9231
PMartindale@rbs.ca

Yes, you could file it yourself...



But we think you have better things to do with your time



So much more than our name suggests... since 1969

Vancouver • New Westminster • Victoria

Tel: 604-659-8600 • info@wcts.com • wcts.com

bclma

Connect with us on Instagram



Follow @bclma
Tag us at #bclma

THE BCLMA TEAM

SUBSECTION CHAIRS & CO-CHAIRS

FACILITIES & SERVICE MANAGEMENT



Stephanie Muzur, Chair
Clark Wilson LLP
604-687-5700
smuzur@cwilson.com



Beth Krushinsky, Co-Chair
Lakes, Whyte LLP
604-984-3646
beth@lakeswhyte.com

FINANCE



Renata Drag, Chair
Edwards Kenny & Bray LLP
604-689-1811
rdrag@ekb.com



Mirela Gakovic, Co-Chair
Farris LLP
604-684-9151
mgakovic@farris.com

LITIGATION TECHNOLOGY & eDISCOVERY



Tracy McBride, Co-Chair
Miller Thomson LLP
604-628-2899
tmcbride@millertomson.com



Shauna Sigurdson, Co-Chair
Lawson Lundell LLP
604-685-3456
ssigurdson@lawsonlundell.com

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT



Maral Angha, Chair
Cassels Brock & Blackwell LLP
604-691-6100
mangha@cassels.com



Julie Wettstein, Co-Chair
Farris LLP
604-684-9151
jwettstein@farris.com

MARKETING



Sara Habibovic, Chair
MLT Aikins LLP
604-682-7737
shabibovic@mltaikins.com



Alex Shelley, Co-Chair
Harris & Company LLP
604-891-2203
ashelley@harrisco.com

HUMAN RESOURCES



Lorin Birnie, Chair
Virgin Law Group
604-633-4252
lbirnie@virginlawgroup.com



Marie Haughian, Co-Chair
Stikeman Elliott LLP
604-631-1478
mhaughian@stikeman.com



Natalia Yan, Co-Chair
Miller Titerle + Company
778-653-2806
Natalia@millertiterle.com

SMALL FIRMS



Susanne Tholl, Chair
Lakes, Whyte LLP
604-984-3646
Susanne@lakeswhyte.com



Kathleen Brett, Co-Chair
MEP Business Counsel
604-891-1153
kbrett@meplaw.ca

LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT



Kayleigh Hansen, Chair
Poulus Ensom Smith LLP
778-727-3504
khansen@peslitigation.com



Amy Sobels, Co-Chair
Jenkins Marzban Logan LLP
604-895-3000
asobels@jml.ca

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY



James McIntosh, Chair
Harris & Company LLP
604-684-6633
jmcintosh@harrisco.com



Kevin Bahng, Co-Chair
Lawson Lundell LLP
604-685-3456
Kbahng@lawsonlundell.com



Gurmukh Ghag, Chair
Farris LLP
604-684-9151
gghag@farris.com

FRASER VALLEY SUBSECTION



Cheryl Scott, Chair
CBM Lawyers LLP
604-533-3821
cscott@cbmlawyers.com



Tim Wurtz, Co-Chair
Baker Newby LLP
604-792-1376
twurtz@bakernewby.com

BCLMA ADMINISTRATION

Jane Kennedy
Administrator & Membership Services
604-988-1221
info@bclma.org

Heather Orchison
Administrative Assistant
604-315-2087
general@bclma.org