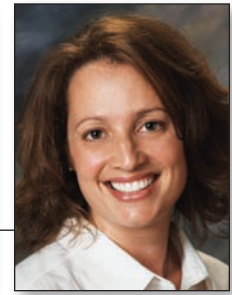


MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORS

Musings on Three Very Meaningful Words, Part 3

By Jeff Scalzi & Melissa Hoff



He Said

I'm of an age now where the word Reunite (and derivatives thereof) brings mixed feelings. Reunion, for example, as in my 20th high school reunion last summer equals parts dread, curiosity and excitement. It invokes the usual suspects in the feelings department. As The Clash sang so memorably in that era, I asked myself, "Should I stay or should I go." Then there is the myriad of reunion tours of bands from the past, some distant (or too distant, with apologies to The Who) and some not so (when did Blink 182 break up in the first place?)

Now, we come together in Denver at the LMA Annual Conference, and we Reunite as an industry—one that is slightly bruised, even a little gun-shy, but still unified in a common purpose. No, we are not merely here to ensure that our firms' profits per partner remain unscathed by the battered-but-improving economy (that's a result, perhaps, but not our purpose). Today, our mission remains as clear as it ever was: to continue to elevate the legal marketing industry by demonstrating thought leadership, creating and perfecting best practices, and driving innovative and creative solutions that accelerate our own professional development and help differentiate our firms in a very crowded marketplace.

I knew that this year's Annual Conference would be top-notch as soon as the American Conference Institute called me last summer and asked my opinion about this annual event. What topics would I like to see covered? What formatting changes might improve the conference? Never one to miss an opportunity to opine, I shared my thoughts as the researcher listened and took notes. I hung up from the call and thought, "Wow. One more barrier caused by the 'cobbler's kids' syndrome has been removed." After all, we all fall victim to not practicing what we preach given the demands of our jobs, right? Isn't what ACI did so brilliantly simply akin to our client interview and feedback programs? We implore our lawyers to let their clients see them early and often, to live in their clients' world. Thanks to ACI and the many LMA staff and volunteers who have worked tirelessly to produce the 2010 Annual Conference, we have all had our say. And we collectively have demonstrated once more that we can and will get it right.

As you must know, I drink the LMA Kool-Aid and have for many years. Members of my family have been known to cite LMA as my employer, and not my law firm. To me, it all combines for one, big invigorating experience. So grab your glass of Kool-Aid, and let's toast to LMA and to Denver. Reunited, and it feels so good. Oh, and as for my 20th high school reunion, I did go, and had one of the most memorable nights of my life.

Jeff Scalzi, 212/768-6914, jscalzi@sonnenschein.com

She Said: Reunite

As I write this, I'm watching the 2010 Winter Olympics taking place in Vancouver, B.C. Of course I'm always struck by the obvious—the skill, the speed, the dedication and commitment of the athletes to their chosen sport—but I'm also struck by the sense of unity and camaraderie. It's moving to hear the roar of the crowd, to see competitors show grace and sportsmanship, to watch teammates celebrate a victory, or to watch parents tear up as their child realizes a dream come true.

Perhaps what I've noticed during this Olympic season is a palpable sense that people around the world needed to connect—through sports, through competition, through celebration and through disappointment. Even when the stakes are high and when the thinnest of margins differentiate the winners and losers, there is a spirit of kindness, sympathy and support. This is what defines the Olympics—people set aside their differences and focus on what they have in common, and how they are united.

In a climate of change and uncertainty, we seek continuity. On the heels of the devastation in Haiti, and with continued uncertainty about the economy and job growth, we are reminded that circumstances change and security is fragile; nothing is guaranteed. To mitigate our risks of instability and unpredictability, we seek connection. We help an out-of-work friend to network, we look for opportunities to connect with industry colleagues, and donate our time and money to the global communities that need our support.

Life (and especially business) can feel like a zero-sum game in which there are winners and losers, those who succeed and those who don't. Occasionally we are reminded that, just as in sports, the difference between the two can be perilously thin. And that's when we begin to reunite. To rally around those who need encouragement and support and to bolster our own sense of community and a sense that "we're all in this together." We regain a sense of purpose and connectedness—or to put in LMA parlance, we recover, refocus and reunite.

Perhaps it's best illustrated by the logo of the Olympics: five interlinked circles. It's a nice metaphor for all of us. ■

Melissa Hoff, 425/822-5262, melissa@mbhstrategies.com