

MEMORANDUM

FROM: Experience Professionals Work Group

TO: Bill Chamberlain

RE: Experienced Professionals Programming at the 2011 Annual Education Conference

DATE: October 20, 2009

Mini-Conference Format:

- All agreed that dedicated, high level programming in a mini-conference format is a good idea and would be a draw to a future conference.
- All also agreed that holding the mini-conference within the confines of the existing conference (Wednesday or Thursday only) and with no extra fee should be a requirement.
- A few said that their attendance will still hinge on the state of the economy and internal (mostly firm) budgets.
- People are very busy, so the conference within a conference is appealing because it doesn't take extra time away from work. Also appealing because it's not an additional expense for extra hotel nights or a second registration fee.
- Strong interest in concurrent sessions where you produce something—others were less likely to attend sessions like this.

Speakers:

- Managing Partners and/or Deans
- Well-positioned and influential consultants (e.g. Hildebrandt or Altman Weil reps)
- Fellow EPs who are authorities in a given area/field – but not just the “usual suspects”
- Talking head only if someone NEW and at a very high level
- David Brookings (sp?) from HLS
- Not Ida Abbot – no offense but old hat
- Person/people with a universal perspective – not just national school/BigLaw employer-focused
- Frank Kimball and Jim Jones
- Prefer non-NALPers for plenaries—people who can bring something new to the table – we need “true experts.”
- For concurrent sessions—the NALPer/non-NALPer speaker issue--it would depend on the topic—others said they preferred non-NALPers.
- Werten Bellamy (diversity speaker at July 2009 Board Meeting)
- Someone who can talk about how older professionals can continue to add value and remain relevant

- Look first internally and if no one, then externally. Try to keep NALP costs down if paying an expert.
- Prefers a NALPer, but answer depends on the topic. For example, an outsider from another professional services field such as banking, accounting or consulting may be interesting because they can tell us what has happened in their industry and what they have done.
- Prefers a combination of NALP and non-NALP speakers
- Either - if an outsider, make sure they understand the audience and don't "talk beneath the level of the group"
- Hindi Greenberg would be a great speaker. She is a career counselor out of S.F. and wrote Lawyers Career Change Handbook.
- Kimm Walton would make us all laugh.
- Kathy Grant is a great speaker.
- Perhaps have a speaker from another professional services industry such as a recruiter at a big accounting firm such as Deloitte to talk about how they recruit & deal with pay (e.g. lockstep) and have faced changes in the market.

Formats:

- Likes interactive sessions.
- Likes a combination of presentations and group involvement.
- Likes a mix of individual presenters and panels.
- Suggests 1 or 2 concurrent blocks followed by a cocktail hour and dinner.
- No competing hot topic or EP programming during the concurrent blocks.

Topics:

With the caveats that most agreed that it may be difficult to know now what the burning topic will be for programming in Palm Springs in April 2011 and if we can even agree on one universally interesting topic, a number of common themes and possible topics (as well as things that were not appealing) were offered:

- Lateral partner evaluation/assessment, recruiting and integration
- Inspiring staff and students to embrace change and the uncertainties of our world and the Profession
- Developing a strategic marketing plan – big picture goal setting and drilling down with small group discussion and exercises so at the end of the half day the audience has a plan to take away (topic on school side could be something like marketing one's students to alternative career employers)
- Hear from the data collectors and evaluators (like US News, ABA, AALS) about how to report our #s – deferrals and the advent of US News' plan to rank firms gives this an employer and school resonance
- Forget the "Best Practices"-based sessions – rather, offer new ways of thinking about high level issues
- Cutting-edge models of approaching what we do, e.g. currently: Firms: Howrey Boot Camp or Day Pitney apprenticeship summer program model; Compensation models beyond lock step. Schools: 3rd year as purely clinical; shortened JD model

- One senior member said that there is nothing specific that she needs – the benefit of attending the conference lies with the opportunity to hob nob with colleagues. Take away: the mini conference should have a good quotient of small group discussion and interactions among colleagues
- Big/broad picture – not limited to viewing the profession and opportunities for students through the big firm lens. Programming that will help generate “job for my students”
- One person mentioned that we should look at what NACE did in their recent conference that Bill Chamberlin had reported to her as “fantastic.” What topics covered? What made the meeting/sessions he attended stand out?
- Explore curriculum at the Harvard Institute for topic ideas
- Strategies for staying ahead of and anticipating the next big trend and development in our profession – how to look around the corner to see what is coming. Resources to tap to identify and evaluate same. Issue spotting and solutions-based
- Most everyone clamors for brass tacks and highly substantive programming – “think tank” model not picked up on in these discussions
- Consider doing a simple survey of EP members asking, 1) What has been your biggest administrative challenge; 2) your biggest personnel challenge; and, 3) your biggest student/lawyer challenge – to tease out patterns and possible topics of common concern/interest – could build buy-in showing that the programming was designed for their interests/needs in mind
- Important that there be no conflicting “high level” concurrent sessions during the mini-conference.
- Would welcome the opportunity to have small group discussions with similarly situated colleagues on whatever the hot topics are at conference time. Right now that might be the impact of moving 2/3L OCIs to winter semester.
- Working on a problem in a think tank setting might be a good use of time if the focus were a problem currently impacting work, firm, students, and/or attorneys.
- Current topic of interest: Moving recruiting to the spring—can it work from both the student/school side and the firm side?
- How to get NALP members to the top tables to negotiate.
- How to be an agent for change / how to lead from the middle.
- How to take advantage of a good crisis.
- How do we bring passion to our jobs?
- Leadership is always a relevant topic.
- Non - traditional career tracks
- Marketing yourself as a professional and how to show your firms/schools you are adding value
- Transferable skills and being empowered in the workplace
- With the current market in crisis, I think a best practices would be helpful and brainstorming on new ideas and new approaches to recruiting students/graduates.
- "Hot topic of the day" such as the economy if the program was right now
- Frank discussion about challenges, problems and suggestions. Talk about pressures of the job and trying to keep a balance
- Burnout or becoming stale in your job - how to stay motivated

Concurrent/Plenary Formats:

- All agreed no more than a half day, starting with an unstructured lunch
- Most liked a plenary or key note idea if we could find the right, sufficiently sophisticated person/people – no more than 45 minutes or thereabouts
- Lion's share of concurrent sessions should be devoted to smaller group breakouts/concurrents with lots of interaction and audience participation
- Short—not more than an hour.
- Sessions should be short – 45 to 60 minutes.
- 60 minutes for speakers; 90 minutes for workshop.
- Ideal length depends on the topic.
- Prefers a mix of panels and individual presenters—always likes time for questions.
- For concurrent sessions, have a speaker set the stage and then allow interaction.
- 1 hour – but more interactive concurrent session could be longer, if needed.
- 1.5 hours
- 1 hour for concurrent sessions; for plenary it should be 1 hour, then 20 minutes for questions.
- 1 hour for concurrent and 1/5 for plenary
- Important to have opportunity to share ideas through a mix of individual speakers and panels.
- Prefers audience participation.

Other Important Feedback:

- Seeing friends and colleagues and networking is a huge motivation for conference attendance.
- Additional goal of these EPs: to come away with at least one new idea or suggestion.
- EPs want to give back especially if in a finite, high level way (writing an article, serving as a liaison to a sister organization, speaking on a program, serving as a mentor) – appreciate being valued.
- Appreciate being asked their opinions – mild perception that there are some favored senior people (not them).
- A few folks are not currently members of the EPs and will likely join.
- All would like to help (including serving as speakers, many said) and expect to attend the programming we devise, if possible.
- Networking! Talking – chatting with old and new people
- Would not want organized evening events—even a dinner on your own format. Evenings are so precious—scheduling anything might interrupt the normal flow of what you'd want to do with EP colleagues in the evenings. Group dinners happen anyway.
- Mentoring Newer Professionals—some value this and others aren't sure the NPs see the value in it.
- Dinner with EP friends—high priority.
- Dinner with existing formal groups (consortiums, branch office colleagues, etc.)—average value for some; high value for others.
- Recharging—high priority.
- Giving back to NALP by presenting—high priority—great experience for the presenter.

- Exhibit hall browsing—seeing what is out there in the way of new products and offerings.