

Unlocking Success in Legal Marketing: Insights from LMA's Annual Meeting in San Diego

What are the secrets of rainmaker success? At the Legal Marketing Association's annual meeting in San Diego, a panel of esteemed women lawyers shared invaluable insights into networking, business development, and personal growth within the legal industry. The program was entitled "Making it Rain: Developing Women Rainmakers," for which I was delighted to moderate four trailblazers in the profession: Jess Heim from DLA Piper, Janice Brown from Meyers Nave, Susan Eandi from Baker & McKenzie, and Palmina Fava from Vinson and Elkins.

Not only are Jess, Janice, Susan, and Palmina exceptional lawyers, but their guidance on developing business and cultivating networks was incredibly valuable to the audience of 100-plus legal marketers from around the country. Together, they offered practical advice and inspiring anecdotes, highlighting six key strategies for success.

1. Authenticity as a Magnet for Opportunities

The panelists agreed that finding the types of business development activities that feel right to you, not those prescribed as the only way to do things, is essential. They also supported the idea that women need to be comfortable in being themselves in their day-to-day work. Janice emphasized the importance of authenticity in professional interactions. She noted that while women often face unique challenges in expressing their true selves in the workplace, authenticity is essential. "Being authentic is not always easy, but it's really

important. Authenticity is a sticky tape. It's what keeps people coming back to you." She encouraged professionals to find courage, embrace individuality, and let their inner selves shine.

2. Continuous Learning and Proactive Engagement

Susan stressed the value of continuous learning and proactive engagement. "I think the most important thing for junior lawyers is to be responsive, to be reliable, and to show that you're committed to the team," said Susan. She advised junior lawyers to seize every opportunity to learn and contribute. Susan also advocated for leveraging marketing professionals within firms to maximize outreach efforts and stay abreast of industry trends.

3. Boldness in Advocacy

Palmina shared her experiences of advocating for herself and embracing boldness in professional situations. She highlighted the importance of advocating for meaningful work assignments and not being afraid to speak up when witnessing potential problems in a case. She also emphasized the power of social media, particularly LinkedIn, in building a professional brand and network. She summed up her thoughts by saying, "You have to be your own advocate. You have to raise your hand and ask for the work or seek it out affirmatively. It doesn't just come to you."

4. Finding Joy and Purpose in Work

The panelists collectively emphasized the importance of finding joy and purpose in one's work. Susan highlighted the value of finding areas of the law that you are good at and at which you have a passion. Yet she also pointed out that it's essential to have activities that bring joy outside of work, such as exercise groups or classes. Janice emphasized the significance of maintaining a growth mindset and developing habits that lead to personal and professional fulfillment.

5. Building Meaningful Relationships and Networks

When talking about building client relationships, Jess remarked, "One thing I do is try to learn as much as I can about their business so that when I do talk to them, I can actually provide some value." The role of building meaningful relationships and networks in business development was heard throughout the session. Jess shared other examples of how investing time in understanding clients' businesses and needs can lead to long-term partnerships and referrals. She encouraged lawyers to reach out to contacts within their industries and maintain connections even if they do not immediately result in business opportunities.

6. Leveraging Firm Support and Resources

The panelists underscored the importance of leveraging firm support and resources in business development efforts. Susan emphasized the need for firms to support and encourage a growth mindset among their lawyers. She also highlighted the importance of firms listening to their lawyers' voices and taking concrete actions to promote diversity and inclusion. These phenomenal women's insights offer a roadmap for legal professionals seeking to enhance their marketing and business development strategies. By embracing authenticity and continuous learning, women lawyers (and marketers) can grow in new ways and deepen their relationships. Advocating for oneself and finding joy in work is essential in moving forward. By following the group's advice, women lawyers and marketers can unlock new opportunities and achieve long-term career success. ■

—Deborah Farone

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