



AND THE ART OF LEGAL NETWORKING

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INSIGHTS & COMMENTARY ON
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Change is Not Just a Six Letter Word: CLOC Urges Lawyers to Put Ideas in Action

BY LINDSAY GRIFFITHS ON MAY 23, 2017



At the recent [CLOC Institute](#), Connie Brenton, CLOC President & CEO, along with Chief of Staff/Director of Legal Operations for NetApp gave us a challenge:

“

Stop thinking about how we can fit into the world around us. Start thinking about how we can *change* the world around us.”

For many of us, that change has started with sharing what we heard at CLOC with our own corners of the legal ecosystem, and keeping that drumbeat for change sounding. While I plan to recap some of the key sessions I attended, I first wanted to share with you some of the excellent articles that have come out following the conference, which should be further galvanizing the legal industry.

Head of Legal Ops at Google Shares Her 2017 CLOC Institute Closing Remarks

I've said before that Connie Brenton is a powerhouse, and she well-complimented by the indomitable [Mary O'Carroll](#), fellow CLOC board member and Head of Legal Operations at Google, Corporate Counsel. O'Carroll was an equally tireless force throughout the conference, and her [closing remarks](#) were the icing on the cake for change. I urge you to read them in their entirety, but a few important points stand out:

- Change isn't something that's happening in the future; it's here, now. And that's evident by the extraordinary growth that the organization has achieved in the last year alone.
- Creating connections and relationships across disciplines within this industry is how real, sustainable change will be achieved. Along with being vulnerable about our depth and breadth of knowledge and expertise. Those who attended the event understand that at their core, and it's up to them to translate it for the rest of the industry.
- Legal ops is thought of as the "intersection of people, process and technology" – but change is all about people. Sometimes, the barriers to change can seem so huge and insurmountable, but when you push back on them just a little bit, they crumble fast. Don't be afraid to push back.
- More on fear: Don't be afraid to think big. To work together. To work hard. To fail.

Takeaways From CLOC: What Happened in Vegas Won't be Staying in Vegas

CEO of Legal Executive Leadership and former GC for Association of Corporate Counsel, [Susan Hackett](#) was in the audience for CLOC and as an agent for change herself, she provided her [takeaways](#) from the conference to Corporate Counsel magazine. As I read her article, I found myself nodding my head in agreement over and over, and agree especially with her comment that "the meeting's overarching themes [will] help you see why the institute will not conclude with the closing session." She goes further to say that:

“

The impact of this meeting and its call to action for change will carry forward for some time and hopefully, with great impact. The only question now is not whether, but how you and your colleagues in law departments, law firms, legal service providers, law schools and bar regulatory entities will respond in the coming days and years.”

Take a close look at her comments, and identify how you and your colleagues will choose to respond to this call for change. Some of her key takeaways include:

- **“Takeaway: Technology is inspiring and is doing amazing things: so what?”** – Technology will help make things more efficient, but unless you are using it to solve a business problem, you’re focused more on the “golf club” and less on the “swing” to use one provider’s analogy. Start always with the problem you’re looking to solve, and then look for if and what can help you solve it.
- **“Takeaway: Get over the “lawyer/nonlawyer” bit. We’re a team, dammit.”** – This was a favorite of pretty much everyone in the room. And it came from Lucy Bassli, who is herself, an in-house counsel. But it’s now really time to get past the caste system system, and as Hackett points out “[law firms] will pay increasingly higher costs in terms of value in the marketplace the longer they and our legal regulatory systems continue to mess up by creating false dichotomies between those who service clients in the legal marketplace.”
- **“Takeaway: We’re tired of talking; it’s time to act.”** – This is, of course, the obvious one, and there are already initiatives in the works to institute the change that is being discussed. So how will you be a part of it?

CLOC Interview: Susskind Discusses Tomorrow’s Lawyers

I had the pleasure of meeting [Jennifer Brown](#), Managing Editor of Canadian Lawyer InHouse and Law Times during the CLOC conference, and she writes [an excellent piece](#) covering legal futurist and author Richard Susskind’s remarks during the conference. She mentions some of the same takeaways that I pulled out in my recap post, but fills in the context, including the following:

- We’re now moving out of the “denial” stage of disruption, as most legal industry players recognize that change is here and isn’t going anywhere. The next stage is re-sourcing, which aims to lower the cost of legal services through “outsourcing, offshoring or setting up low-cost legal resource centers,” among other opportunities.
- The third phase sees technology taking on more tasks that would historically be done by humans, and that’s where Susskind asked “do you want to compete with machines or build the machines?” Rather than lawyers resisting these changes because they’re concerned about unemployment, they should reframe this as a time of “redeployment.”
- This growing reliance on technology means that firms will increasingly need legal technologists in-house to help use these tools effectively.
- In line with the theme of the conference, Susskind identified the most successful law firms as those who stop talking, and just start doing. They are driven by innovative leadership. But he recognized that demand must come from the market for widespread change to take place.

Report from the CLOC Institute: A Measured Approach to Artificial Intelligence

Thomson Reuters Legal also reported from CLOC, from another of my favorite sessions, this one on the Practical Applications of AI. [David Curle](#), the Director of Market Intelligence, pulls together the highlights of this session, which featured a panel with moderator Paul Lippe of Elevate and panelists Mary O'Carroll of Google, Steve Harmon of Cisco, and Sylvie Stulic of Electronic Arts.

We've talked about AI here a LOT on Zen, and the same themes emerged from this panel that I've heard everywhere else (which is reassuring). Curle covers the essentials in his article, but I'll start with my favorite quote from the session, which was "It's only AI when you don't know how it works; once you know how it works it's just software." Keep in mind that there was a time when the telephone was a newfangled object of technology to be feared and loathed, and now we carry an internet-connected phone in our pockets all the time. The highlights from Curle's post:

- As we said earlier, start with the problem, not the tools. You will definitely remember hearing this from [the AI panel](#) I attended at the Legal Marketing Conference in April.
- There are two major categories of work when it comes to AI and lawyering – one of these has to do with managing, which is more task-based type of work, and the other is performing, which gets into some of the areas that make lawyers a bit nervous (like predictive outcomes). Starting with management problems can be a good way to make some processes more efficient and get comfortable with AI, without being too threatening.

Take some time to read these excellent summaries of the conference/some great sessions and identify how you can contribute to the change that's happening in the legal industry.