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# BENESCH LAW OPS

Current Issues from a Law Firm that Understands Business Operations

## Feedback is Key to Excellent Client Service



Jeanne Hammerstrom

Almost a dozen years ago, Benesch developed a formal client assessment program. Firm leadership believes this program is essential to our success in servicing our clients. The program includes a visit

by the Chairman of the Firm or a member of the Executive Committee and the Director of Client Service. The client's relationship partner helps to prepare for the assessment, but is not part of the meeting. This is so a client can talk openly about his/her experience with an attorney and his/her team. The majority of the assessments are done face-to-face, but there are times when a telephone assessment is conducted.

The main purpose for these assessments is to find out, how are we doing? What can we be doing better? Is there anything that other providers are doing that you want us to be doing? And the ultimate question, would you refer us to another potential client?

We've conducted approximately 300 of these assessments and have always found valuable information to not only continue to provide high quality service, but to hear the voice of our client and understand their challenges so that we can provide counsel and solutions.

If you would like to schedule a client assessment, please call Janet Speno at (216) 363-4501. We look forward to the discussion.

**For more information**, contact **JEANNE HAMMERSTROM**, Chief Marketing Officer, at [jhammerstrom@beneschlaw.com](mailto:jhammerstrom@beneschlaw.com)

## Is Security an Integral Part of Your Operations Toolkit?



Jerry Justice

A common misconception I see is that security (and privacy) are the realms of a technologist or designated experts, not necessarily integrated into operational design/delivery. This strategy can be shortsighted in today's cloud leveraged, agile-process focused, and information-based sharing economy. Given all the security breaches, dynamics of risk/compliance and complexity of service relationships (clients, vendors, service providers, personnel, outsourcing, etc...), this presents immense organizational challenges.

*Here are a few concepts in my toolkit...*

### It takes a village.

Foster relationship with primary stakeholders within your organization (privacy, legal, compliance, technology). They each have unique and valuable perspective on things we deliver. Leverage them. *I don't mean just get everyone in a room* but actually engage them to understand challenges or how they can assist you in more cohesive outcomes. Also, have an attorney with expertise in cloud/IP contracts so you can properly evaluate your contract risks (and the vendor). Contracts provide "tells" about the data handling and risk levels of a vendor.

### Educate yourself and colleagues.

There are common tenants and risk points in modern security frameworks. You do not need to be an expert to understand the impacts of when security breaks down... just watch your newsfeed. However, you do have an obligation to understand how security (or lack of), affects you and the services you deliver. Have coffee with a technologist or specific expert to gain insights/share challenges. One key to security is awareness. The more you know, the better prepared you are. Make security and privacy talks part of your discussion points because the challenges are not going away (i.e. – GDPR). Also, note... security and efficiency are two different targets; sometimes things take longer *because they should*.

### Raise your expectations (or your clients will).

Understand expectations around security and privacy early in any engagement process. Some participants will be behind (still a risk to you), some catching up (educate) and some you can learn from (opportunity). I can tell you "baking in" security as part of the overall process is much easier than "bolting" it on after (and much more effective).

**People, people, people** – In the end, like technology delivery, operational targets are about managing the impact around people and process. People can be your weakest link or strongest asset. It is one thing to design a process; it is another thing to get consistent adoption with how people use it. Be prepared to listen, learn, educate and adapt as you engage people. In the end, your message should also include *security is everybody's job*.

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### Become a data steward.

Like it or not we are in a data driven world. This provides immense opportunities (i.e. – AI) and introduces new risks. Most of the risk is due to data scale and accessibility. Learn about your data and the impact, from both your perspective and clients, so you can understand risk profile.

*In the end*, the goal is to evaluate risks and impacts early on as part of the process.

*Focusing on both efficiency and security* to create better product/service outcomes. This reduces risks and also increases collaboration across stakeholders.

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## Diversity & Inclusion

Diversity is critically important to Benesch and its culture. Hiring and retaining a diverse work force promotes and demonstrates our commitment to our firm's core value of being a valued and model member of the community. Creating a workplace where all individuals—regardless of race, gender, or sexual orientation—can develop professionally in a supportive, growth oriented environment, is paramount to our success and something that we focus on every day. In addition to being part of our core values, diversity is critical to our long-term success in the representation of our clients. Data has shown that diverse teams perform better and achieve better results, in part because they think more creatively and better reflect the values of the clients they represent. Benesch's Diversity & Inclusion Committee has developed a program that focuses on the three main aspects of Diversity: Retention, Inclusion and Recruiting.

**For more information**, contact **AMANDA MILLER**, Partner and Co-Chair of Benesch's Diversity & Inclusion Committee, at [amiller@beneschlaw.com](mailto:amiller@beneschlaw.com); **KAL SHAH**, Partner and Co-Chair of Benesch's Diversity & Inclusion Committee, at [kshah@beneschlaw.com](mailto:kshah@beneschlaw.com); or **LAURA DUTT**, Director of Talent Acquisition and Development, at [ldutt@beneschlaw.com](mailto:ldutt@beneschlaw.com)

## Benesch Again Named Top Workplace in Northeast Ohio



Mark Biddlestone

Benesch is proud to have earned a spot on two workplace recognition lists in 2017. In June, Benesch was ranked seventh out of fifty midsize organizations on the Cleveland Plain Dealer's 2017 Top Workplaces list. Companies were evaluated solely based on what employees had to say about where they work and for whom they work. Employees were asked to share their feedback regarding the direction of the business, transparency from the organizational leadership, workplace culture, compensation and benefits, and a myriad of other topics. This is the sixth time Benesch has made the list.

The second recognition came in August when the Firm was awarded a place on the NorthCoast 99 list for a milestone 15th year. NorthCoast 99 is an annual recognition program that honors 99 great workplaces for top talent in Northeast Ohio. The program focuses on great places to work for top performing people that drive results, provide competitive advantages, and allow businesses to innovate and grow. NorthCoast 99 is presented by ERC, the area's leading professional services organization dedicated to HR. Applicants are evaluated based on policies and practices related to the attraction and retention of top performers, as well as data collected from employee surveys. Benesch is very proud to be the only law firm to have earned this award for fifteen years.

Working in a law firm can be a challenge. It has been important for Benesch to grow an environment that keeps our employees involved and engaged in the strategic and day-to-day functions. An inclusive and open culture has been a major key to the Firm's success. Much of the feedback provided by our employees has praised the transparency from our Firm leadership in regards to financials, anticipated growth, and ongoing operational plans. Employees at all levels also have an opportunity to be a part of meaningful change. The spirit of continuous improvement falls on everyone to examine what their role is and how they can improve the service to both the internal and external clients. When the focus isn't on how the overall Firm can be enhanced, it is shifted to how we can further develop the employees. Benesch offers ongoing opportunities to attorneys and staff to develop their skill sets via Lunch and Learn meetings, formal training sessions, professional development seminars, and tuition reimbursement.

As both the modern workplace and legal industry continues to evolve, it has been imperative to adapt while keeping employees engaged and involved. Good communication, meaningful work, and a strong organizational culture has kept Benesch moving forward in a time of tremendous growth. By sustaining an environment that is welcoming and engaging, the Firm will not only adapt, but continue to thrive as a workplace and industry leader.

**For more information**, contact **MARK BIDDLESTONE**, Director of Operations and Human Resources, at [mbiddlestone@beneschlaw.com](mailto:mbiddlestone@beneschlaw.com), or **KAREN BUTLER**, HR Generalist, at [kbutler@beneschlaw.com](mailto:kbutler@beneschlaw.com)

## Client Account Services at Benesch



Julie Vaccaro

At Benesch, Account Services isn't just our version of accounts receivables; it's another opportunity to deepen our relationships with our clients. Each account is assigned to a specific Account Services Representative who then works closely with you and your Benesch attorney to understand you, your business, and your billing preferences. Working with the same Representative regularly provides dependability, trust, and an opportunity for us to anticipate your future needs.

Responsiveness is key, and we know that our ability to trouble-shoot and innovate is vital to making the invoicing and payment process a seamless one. Whether it's a quick request for a duplicate invoice or detailed reporting to assist

with auditing, our team works with you to provide the information that you need, when you need it.

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