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Social Media 101: Takeaways for our Lawyer Friends Who Are New to Twitter
Karen Korr, San Diego County Bar
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NABECOMM18 Puts the O! in Omaha

The longest night of my life, I spent in Omaha, Nebraska.

That may not be exactly the teaser you expected from the Section Chair in the run-up to our annual Communications Section Workshop – this year to be held in Omaha on October 3-5. But hear me out.

It was 1990, and my wife and I were driving cross-country, from Chicago to San Francisco, where I was about to start law school. We gave ourselves a few days for what we thought would be a leisurely trek. As part of that laid-back ethos, I decided that we wouldn’t need motel reservations. Our plan was to stop somewhere near Omaha, then again near Salt Lake City, before finally rolling into the Bay area, refreshed and ready to law.

That trip – and law school later – taught me lessons about the foolhardiness of poor planning. Turns out traveling by the seat of your pants is cool and all, but it also means you may sleep in your car’s seat. Which is what we did. Somewhere, my elementary-school Scout leader shook his head in disappointment.

Cruising into Omaha on a warm August night, I was confident of our chances. Lining the freeway were national motel chains – plus a few we’d never heard of. It looked like a lodging-palooza. We thought our immediate future would be a check-in at a roadside lodge, followed by an unhealthy and delicious meal at a hometown diner. In other words, a pleasure.

But the first motel we stopped at – and then the third, fourth and fifth – dashed our hopes. “No vacancy” we were told over and over. Finally, a front-desk clerk decided it wasn’t enough simply to disappoint me – he thought a lecture was in order.

“How did you ever think you could get a hotel room without a reservation in Omaha in the summer?”

How, indeed? The earnest query, posed by an acne-faced adolescent in a clip-on tie, was a very good one – almost chamber of commerce-worthy. And it’s floated into my mind at least once a month ever since that night. The planners, I learned, are the cool kids.

I cannot explain Omaha’s scarcity of motel rooms in the summer of 1990. But I do recall the long night after we acknowledged defeat. I had always thought the seats of our 1986 VW Golf were comfortable, but a night of struggle trying to achieve REM in a semi-reclined state taught us otherwise. And because of area restaurants’ surprisingly short hours, our dinner – Chex Mix – was consumed there too.

Why do I tell you this? Because out of that experience, a planner was born. And I’m hoping that benefits all those who will attend the Communications Workshop.

NABECOMM18 will be in the same great city Kathy and I traversed, but our Section experience will be so much better. Thanks to the hard work of my Workshop Co-Chair Sam Clinch, of the Nebraska Bar, every detail has been considered. Our hotel – the Hilton Omaha – is a venue so terrific, I never would have imagined staying in it back in the day. The educational programming – devised by a committee led by Brandon Vogel – is guaranteed to inform and delight you. And our colleagues on the vendor and sponsor side will be there in force, due to the tireless commitment of Sponsorship Chair Carissa Long.
I am very excited to truly enjoy the River City (colleagues have asked me to stop calling it “The Big O” – whatever).

I hope to see you there.
NCWBA Develops Diversity Tools

The National Conference of Women’s Bar Associations (NCWBA) has developed two toolkits to make it easier for your bar to work to advance equality in the legal profession.

GOOD Guys (Guys Overcoming Obstacles to Diversity)

All too often when bar associations host programs about the value of increasing diversity in the legal profession, only “the usual suspects” attend: primarily women and lawyers of color. Majority males, perhaps remembering poorly-managed mandatory HR trainings of the past, may feel that they would be singled out or made to feel unwelcome. Or perhaps they think that the topics addressed don’t have any personal relevance to them. Frustration with this state of affairs led the NCWBA to develop a program called “GOOD Guys,” which stands for “Guys Overcoming Obstacles to Diversity.” The underlying premise is that there are men who work every day towards equality in the legal profession. There are also men who want to do the right thing but aren’t sure what practical steps need to be taken. It may be more effective for majority men to be the messengers about the value of diversity in the legal profession rather than hearing the same information from the perceived beneficiaries of changes in the status quo.

Although a GOOD Guys program can be adapted to the needs of any individual group, the basics follow the pattern established at the first GOOD Guys program, held at the 2016 ABA Midyear Meeting in San Diego, and include information about the business case for diversity, practical information about disrupting bias, and a moderated panel comprised primarily of men who have implemented steps to increase diversity in their own organizations. All men attending are recognized—sometimes with a ribbon for their nametag, sometimes just with a round of applause.

Since the initial program, GOOD Guys events have been held around the United States. To put on your own program, use the resources at www.goodguysinlaw.org. For assistance and to help the NCWBA keep track of use of the program, please contact goodguys@ncwba.org.

Diversity Rules

ABA Model Rule 8.4(g) was adopted in 2016 to make it professional misconduct for lawyers to engage in conduct that the lawyer knows or reasonably should know is harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, sex, religion, national origin, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status or socioeconomic status in conduct related to the practice of law. Although many states have implemented a similar rule either before or since the adoption of ABA Model Rule 8.4(g), for those which have not, the process can be challenging. The NCWBA has created a toolkit to assist states in exploring adoption of an anti-discrimination rule by introducing ABA Model Rule 8.4(g), providing quick access to key information, summarizing arguments for and against the rule, and providing a checklist and sample letter/proposal to get the process started. These resources are available at https://ncwba.org/programs/diversityrules/. For more information or assistance, contact diversityrules@ncwba.org
Keywords for Healthy Living Begin with Control

If anyone ever asked me what is the most important word when it comes to losing weight or keeping it off, that would be my answer: control.

Several other words come to mind, including determination, dedication, willpower, fear, exercise, faith, perseverance and patience. Experience has taught me the importance of simply hanging in there and never giving up, even on days when you have given in.

But at the end of the day, control is the key. Control is the thing that I didn’t have before I lost weight many years ago, it is the thing that has been missing whenever the pounds have crept back on, and it’s the thing that must be rediscovered in order to get back on track.

Several colleagues at the North Carolina Bar Association have done a phenomenal job over the past year in losing weight. I am so proud of them for taking control of their lives through smarter choices and a sustained commitment to achieving a healthier, happier lifestyle. Their success is not only inspiring, it’s contagious.

Although each has followed a different path, in every instance control has been a significant factor. They have taken control of what they eat and what they don’t eat. They plan ahead, they pick their spots, and they have stayed the course over the past several months and longer.

They've owned it.

Backsliding comes with the territory. I recall telling someone years ago that if I didn’t mess up, I'd weigh zero. That is, of course, an exaggeration, but the point is that no matter how much control we have, we’re still human. We’re still subject to the influences of stress, fatigue, adversity and any assortment of situations that arise through the execution of our daily lives.

Somedays our brakes just don’t work. That’s OK.

What is important is to learn to look forward and not back. What’s done is done. Whether yesterday was the best or worst day of your life, you’re not going to relive it. The only day over which we have any influence is today, and what we do with it will in turn influence tomorrow.

I like to look at this situation in terms of 15s. That is, whatever bite I’m about to take, it’s going to take me about 15 seconds to finish it. But how is that going to make me feel 15 minutes from now? Happy or sad? Satisfied or depressed? And what about 15 days from now, or even 15 years?

So no matter where your backsliding takes you, keep pumping the brakes.

Starting out or starting over, losing weight can be a miraculous journey. The transformation, no matter how great or small, can make a lifelong impact on the way you look and feel and live.
Lessons learned along the way will stick with you for the rest of your life. They don’t define you, but they do define what you are capable of doing when you put your heart and mind and soul into it. The benefits are immeasurable.

All it takes is everything, from believing in yourself to believing in the process. It takes determination, dedication, willpower, fear, exercise, faith, perseverance and patience.

And control.

Cherish it, respect it, and never take it for granted.
The Business of Blogging

Blogs might seem like “old news” when it comes to digital marketing, but even today, they remain an essential tool in effective content marketing. Not only do blogs help to drive content to your website, but they also position your association as a trusted source of information, assist in search engine optimization (SEO) and provide valuable content for building a powerful social media strategy.

In order for blogs to be effective, though, there’s one obvious trick: engagement with your members and the positive benefits to SEO come only when blogs are consistently updated with relevant, interesting content. With myriad demands competing for our attention each day, drafting a blog post can seem burdensome and unimportant, but it truly is critical to an effective content marketing strategy.

The Indianapolis Bar Association has been maintaining more than 20 separate blogs online since a member workgroup underwent a comprehensive review of the bar’s communication efforts and the needs of our members in 2012. This workgroup identified that positioning the bar as a trusted source of information in the legal community was a key factor in guaranteeing relevance in a changing legal marketplace.

Through some simple strategies to gain buy-in from members and plan regular content, our blogs have proven successful in creating a hub of information from members and in fueling our social media activity, with blog posts consistently serving as the greatest driver of engagement and traffic to our website.

Get Everyone on Board

Early on in our communications review, we identified that our members are the best source of content for blogs. Because we feature a blog for each of our substantive sections and demographically-based divisions, we further identified that the executive committees of each of these groups would be the logical key stakeholders in gathering content for their groups’ blogs.

It was important, however, to clearly communicate the value and benefit of blogs before asking our members to take time out of their busy days just to do one more thing for the bar association. Both at the onset of our new communications plan and each year thereafter, the bar’s content strategy is clearly explained at leadership retreats and section/division executive committee meetings. We further incentivize members by emphasizing the benefit to their practice, as their participation on the association’s blogs results in positive SEO for their firm/organization, positions them as an authoritative source in their practice area and provides them with an avenue for communicating with thousands of attorneys in the community.

Make it Routine

By setting realistic expectations, we’re able to maintain each blog and avoid stale content. Our goal for each blog is two posts per month. Many end up with more posts than this minimum requirement, but by having a tangible goal, it is much easier to gather content from members and generate content by staff when we lack member submissions.
Many of our groups have tackled the two posts per month goal by delegating the responsibility to their executive committee members. This ranges from creating a dedicated position on the committee to assigning each committee member a month out of the year during which they either draft blog posts or collect posts from other group members.

We’ve also publicized the opportunity to contribute content to the general membership of each group as a benefit of section/division membership. Committee members then review and approve any contributions from members of their group.

Another simple way to ensure consistent content is to build regular features into your content marketing strategy. The IndyBar maintains several regular features on our general association blog. These include weekly blog posts sharing upcoming bar events and best of the week/best of the month posts where we highlight blog posts that have been included on other section/division blogs on the site.

Make it Easy

It can be intimidating to be tasked with identifying content for your blog or blogs. However, most associations are rich with content opportunities that actually take very little effort to adapt into blog posts.

First, consider content that resides elsewhere. If you have a print publication, why not repost print articles on your blog? You can enhance a print article for online publication by adding additional photos and links to related websites. Repurposing content from old publications is also an easy way to almost instantly create a new blog post. Find an article from years ago and highlight it as “a look back.” Add a quick intro that reflects on changes from then to now and you’re all set!

Second, consider everything in your association as a source of information. One of the biggest sources of information that almost all bar associations have at their disposal is continuing legal education. There are a variety of ways to take an average CLE program and turn it into a number of potential blog posts: highlight a speaker, provide a sneak peak of the upcoming program, prime attendees with “what you need to know” before the program, recap the CLE, post the top five takeaways, share snippets of the printed material and photos of the attendees and speaker(s).

Third, be aware of the content that your members are already creating and sharing online. If you have members who blog regularly or routinely post information on sites like LinkedIn, simply ask them if they are interested in sharing this content with your association. Often, the request from the member is to include a byline with their firm information and a link back to their website or blog.
In the Spotlight: Alberto Rodriguez

How long have you been a member of NABE Comm:

I’ve been a member of NABE Comm for seven years—geez, time flies!

When you were a kid, did you dream of being a Bar Association Executive?

No, no I didn’t. However, I did dream of being a bar executive—only it was the kind you drink your sorrows away at or celebrate the job you got at the lawyer kind. I worked several years as a bartender thinking I’d be running my own night club someday. That’s everyone’s dream when they’re growing up, right?

If not, describe how you got to where you are today:

While I really did dream of owning my own nightclub/bar, my bigger dream was to be my own boss...period. I did just that at the end of 2007 when I launched Más Public Relations in Phoenix (at a swanky lounge at that). After two years of busting my behind for clients like Wells Fargo and Donor Network of Arizona, the economy started to tank and budgets were cut. My client and friend from Wells knew I might be looking for full time work and sent me the job posting for the State Bar of Arizona’s Communications Coordinator. Ugh. I bit the bullet and applied for the junior position. Lo and behold...here I am more than eight years later working at the State Bar as the Public Relations Manager.

What is the most rewarding part of your job:

I have to be honest ... when I first started at the Bar I was bored—out of my mind. Not only that, I didn’t fully understand why the Bar existed. However, once I learned that we were here to serve and protect the public, all sorts of light bulbs started to shine light on my purpose: help, help, HELP people. So, I developed—and partnered with—programs to do just that. Connecting the public with volunteer attorneys at the Annual Law Day Legal Aid Clinics, Abogados a Su Lado Phone Banks, and immigration forums, to name a few, are programs that make my job rewarding.

If you weren’t a bar executive, what would you want to be?:

I want to be my own boss—again. Perhaps opening a restaurant that serves my mama’s delicious Mexican dishes.

What is your greatest accomplishment?:

While at the Bar, my greatest accomplishment is having launched access to justice programs for the Spanish-speaking community, including Abogados a Su Lado (Lawyers on your side) phone banks with Univision and immigration forums and clinics with volunteer lawyers.

What makes you successful in your position?

PSA: The following is not an attempt to butter up my boss.

I believe that I am the reason I am successful at the Bar. I have a drive to succeed that helps me accomplish what I set out to do. And here’s where my boss comes in ... he’s given (most of) my ideas the green light, which has helped me grow personally and professionally. I’m
lucky to have a boss and work for an organization that fosters and nurtures its employees’ success!

**What's your favorite website or app?:**

For work: I’m a news junky, so my go-to websites are CNN and Washington Post (sorry, not sorry). I also frequent wordreference.com when I need to double-check my traducciones.

Personally: Photo apps, of course. My current faves are Quick and Typorama.

**Favorite quote:**

“Hard work is greater than lazy talent.”

**Favorite sports team:**

What’s a sports team?

**Any interesting celebrity sightings or run ins:** Shook hands with presidents Bill Clinton at a Hispanic leadership conference in 1999 and Barack Obama during his visit to Phoenix in 2015. Oh, I also thought I saw someone famous on a flight before...after racking my brain, it turned out he was a local attorney who buys tons of TV ads. HA!

**Favorite band/album/concert of all time:** Sade...All. Time. Favorite. Artist.

**Favorite Book:** Rain of Gold by Victor Villaseñor

**Favorite movie:** Coco is my NEW favorite movie. Disney did my Mexican culture right! Before it came out, Romy and Michele’s High School Reunion was my fave (judge me all you want)!

**Person you would most like to have dinner with (alive or dead):** Mother Teresa of Calcutta
Being Relevant

“Think before you speak. Read before you think.”

--Fran Lebowitz

It was my first NABE Comm Workshop. The place was Seattle. The year was 1985. I wrote a memo to my boss (the Dean of Bar PR Brad Carr), detailing all that I learned. It was written in long-hand on a yellow legal pad. It was handed to an assistant. The assistant typed it into a Wang word processing system.

That practice soon ended. The following year a Macintosh Plus--with 1/64th of my iPhone’s capacity--landed on my desk. Typesetting became desktop publishing. I migrated from PageMaker to Quark to InDesign. I left an Apple shop for a Windows world and back again. I deserted WordPerfect for umpteenth versions of Word. I mailed news releases. I sent them via PR Newswire¹. You emailed news releases. Now you tweet them. You get the idea.

As such changes crawl through our workplaces, we are always acquiring new skills. I suspect we don’t give it too much thought. We adapt. We figure it out.

But I think we need to do more. We need to commit to being life-long learners. We need to be self-directed knowledge seekers. This month’s Harvard Business Review reports only 24% of employees are curious about their work. Really? How career stifling. How professionally dead ending. How boring.

If you are heading to NABE Comm, move out of your comfort zone. Social media mavens hit the print track. Marketing types hit a media relations presentation. Jack of all trades in your role? Add another one. Burst and move beyond your bubble.

Figure out how to understand an audit report.² Read your organization’s bylaws. Know the difference between a 501©(6) organization and a 501©(3).

Go beyond your organization. Go beyond the bar community. Go beyond the association world. Yes, by all means, read NABE News, Bar Leader Weekly, and Association News. But don’t limit yourself. Check out Forbes or Inc. or Entrepreneur. Follow HBR on Twitter.

Your next great idea just might be sparked.³

Make the time to read. Grab a book from the “Business Section” like Adam Grant’s Give and Take. Keep it at your desk. When you’re eating that leftover Thai takeout, read the book. Use tape flags. Highlight.⁴ Share your “aha” moments.

Heck, start a reading group at the office.⁵

If you are hiring, ask candidates, “tell me about what you’re reading and whom you follow on Twitter.” You will learn a great deal.⁶

Be curious. Ask questions. Read. You will be a better whatever you are now and position yourself to be a better whatever is next.

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¹ Yes, I haven’t personally sent out a news release in a very, very long time. I do remember the terms lede and slug.
Numbers aren’t natural to communicators, or we would be in the A&F Section. I get that. However, knowing the numbers and the letters gives us a higher valuation.

“Hamilton” the musical was inspired by Lin-Manuel Miranda’s beach reading of the 800-page biography Hamilton. Not exactly the kind of book you would ascribe to a musical theater type.

I always have to two to be read piles. They are in two different rooms. One for professional development and one for the pure joy of fiction and of biography although they aren’t mutually exclusive.

Nice idea in theory. In practice, it is harder than it sounds. Trust me.

One of the worst hires I ever made couldn’t answer the interview question, “Tell me about the last book that you read.” The job was a position that required lots of writing. Lesson learned.