



March 2018

BENESCH LAW OPS

Current Issues from a Law Firm that Understands Business Operations

Data-Driven Preparation Makes the Difference



Jeanne Hammerstrom

It's an overwhelmingly data-rich world we live in, but the key to any successful meeting, presentation or business opportunity is get to the *useful* data that can help you prepare properly.

Some of the ways we do this at Benesch includes business intelligence tools that give us background information on companies—their board members, SEC filings, pending lawsuits, patent applications and so on. We also leverage our data by keeping up on news regarding our clients, their industries and even their competitors. These web-based tools have been very helpful, and we've even put them in the hands of our lawyers, who we know always love to be prepared.

In addition to these public-facing tools, remember there is a wealth of rich data within your own companies. Your financial and accounting information is important to understanding where your company stands, who your clients are, and where there may be opportunity for growth in the business. Also, know where your company contacts reside, including “who knows whom”—who within your company knows whom within the businesses and networks of your clients, prospects or referral sources. This, too, can lead to great business opportunities and relationship building internally and externally.

Finally, know the strengths, expertise and background of your own people. Who can help

continued on page 2

Project Management Best Practices for All



Bob Thorne

I've had the great fortune to be a technology project manager for over a decade with focused experiences in mid-market professional services organizations (first financial services and now my third year in legal). In that time, I have developed a few best practices to balance the framework fundamental concepts of project management (PMP, CAPM, etc.) with real-life lessons learned. I wanted to share a few of those best practices, in the event you're working with a project manager or have been tasked with leading a project yourself and wondering how to get started.

Lead With Strategy, Not Technology—There are numerous good ideas out there, but what makes a good idea great is one that fits “you”: your firm's size, needs and goals. Be careful not to start with a solution, and look for a problem later. Instead, understand the business needs from the stakeholders, and even question the symptoms creating the problems in the first place. Not only will this lead to a more accurate project scope, but you'll also be able to better evaluate potential solutions while still adhering to your firm's framework, security and governance.

Get To Know The Front Line—Talk to the personnel who would be directly impacted by the new project and understand how they do their work today (likes, dislikes, suggestions), since they may add another perspective to what stakeholders have already provided. Observe, and ask questions: If something is done a certain way 9 out of 10 times, ask how & why the tenth is done differently. This type of input now will help reduce change requests later.

Everything is Negotiable—Vendors want to sell products; clients want value. So if you think you've found the right solution, make the result a partnership in value for both sides. Negotiate what fits you and sells the value to your firm/colleagues. For example, does the licensing model fit your implementation plans? If you're starting with a core/pilot group while still proving value, question a contract that requires you to purchase 100% of licenses on Day One. Likewise, if the vendor is doing the install and configuration as T&M (time and materials), how do you stage gate to control costs and assure no scope creep? How do you make sure the vendor also has appropriate controls to alert you when things go out of scope? Perhaps, request some payment terms that align with delivery milestones. You can even combine the two, such as requesting Year One licensing be stretched across 16 months, giving you time to ramp the value and complete training. In the end, what is good for you is good for them.

Focus on Iterative and Visible Progress Points—Not only are the stakeholders who are paying for the project going to want to see results, but they may also request changes as business strategy and markets evolve. Therefore, work with the vendor to figure out how to show some iterative (small and incremental) progress as you go, up to and including inviting the stakeholders to walk through some early beta versions. Designing in a vacuum is a recipe for disaster, as the target may have shifted

continued on page 2

Creating a Culture of Introductions



Liz Gillmore

We all do it. We get on the elevator with someone we believe is a colleague, but we don't know the person's name, office or department, or how long he or she has worked here. So we start looking at our phone and hope the moment passes quickly.

Being new and learning the lay of the land in a new office can be challenging. Since I've joined the firm, I have had many long-term Benesch team members say that they are challenged with knowing who people are because we have had such a dynamic growth over the last year. Our growth is amazing, but it can pose a risk to the tight relationships we have as a firm. So, to address this, as many companies have this issue, I'd like to suggest that you create a *Culture of Introductions*.

That sounds fancy, doesn't it?

It's really just a simple practice of introducing yourself to someone new, whenever and wherever you see that person. As I've walked around our offices, I've tried to introduce myself to every new face I see. I have been surprised at how many people shake my hand, offer their first name, and then keep moving. This leaves me wondering 'Which Matt did I just meet? And what area or office is he from?'

Get to know your colleagues—you're a team and the most important assets of your company! Introduce yourself: your first *and* last name, what group you are a part of, and maybe which office you work in, if you are visiting from another office.

I'll start: Hi! I'm Liz Gillmore, I'm the Chief Human Resource Officer, and I'm located in the Cleveland office.

Now, it's your turn!

For more information, contact **LIZ GILLMORE**, Chief Human Resource Officer, lgillmore@beneschlaw.com

Investing In Our Future



Laura Dutt

This spring, our Professional Development Department is launching a new program for our high-performing associates, "Future Leaders of Benesch." This program is dedicated to the leadership skill development of associates who are nominated by their practice group chairs and meet the following qualifications:

- 1) At least a 4th year associate
- 2) Consistently receive high marks on performance reviews
- 3) Demonstrated commitment to career development and to Benesch's core values
- 4) Involvement in community/civic initiatives through not-for-profit board participation, pro bono efforts and/or volunteerism. This nine-month program will provide high-level soft-skills training and development, one-on-one coaching, an opportunity to work collaboratively with other attorneys outside of the associates' practice group and office location, and interaction with firm leadership. Topics covered include: business etiquette, successful delegation, presentation skills and emotional intelligence, to name a few.

Future Leaders of Benesch is the firm's latest strategic initiative to support the development of our talented associates to ensure they have the tools to provide excellent service to our clients and to position them to be the next generation of leaders at Benesch.

For more information, contact **LAURA DUTT**, Chief Talent Officer, at ldutt@beneschlaw.com

Project Management Best Practices for All

continued from page 1

by the time you are ready. Things like "fail fast" are a good thing, giving you the ability to learn and adapt (and you ultimately deliver a better product). It also ties in nicely with standard change-management approaches.

Measure Project Adoption—As a project goes into pilot and then production, circular feedback is vital. I try to categorize any reported issues into one of three areas: people, process or technology. Are people trying to apply their original methods in new system? Has the process adequately covered all scenarios? Is there a gap in approach or technology feature set? Also, being proactive rather than reactive is crucial, as it's already hard enough driving change/adoption without the impacted personnel seeing problems but no obvious way to get assistance. From here, I simply put requests into "nice" versus "need" buckets. This makes it easy to determine if it requires immediate correction, or is just something that may be added downstream.

There is a lot more an experienced project manager/PMO handles, but the above should provide some insights on best practices in project delivery and engaging project leads for successful projects.

For more information, contact **BOB THORNE**, Senior Strategic PPM Analyst, at rthorne@beneschlaw.com

Data-Driven Preparation Makes the Difference

continued from page 1

you with a project, a business opportunity or a referral? Keep a database of their experience and the companies and industries they work in or have worked in previously.

We try very hard at Benesch to use the data available to us so that we have a better understanding of how best to serve clients. It's difficult at times to decide how much is too much, but it's better to have the information at your fingertips. As the saying goes, "knowledge is power." If you'd like to have a conversation about some of the web-based tools we use, feel free to contact me.

For more information, contact **JEANNE HAMMERSTROM**, Chief Marketing Officer, at jhammerstrom@beneschlaw.com

Benesch Welcomes Liz Gillmore and Brittany Haidet

Benesch is pleased to announce that Liz Gillmore and Brittany Haidet have joined the firm.



Liz Gillmore

Liz Gillmore joins Benesch as Chief Human Resource Officer. Previously Liz was Global Corporate Human Resources Director at the Sherwin Williams Company. While in this position she was responsible for leading the integration strategy to support the acquisition of The Valspar Corporation, including organizational design and strategy, change management, communications, systems integrations, value capture, policy alignment and employee engagement. "We are so fortunate to have Liz join our team. As we continue to grow, we need the appropriate management infrastructure to support the firm, and Liz will be key to this," said Gregg Eisenberg, Managing Partner. "Her vast experience in the human resources area is a great addition to our senior management team," he added. Liz received her Bachelor of Science degree from The Ohio State University with a concentration in human resources.



Brittany Haidet

Brittany Haidet joins Benesch as the firm's Legal Recruiting Manager. Brittany has extensive full-cycle recruiting and placement experience in growing organizations with multiple office locations. In her previous roles, she partnered with senior management to ensure essential roles were filled using the most effective recruiting strategies. Brittany will be working alongside our Chief Talent Officer to manage the recruiting and hiring process of summer associates and lateral hires. She has her SHRM-SCP professional certification through the Society for Human Resource Management, and she earned her bachelor's degree in business administration from Kent State with a concentration in marketing.

EVENTS

Business of Law Workshops for Ohio Law Schools

Join Benesch for one of our complimentary workshops on the business of law, presented by CFO/COO John Banks and CMO Jeanne Hammerstrom, followed by a networking cocktail hour, all designed exclusively for Ohio students.

Monday, April 16, 2018

4:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

200 Public Square

Great Lakes Room, Third Floor

Cleveland, OH 44114

*All northeast Ohio law students welcome

Thursday, April 19, 2018

4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

DoubleTree Suites by Hilton-Columbus Downtown

Cardinal Room, 1st Floor

50 S. Front St.

Columbus, OH 43215

*Designed exclusively for OSU Business Law Society members

For more information or to register for one of these workshops, contact **BRITTANY HAIDET** at bhaidet@beneschlaw.com

LMA Quickstart® - Legal Marketing Essentials

If you are heading to the 2018 Legal Marketing Association Annual Conference, check out John Banks' presentation *Law Firm Structure, Strategy and Economics* during LMA Quickstart®. The program is a case study of working in a team environment and the values of running a firm like a business.

Monday, April 9, 2018

9:00 a.m. – 9:40 a.m.

Hyatt Regency

New Orleans, LA