



## #LMA21 Together – Focused – Forward

By Ioana Good

Sunrise yoga with the beautiful Atlantic Ocean in the background, yes, please!

With robust pre-conference programming, two keynote speakers, over twenty sessions from dozens of speakers, and well-being activities (I mentioned the yoga, right!), the 2021 Legal Marketing Association Conference offered valuable content and activities. Though smaller in attendance than in years past, everyone enjoyed being together again, mingling and learning in an intimate setting with a fantastic Florida coastal backdrop. The event took place at the Diplomat Beach Resort in Hollywood, FL, from October 22 – 24. There was also an option to attend virtually. Here are five takeaways.

Write!

This year, we heard from Keynote Speaker Neil Patel, one of the most influential digital marketing authorities, New York Times Bestselling Author, and Forbes Top 10 Marketers. Right off the bat, Patel told the audience that he hires lawyers based on authority content he finds online such as blogs, valuable articles, social media, and more. He joked that he does not hire attorneys by attending golf tournaments. LinkedIn and blogging remain the top two channels for communicating in the business world, followed by videos, social media, and infographics. Patel went on to say there are over one billion blogs, and Google indexes the freshest site. His advice? Write often and provide valuable content if you want to remain at the top of the search engines. Patel also suggested that law firms consider using tools

like Google Correlate to help potential clients before they need help and add a scheduling tool on law firm websites to book appointments with attorneys.

### Help Clients See Around Corners

Dr. Heidi K. Gardner, a Distinguished Fellow at Harvard Law School and co-founder of Gardner & Co., focused her presentation on delivering exceptional client-centric service in a high-performance culture and using innovative methods and tools to drive higher revenue and client loyalty. Over and over, Dr. Gardner said it is a given that attorneys are good at their job and responsive but what sets them apart is knowing the client's business and how industry dynamics will affect them.

Smart collaboration is critical in today's business culture. This is where experts get together and integrate their specialized knowledge to tackle more complex problems. Clients are becoming increasingly sophisticated, and they want to know that they can rely on attorneys for access to knowledgeable insights and advice.

What are the best ways to add strategic value? According to a GC survey conducted by Gardner & Co., here are the top results:

- 37% - Insights specific to your industry
- 29% - Perspectives from other businesses
- 14% - Connections within your business
- 12% - Knowledge from other countries
- 8% - COVID or recovery info

### Adapt to Changing Sales Cycles

The buyer persona is changing, and as legal professionals, we must pay attention and adapt. Erin Meszaros, Chief Business Development and Client Service Officer with Eversheds Sutherland, and Rory Channer, Chief Commercial Officer with BehaVR, LLC, compared how sales cycles changed in the past 12 years. The norm used to be that GCs had much more control but limited in legal operations and legal buying tools. Suppliers also engaged earlier in the process. Today, more decision-makers are involved, and there are more choices. More information is available and seamless supplier engagement.

The speakers noted that strategies are becoming much more complex, and it takes longer to develop key relationships. People can develop relationships via Zoom but meeting in person helps to solidify the relationship. The speakers talked about the importance of identifying the people in your business who are the most successful. Understanding what rainmakers look like will help build best practices and encourage a similar mindset and working behavior internally. Rainmakers have similar traits – they have high-levels of empathy, emotional intelligence, think about their clients first, and provide advice. The speakers also talked about the importance of checking in with their clients mid-way through an engagement and not only at the end. They provided an example where they checked in mid-matter and discovered several issues. Had they not done that and left it till the end, the client would have been unhappy and would not have come to them again.

Ask Not What Your Clients Can Do for You; Ask What You Can Do for Your Clients

In a presentation titled “Firms That Have Strong Corporate Citizenship Build a Loyal Client Following,” presented by Elle Walch with Ball Janik, Amanda Loesch with Porzio, and Morgan Ribeiro with Waller, the speakers focused on the natural disasters that took place on top of the pandemic. The panel walked the audience through the wildfires that burned twenty-five miles of land along the Cascade Mountain ranges in Oregon, devastating businesses, schools, and the entire community while in the middle of a pandemic. Walch explained how her firm stepped in to help those impacted by the fires and restore connectivity with other community leaders. Ribeiro talked about how Waller helped Tennessee residents with the recovery efforts from the deadly tornadoes before the COVID lockdown and later contributed to food banks in all six of their markets. Loesch talked about how Porzio assisted underprivileged communities and struggling businesses during the pandemic by offering pro bono services to the City of Newark. The firm also provided business and legal support to struggling local businesses in the area. Instead of traditional holiday gifts, the firm distributed a book written by New Jersey’s first African American Supreme Court Justice and donated to the Law Firm Anti-Racism Alliance on behalf of its clients.

By being proactive and doing good in their communities, these three law firms developed a loyal client following. Strategic communication and planning around these efforts also helped with recruitment, retention, cross-selling, and client loyalty programs, and as a result, they grew.

Go All In

The conference ended with Siri Lindley, the second keynote speaker, who brought everyone in the room to tears. A world champion triathlete and high-performance coach, cancer survivor, Lindley is known as one of Tony Robbin's favorite motivational speakers. She walked the audience through all her hardships and successes. For instance, it was difficult for her to tell her father she was gay, and at first, he did not take it well. She became a world champion triathlete after not knowing how to swim. She also was told that she had a five percent survival chance after discovering a rare genetic cancer. Lindley beat all odds and said "when you want great things to happen, you need to be all in! Not one foot in."

Ioana Good is a regular contributor to The Mid-Market Report and is the founder of Promova, an international communication, and PR agency. She is the co-chair of the LMA International Professional Advocacy Committee. She may be reached at [igood@getpromova.com](mailto:igood@getpromova.com).