

Membership Speed Dating Roundtable Notes

2018 NCBP Midyear Meeting

Feb. 2, 2018

Dues Structures

(facilitated by Bob Spagnoletti, Executive Director, DC Bar)

Louisiana (Mandatory Bar) – discipline is separate from the bar and the court sets bar dues. Member dues, section dues, discipline fees all on one statement, and it's all electronic. Sections still control all their own funds.

Pennsylvania (State Voluntary Bar) – bar dues waived after 75 years old. Members can join committees for free.

Connecticut (State Voluntary Bar) – First year is free; price is \$200-400 after three years; bar does require mandatory CLE.

Tulsa County Bar (Local Voluntary Bar) – First year is free; discounted dues for 1-3 years; \$220 per year after three years. Free live CLE (up to 72 hours).

Atlanta Bar Association (Local Voluntary Bar) – 6,000 members. Law students are free; membership dues top out at \$250. \$75 discount for CLE; sometimes 50% sale on dues for new customers.

Beverly Hills Bar Association (Local Voluntary Bar) – Free CLE (but charge for cost of food).

Houston Bar Association (Local Voluntary Bar) – Sections must prepare a separate budget each year and elect their own officers. Sections arrange food and space by themselves. For dues, 0-2 years are free; graduated increase to 10+ years, which is \$195. Government employees, judges and non-profit employees get a ½ price dues.

Marion County (Local Specialty Bar) – graduated dues structure for 0-3 years; 4-10 years; 10+ years; discounts for Government and Judicial employees.

Re-entry into the Profession

(facilitated by Sharon Lopez, President of the Pennsylvania Bar Association)

New York (Voluntary State Bar) –

- (1) Lawyers in Transition Committee – to give skills to anyone who's been out for a while or for whom being a lawyer is a 2nd career. Videos are available to members online.
- (2) Social connections are needed for people who have been out longer.

- Maggie Vath - maggie@vath@gmail.com

Military Spouse JD Network (Specialty Organization) –

- Often military spouses can waive bar dues temporarily while in jurisdiction.

- Pregnant women and women of young children may need accommodations during trials or hearings (bathroom breaks; nursing; etc.)
- Those trying to get back into the profession need social outlets
- CLE credits in jurisdictions requiring all credits to keep license active, or bring your license out of “freeze.”
- Provide different tracks in law firms to allow for part-time and more

Keeping Big Firm Members

(facilitated by Charles Eppolito, President-elect of the Pennsylvania Bar Association)

The biggest selling points of membership are (since big firms already offer CLE and other benefits):

- Meeting judges, adversaries and colleagues
- Annual networking events, receptions (especially judges – always important to big law)
- Assistance information, networking, referrals (especially for firms that aren't huge)
- Mentoring (sometimes attorneys in firms may not feel comfortable discussing certain issues with mentoring within their own firm)
- Bar Leadership opportunities
- Speaking opportunities for CLEs (get your name out there)
- Writing and publishing opportunities

An overall strategy to recruit from big firms, including ensuring joining/leaving big firms, is:

- Create a sense of Culture – more senior lawyers should communicate need or expectation to be involved in the bar.
- Bar Staff and Leaders should go to firms to give a pitch to join the bar.
- Send letters to lawyers joining firms, or leaving firms, promoting the bar and inviting them to join.
- Create relationships with managing partners or decision makers:
 - o Annual lunches and discussions
 - o Share issues, solutions, ideas
 - o Can also do theme-based meetings (e.g., technology)
 - o Share success stories
 - o Share disaster stories and learn from them
 - o Identify key people and show them respect

100% Clubs:

- Discounts to members of big firms to join if 100% membership
 - o One model is to target associates
 - o Publicize firms that 100% membership; give them recognition
 - o Tap into the competition mentality

Miscellaneous:

- Flat rate to government agencies (give them a discount) - \$X,000 for entire office.

Diversity & Inclusion / Pipelines / Affinity Engagement

(facilitated by Lisa Loo, Past President of the State Bar of Arizona)

Houston (local voluntary bar):

- 33 community projects geared to every school district. Not designed to produce lawyers, but to expose students to the legal system.
 - o Example: The Juvenile Mock Trial Program – has been in existence for 40 years; 6-week program/one day per week, culminating in a mock trial.
 - o Effectiveness is measured by teacher evaluations

Bars and Technology

(facilitated by Kate Conyers, President-elect of the Women Lawyers of Utah)

Content to members:

- One attendee recommends “constant contact” – mainly through automatic emails that cover activities, events, and useful relevant information. She also recommends sending out information about one event in several different messages
- Austin has a great program where they allow members to opt in to receive an email about upcoming trials for that week, including where the trial will be, the judge, and all attorneys.
- Many of the local, voluntary bars utilize e-newsletters
- Many of the mandatory state bars utilize weekly “e-Bulletins” with weekly events and then another one on Wednesday with CLE information. The key to these are to keep them short and sweet and to utilize links where members can get more information if they want (utilizing mail chimp)

Utilizing social media:

- YLD has its own SM accounts; some sections also have their own SM accounts
- Most bars use SM for important messages, announce events, and to highlight CLEs, pro bono opportunities and member spotlights, and to post photos from prior events
- Austin has a Feature 100 Club as a way to recognize its top law firms
- Best practices
 - o Bars should retweet, repost, and interact with members’ posts
 - o Presidents should have their own FB page to interact even more with members without having to be so formal; the Bar should assist with those messages and statements
 - o Use programs that help schedule SM messages to be more strategic about your individual and overall messages
 - o Create evites for all events/CLEs
 - o Don’t use SM to only announce events; publish articles helpful to members and/or thought-provoking topics
 - o FB something everyday

- Have dedicated staff for SM communication
- Have one general calendar for Bar that covers ALL sections and affinity groups
- Have a millennial chair the SM committee

Using technology and website to recruit and retain members:

- Have a referral directory (like Utah State Bar's Licensed Lawyer)
- At a minimum, have a member directory (possibly with advertising)
- Have free CLE for members to download
- Have free legal apps for members to download (such as fast case or casemaker)
- One attendee's bar has an Member App with a membership roster and calendar (it cost \$15-20K but he believes it was worth it)
- Have a brief bank for members
- Have a listserv