



We Care

This is a different kind of *Bar Journal* article. It is written to the staff of the State Bar of Michigan. Bar members, you are invited to listen in.

The birth of this article took place at the conclusion of an extensive consultation process with Right Management Consultants. We asked them to provide assessments about how we as a staff could understand our behavior styles and how we could work together to serve our members in greater ways.

I appreciate each and every one of you for your openness to the process. The consultation included 360 evaluations of leadership,

Myers-Briggs, Brinkman, and DISC evaluations. Our attitudes and approaches to service and team building were laid open for the sole purpose of helping us be of greater service to all 36,000+ members of the State Bar of Michigan and the public we all serve.

No one needs a consultation to know people are different. We as a staff have different approaches to life formed by varying life experience and behavior styles.

Think of it this way. We marry our spouses hopefully because we love them and respect them and despite our differences have more to draw us closer than to separate us, yet it is not always an easy ride. Differences are not only to be expected, they are a given.

Let's multiply that dynamic of two people in love and extend it to 66. All of us are drawn together by a common goal of service and personal job satisfaction, and yet we feel both blessed and at times challenged by having to get along with folks not exactly like us. Can't everyone just be like us?

I have revised a famous song from "My Fair Lady" to illustrate the point:

A Revision to "A Hymn to Him"

Why can't others be more like me?
I am so honest, so thoroughly square;
Eternally noble, historically fair;
Who when you win will always give
your back a pat.
Why can't others be like that?
Why does everyone do what others do?
Whenever you're with me, you're always
at ease.
Why can't others behave like me?
I am so friendly, good-natured and kind;
A better companion you never will find.

To all of our staff, here is my promise to you: To do all I can to help provide a meaningful place to work, helping you to help lawyers in every way possible, so that they in turn can help our society with their legal needs.

All of us, however, need to stay focused on this fact: it is not about us. It is about those we serve. To provide better service, all of us must do our part to help each of us reach our full potential.

All in all, it is about fostering a trusting, team-orientated, friendly environment that promotes competence, great attitudes, and innovative ways to help our lawyers in the way THEY want to be helped.

We answer to many constituencies. At times most of them agree. At times they may be poles apart. The Supreme Court, Legislature, Board of Commissioners, Representative Assembly, Executive Committee, Bar presidents, sections, committees, trial lawyers, non-trial lawyers, and citizens of the state, all in one way or another look to us to be competent, ethical, professional, and friendly in our dealings with them. At times, they do not agree on what that means. Fun, huh?

If it were easy, it would not be this important. If it were easy, it would not offer each of you the chance to make an important difference in such an important part of our democracy.

It is my belief that our very democracy is held together by the glue of a diverse, strong, independent judicial system composed of officers of the court, lawyers.

I ask of you tolerance of my shortcomings and help to correct them and even make up for them. With all of us working together to help each other we all can grow professionally and grow in our ability to be of help to those who pay our salaries. I will try to do that for

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you and I ask the same of you toward each other. I hold you accountable to do so. You can count on the fact that I have even more folks holding me accountable.

Though our own happiness and feeling of self-fulfillment at work affects our service, in the long run it is not about you, it is not about me. It is about strengthening our profession, helping our lawyers.

If we succeed at that, which I believe we are doing and will do more each day, then our need for job satisfaction and fulfillment will inevitably follow.

John Woodin, the famous UCLA Basketball Coach says, "Don't let that which you can't do hinder what you can." We do the very best with what we have.

There are no excuses for us at 306 Townsend Street. From that perspective it is "all about us," despite the imperfections of those imperfect human beings around us (whether our bosses or co-workers). Each of us can get better and have fun doing it.

I thank you for what you have done so far. Together we can help create an even better Bar!

As my title suggests, we do care. The Board cares, evidenced by providing the opportunity for us to look at ourselves. The management team cares to hear from you on what we can do better. You have shown how much you care by welcoming an increasing opportunity to use your skills. Most importantly, our members care about how their hard-earned dues money is spent.

I once told someone that no matter how difficult the issue, how tough the challenge, we could have fun in all we do.

I will admit, when someone is angry at me for something done or undone, it is hard to say it is a fun moment, but it is even in those moments that we can learn from others and use it as a constructive opportunity for growth.

So let's serve each other well, our members well, and have fun doing it. God Bless. ◆