

From Bite-Sized Learning to Life-Cycle Partner Development: PDI Plenaries Offer Cutting-Edge Perspectives

by **Jennifer G. Gallinson**

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The agenda for this year's PDI is overflowing with innovation, creativity, and forward-looking programming — and what better way to kick off each day of PDI than with an exciting plenary featuring well-known national and international experts in the field of professional development, training, and law firm management? Below is a sneak peek at two plenaries you won't want to miss.

Bite-Size Is the Right Size

Traditional lawyer professional development and training programs were for decades presented as extensions of traditional classrooms — often complete with homework, a teacher/presenter in the front of the classroom, and a whiteboard or chalkboard with key concepts summarized in front of the group. With the 21st century came the shift to recording traditional learning experiences for either live viewing at a remote location or later viewing via an online library. Then, in a blink of an eye, technology exploded, and the way we get information dramatically changed to include snippets of news and information via Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, podcasts, and more. What does this mean for professional development and learning in law schools and law firms?

Steve Gluckman, Managing Partner of Law Firm ELearning, will lead the first plenary on Thursday, December 3, and explain how bite-sized content with short, focused segments has opened the door to many new opportunities for learning (both online and offline). According to Gluckman, while millennial lawyers may seem a natural audience for targeted learning opportu-

nities, experienced attorneys who are juggling multiple client and personal obligations have been eager to jump on the bite-sized bandwagon as well.

This plenary will feature a cross-section of professionals who will give specific examples of how to create easy-to-use videos to leverage existing content. In addition to Gluckman, the panel will feature Angela Allen, Assistant Director of CLE, North Carolina Bar Association; Heather Bock, Executive Director, Center for the Study of the Legal Profession and Visiting Professor of Law, Georgetown University Law Center; and Kristin Heryford, Senior Professional Development Coordinator, Fenwick & West LLP. Pooling their experience, panelists will provide insights into the benefits and challenges of creating bite-sized learning opportunities. Both law school and law firm PD professionals will leave this program energized to take the concepts of an eight-minute learning session (similar to a short TED talk) and bring it to their firm or school.

Career Arc of Law Firm Partners

The second plenary on Friday, December 4, will bring together an international panel of experts to share their wisdom on the role of PD and talent management over the stages of a partner's decades-long career. Steve Armstrong, Principal, Firm Leader, Inc., describes this as a program that has been years in the making. It grew out of discussions between panel participants Armstrong, Tony King (former director of the Clifford Chance Academy), and Norm Letalik

(former Partner and Managing Director of Borden Ladner Gervais LLP) about the different ways that U.K., Canadian, and U.S. law firms view partnership, management, and retirement. At the same time, Armstrong has been hearing from more and more managing partners like panelist Ellen Dwyer (Managing Partner, Crowell & Moring LLP) that they are concerned about partners developing the skills they need to thrive in this market and about the potential mobility of partners due to increased lateral partner hiring.

All panelists agree that partners want more

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from their law firms — not just when they are new partners but also when they later take on leadership roles, and even more when they are looking at succession planning. The panel will tackle these difficult issues and more when they present their multi-faceted plenary at PDI. They will share best practices in the U.S. and beyond, taking into account both the professional development implications and the law firm management perspective. This is going to be a unique opportunity for you to bring some great insights back to your leadership team.

Whether you are new to PD or are a seasoned veteran, you won't want to miss the opportunity to hear these two fantastic plenary sessions at this year's PDI. You'll leave invigorated with tips, tools, and takeaways to use in your own PD department at your school or firm. For more information or to register, go to www.nalp.org/events. ■