

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT QUARTERLY

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In January 2001, Blackwell Sanders Peper Martin LLP replaced lockstep associate advancement with a Level System of defined competencies. A committee of associates and partners worked for months in 2000 to design this new approach, which we believe is a significant improvement over the traditional system for associate advancement in law firms today – lockstep.

What is wrong with Lockstep?

In a lockstep system, associates join a law firm in a class of new lawyers and progress by class and by calendar year toward partnership eligibility. The partnership track is the number of years associates must be at the firm before they will be considered eligible for partnership. In a lockstep system, two associates who join a firm in the same year are “locked in” to the same pace of advancement regardless of their competencies or performance.

Lockstep is certainly easy to administer. In fact, in a traditional lockstep system, no promotion decisions need be made at all before the associate is on the threshold of partnership eligibility.

This simplicity brings with it many shortcomings from the associates’ perspective. Compensation and advancement toward partnership do not account for an individual’s competencies. In other words, lockstep is inflexible. It fails to reward those who progress in skills and performance at a faster pace, and it does not accommodate those

who “bloom” a little later. Associates also have no meaningful career guideposts along the way, other than the distant objective of partnership eligibility. Last, lockstep offers only one guarantee to associates, that they will *not* be eligible for partnership until a certain number of years pass, regardless of their skills, performance, or value.

In turn, law firms are disadvantaged by a lockstep associate system. Lockstep’s inflexible pace toward partnership can cause a firm to lose talented associates who are frustrated with a system that, from their perspective, rewards mediocrity. Highly talented associates may be unmotivated or not allowed to practice at a more advanced level. The firm at the same time incurs the full expense of associates who are underperforming and fails to send the clear, direct signals to associates that would help them improve and become more valuable. Supervising partners and group leaders are disconnected from associate career development because lockstep does not require their input or involvement in actual promotion decisions. And the firm’s financial investment in training is less effective than it should be, because training is not directly connected to associates’ advancement toward partnership eligibility.

In sum, lockstep puts associate career advancement on auto-pilot. The destination and itinerary are locked in by a class-by-class basis. With the auto-pilot turned on, there is little motivation for the actual pilot (be it a supervising partner or group leader) to be engaged in what occurs along the way.

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Of course, many partners at lockstep firms do take the time to provide mentoring and training to associates. Yet in a lockstep system these efforts, no matter how praised and encouraged, are inherently extracurricular. Associate evaluations at a lockstep firm are also less effective than they could be. It is cognitive dissonance for associate Jones to receive a glowing performance review and associate Smith a lukewarm review, when both associates take the same annual step closer to partnership eligibility.

Lockstep compensation exacerbates these shortcomings. If “money talks,” then uniform annual raises for an associate class out-shout finely tuned messages in associate performance reviews. Also, the firm is pulled in multiple directions in setting associate compensation, placing salaries at a level representing the average value of associates in a given class, while trying to incent and retain the most competent and marketable associates within that class.

Some firms have tried to fix the problems of a lockstep system solely by adopting mechanical hours bonuses. This approach causes additional problems when it is the only remedy to lockstep, for it motivates associates to work longer but not necessarily better. Bonuses can be quite useful in rewarding exceptional productivity by an associate in a given year. But any bonus system, no matter how well planned and implemented, that is merely added on top of the traditional lockstep approach still rests on a shaky foundation.

How does the Blackwell Sanders Level System work?

On January 1, 2001, all of Blackwell Sanders Peper Martin’s associates converted to the Level System, which has four associate levels: A1, A2, A3, and A4. A4 associates are eligible for partnership. We have determined what expectations we have of associates in each of the four levels, and these competencies are defined and provided to every associate. Each competency area (for example,

“Oral Communication,” “Creativity and Flexibility,” or “Client Relations”) is defined differently by associate level, so that associates can clearly understand the rising expectations as one progresses in one’s career.

Associates also have their practice group or department’s skills guidelines, which detail the specific skills and abilities associates in the group or department should acquire in each of the four levels. As a result, each associate has a roadmap of what is expected of him or her each step of the way toward partnership.

Associates’ performance is formally evaluated twice a year by all lawyers for whom they work, not just partners. The evaluation forms vary between levels, because the expectations differ depending upon the associate’s level. Associates take the lead themselves in keeping track of their progress against their group’s skills guidelines.

Both the Spring Review and Fall Review meetings involve the individual associate and his or her department/practice group leader. The Spring Review focuses on career development, and the associate takes the lead in preparing a one-page career development plan, which is then discussed and agreed upon with the group leader. That plan is a roadmap for what the associate and the Firm will do over the next 12 months to develop the associate’s career. In the Fall Review, which focuses on performance, associates do a self-evaluation that helps them objectively assess their strengths and areas needing improvement.

Compensation for associates is in bands tied to the four levels. While associates who remain in a given level for more than a year receive raises, the significant compensation increases occur when an associate is promoted from one level to the next.

Our partnership track under lockstep was six and one-third years. Under the Level System, the average length of time in progressing to partnership has remained the same, but now associates who acquire skills and experience sooner, and who perform at a high level, are eligible for partnership sooner. More fundamentally, partnership eligibility at our Firm is no longer measured by years. Associates progress to partnership based upon their competencies and performance, not by how many consecutive years they have worked here.

The Level System requires a great deal of our partners and our department chairs and group leaders. Approximately 1,000 evaluation forms are filled out in each semiannual evaluation period, and department chairs and practice group leaders meet on an individual basis with associates to talk specifically about the associates’ performance, their experience and skills development, and their careers.

The Firm's career development programming and resources dovetail directly, in timing and content, to the competencies associates need to progress and succeed.

To help make sure our partners are providing the right kind of support and guidance to associates, associates across the Firm evaluate our partners each year on supervision, training, and other aspects of partner performance that are crucial to associate career development. This evaluation occurs after the Fall Associate Reviews and directly before decisions are made on partner compensation for the coming year.

How does a Level System benefit associates, the law firm, and clients?

Associates are well served in several ways by a Level System. They have a clear roadmap of the competencies they need to acquire as they move, level by level, toward partnership. Through semiannual reviews tied directly to the Level System's competencies, associates know where they stand as they develop professionally, are recognized and rewarded for growth in competencies, and can focus clearly on areas needing improvement. Since training resources are aligned with the expected competencies, associates receive the timely guidance they need to be promoted from level to level and advance in their careers. Associates' differentiated compensation directly reflects their individual performance and growth in key competency areas. Associates are afforded some flexibility in the pace of their career progression toward partnership. Last, associates are more assured of being successful entrants into partnership, because each promotion through the firm's levels requires the associate to have performed and built the competencies that will later make the associate successful as a partner.

A well-implemented Level System helps the law firm in ways that complement the benefits enjoyed by its associates. The road map of expected competencies and performance requires the law firm to understand and articulate what it expects of its associates at each level leading to partnership. Effective associate evaluations and promotion decisions require the firm's department and practice group leadership to actively manage their associates' performance and development. Leaders who are accountable for the performance of their groups view this as an essential management responsibility (indeed, a

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management opportunity), not merely an extracurricular activity. The resources expended on associate training become better investments. Training dovetailed to Level System competencies is directly pertinent to the firm's associates, who want to benefit from the training to grow their competencies and be promoted.

The firm's compensation structure for associates is now flexible. Compensation is directly associated with the value of individual associates, so the firm has a better chance of adequately compensating and retaining its most marketable associates, without over-compensating individual associates who are progressing at a slower pace. Because the Level System affords some flexibility on an associate's pace toward partnership eligibility, the firm can promote to partnership those who are ready, when they are ready. Early bloomers can become partners ahead of what would otherwise be an arbitrary schedule, while later bloomers are allowed some extra time, if the potential is there.

Clients also benefit from a well executed Level System. As associates' competencies grow, clients receive better value. Billing rates are tied directly to the associate levels, so legal fees reflect associates' competencies, not merely how many years they have been employed by the law firm. Clients appreciate the business sense of such a system, which in turn bodes well for the law firm's client relationships.

There is nothing particularly remarkable about the Level System concept. Professionals should progress in compensation and in their careers based upon their performance and competencies, rather than the number of consecutive years they have shown up for work. One would be hard pressed to think of a private sector company, a typical law firm client, that promotes employees based solely on tenure.

What is remarkable is that the vast majority of law firms do not yet use a competency and performance based system for associate advancement. But interest in such an approach is growing among law firms, and the effort needed to implement a Level System, in our experience, is well spent.

[**Note:** In August 2002 Blackwell Sanders will publish *From Classes to Competencies, Lockstep to Levels: How One Law Firm Discarded Lockstep Associate Advancement and Replaced It with an Associate Level System*. The book is a thorough case study of why the Firm replaced lockstep advancement for associates, how the Level System was designed, structured, and implemented, and how it has performed. Also included is a template of the Level System, with the competencies, representative skills lists, evaluation instruments, and measurement tools used by the Firm. For information contact Peter Sloan at psloan@blackwellsanders.com.]

The Importance of Work Allocation Systems for Associate Development

Ida Abbott

Law firms that are committed to associates' professional development ensure that associates receive work assignments that promote their learning and growth. It is through daily work, after all, that associates acquire the experience, skills, and knowledge they need to become expert practitioners. And it is by working on a variety of assignments with a variety of partners that associates successfully navigate the path to partnership.

In most law firms, associates have little say in the assignments they get; they depend on the partners who give them work. But associates need work that is constantly challenging and requires them to stretch beyond their comfort zones. Otherwise, they fail to expand their knowledge and expertise. They grow stale and bored. If they do not have the right mix of work experience, their motivation wanes, their development suffers, and their career advancement is thwarted.

It is therefore the firm's responsibility to make sure that work is distributed fairly and appropriately so that associates will progress steadily and quickly. This requires a system that makes associate development a major consideration when allocating work, especially when assigning significant or long-term projects.

Unfortunately, associates' professional development is usually not a high priority when work assignments are made. Staffing decisions are frequently driven by the urgency of client matters and associates' availability. When a client sends a firm new work, the firm's immediate staffing concern is finding the right person to get the work done. From the supervising lawyer's perspective, the ideal choice is an associate who has done similar work before or is experienced enough to know how to tackle the new assignment with little training or supervision.

But from a professional development standpoint, it is more important to assign the work to an associate who will learn from it. This not only benefits associates, it also serves the firm's long-term interests. Assigning work in a systematic way makes it possible for the firm to methodically prepare and successfully retain the proficient, highly motivated lawyers needed to serve clients, compete in the legal marketplace, and lead the firm in the future. A work allocation system ensures that associates receive increasingly complex and varied work experiences that will promote their continuous learning and development.

The laissez-faire approach

Law firms commonly let partners choose the associates who will work on their cases. This laissez-faire approach allows partners to select associates they already know, have heard about, or just run into in the hallway. This may be feasible in a small firm or practice group where partners know their associates' abilities, workloads, and development needs. In large firms, however, this unregulated approach to assignments results in a host of work management problems for partners and associates.

For partners who bring in new business, having to locate and recruit associates to staff their cases results in a waste of their valuable time. On existing matters, domineering partners often insist that the associates working on their clients' matters take priority over any other work the associate may have. Some of these partners claim certain associates as their own. They instruct the associates not to accept any other assignments, restricting the associates' accessibility to different partners and different kinds of work. In addition to causing friction within the firm, this situation potentially harms the interests of some partners' clients, whose matters are not adequately or appropriately staffed.

These conditions also harm associates. Associates know that exposure to a wide variety of partners, clients, and work experience is indispensable for advancement to partnership.¹ A laissez faire approach gives them no control over the partners and clients with whom they work or the kind of experience they get. Without a system for allocating work, associates never know when or from whom they will receive new assignments. They feel unprotected and intimidated, unable to keep their priorities straight, and powerless to turn down proffered new work even if they are already overwhelmed by current assignments. When partners can make assignments at will, the most popular associates become overworked while other associates are underutilized. Associates who do not get interesting and progressively more challenging work soon become unhappy, and unhappy associates are less productive and more inclined to leave the firm.

¹ *Perceptions of Partnership: The Allure & Accessibility of the Brass Ring* (NALP Research & Education Foundation, Washington, DC), 1999.

Work allocation systems

In contrast, a work allocation system can distribute work fairly and rationally in a way that benefits the firm by ensuring a more efficient use of associate talent and that benefits associates by providing work-based learning opportunities. In selecting the right associate for the job, it takes into account both the firm's staffing needs and the associate's development needs.

With such a system in place, a firm can regularly monitor associates' workload, availability, and productivity. This can lead to better management of associate work and time by enabling the firm to prevent or promptly correct lopsided workloads that occur when some associates work a lot more than others. It can also promote associates' career development by tracking their experience and progress; ensuring that associates get varied work that challenges them, interests them, and facilitates their growth and advancement; and allowing associates a more active role in their own development by giving them the kinds of work experience they want.

The specific features of a work allocation system should be designed to suit the needs of the particular practice group, department, or office. However, effective work allocation systems share certain characteristics:

1. **Designated individuals with clear authority.** The firm designates "assignment brokers" who are individuals charged with the responsibility for finding suitable associates to fill staffing needs. Assignment brokers also track associates' work experience, requests, and aspirations. In most firms, assignment brokers are partners (often practice group or department chairs), although some firms use administrative personnel. For assignment brokers to do their work effectively, everyone must know who they are and the nature of their authority.
2. **Written procedures and ground rules.** To facilitate compliance and prevent confusion about how the system works, procedures and ground rules should be written down and posted. Simple, clearly explained procedures promote acceptance of the system and facilitate its effective operation.
3. **Fair and consistent application.** Adherence to the prescribed procedures and ground rules is essential for

the system to maintain credibility and integrity. Lawyers should not be permitted to ignore, override, or go around the system. Firm leaders must guarantee that partners and associates take the system seriously, and that there are consequences for violators. This is especially important at the practice group level, where most assignments are made.

4. **Administrative and technological support.**

Because it takes considerable time to collect and process the data needed to allocate and monitor associates' work assignments on a regular basis, assignment brokers must have the administrative and technological support necessary to do the job efficiently.

To maximize the development value of a work allocation system, it should be integrated with the firm's other professional development systems. Work allocation, performance evaluation, mentoring, and training systems produce the best results when they are linked together. All of these systems should focus on identifying and addressing associates' developmental needs. These needs may be identified during the evaluation process, in discussions with a mentor, or in the course of work. When needs are identified, targeted training programs can be provided, mentors can offer directed counseling, and work assignments can be tailored for developmental purposes.

When firms integrate a work allocation system into a comprehensive professional development program, partners manage associates more effectively, and associates accelerate and enhance their development and performance. This leads to greater profitability and satisfaction for the firm and its lawyers.

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Knowledge Management: Leveraging In-House Expertise

Evelyn Gaye Mara

[*Editor's Note: We first published this article in February 1998. It was subsequently reprinted in Law Firm Partnership and Benefits Report and in conference materials for the 1998 Winter Convention of the District of Columbia Bar and for the February 1999 Law Firm Associate Management Forum of Fulcrum Information Services.*]

Knowledge: The Ghost Asset

The greatest asset of every law office is not recorded in its chart of accounts. This key asset -- the expertise of lawyers and other professionals -- is not on the books for two reasons:

- While we recognize that professional know-how is critical to our success and indeed our very survival, we haven't yet figured out what value to assign to it, nor how to measure and track it.
- The most and best know-how tends to reside exclusively between the ears of our professionals. In a very real sense, the firm does not "own" it. How can we justify putting on the books an asset, no matter how valuable, that freely walks out the door every day at the close of business?

We are painfully reminded of the second fact every time a valued professional retires or, worse, leaves to join a competitor.

Leveraging Knowledge Assets

The emergent specialty of knowledge management seeks to tease out the know-how from between the experts' ears. More than that, it seeks to *leverage it* -- to increase everyone's abilities and productivity by disseminating and building on individual and group expertise; and to *create institutional ownership* by capturing the expertise and embedding it in the organization, so that the office is less vulnerable to losses of key personnel.

The key components of a knowledge management (KM) system already exist in every organization:

1. people,
2. professional and practical knowledge, and
3. media (whether human, print, or electronic) for communicating and storing the knowledge.

What KM brings to the table that is new is

4. a systematic approach to
 - developing and disseminating knowledge, and
 - capturing and organizing knowledge so it can be continuously recycled, improved, and updated.

KM systems based on high technology are currently getting a lot of attention. Some of the fuss may be driven by their huge revenue potential for hardware/software providers and systems consultants. (One recent estimate put the market for knowledge management products and services at more than \$1.5 billion.) At the same time, some organizations' experiences with corporate intranets, with "groupware" such as Lotus Notes, and with on-line databases have indeed shown that carefully designed, computer-based applications can help people find the knowledge they need, or find other people who have it, faster and easier than ever before. Computer-based systems can be especially effective for offices whose personnel work in widely dispersed locations or depend on easy access to a large volume of rapidly changing information.

But the human component of the system is the key. For one thing, in-person communication accomplishes some things that electronic communication cannot. (As one wag put it, "No technology will ever take the place of a pitcher of beer.") For another, the technology accomplishes nothing if people can't or won't use it, as some organizations have learned the hard way.

Three Keys to Success

How do we get there from here? At a minimum, creating a successful office-wide KM system requires the following:

1. **People must be willing to share what they know.** Is knowledge readily exchanged in the organization now, not just among close colleagues but also up and down the hierarchy and sideways across departmental lines? If not, the drags must be identified and eliminated or this boat will never float.

For example, the more people's job security and financial rewards are based on outperforming their coworkers, or on amassing enormous quantities of billable hours, the less likely they are to make the time and effort to help others along, whether in person or by contributing

to a data base. Likewise, if the climate makes it seem too risky to ask a “stupid” question or admit to a mistake, important learning activity will be stifled at the source. Both the incentives and the culture of the organization must support the giving and taking of knowledge before any KM system can work.

2. **The system must be people-friendly.** That is, the system should be designed around the needs of the people who will use it, instead of the people being required to fit the needs of the system. Based on how particular types of content are most effectively delivered, the optimal system will most likely integrate a range of human, paper, and electronic resources.

One such resource is in-person orientation, training, and mentoring programs for new employees, because we want them to “bond” to the people and purposes of the organization as well as to learn how it does things. So are retreats and other types of structured, in-person peer discussions, when group goals or plans must be hammered out and commitment generated. And so, too, are computer-based information resources, so long as their design is based on the thought and work processes of the people who will use them instead of the internal logic (or illogic) of the underlying software package.

3. **The organization must fully support the system.** Some essential aspects of that support:

- *Leading by example.* Top leadership must “walk the talk” and from the beginning be highly visible, model users of the system. Without their active participation

the system will never be a priority for the rest of the employees.

- *User input and training.* The people for whom the KM system is designed must be involved in its development, educated about its features and benefits, and trained to use it. Otherwise they will continue relying on the “tried-and-true” ways that have worked for them in the past and that they feel most confident and comfortable with.
- *System maintenance.* There must be clear responsibility and adequate resources to maintain and manage the KM system, including monitoring and troubleshooting, quality control, and regular updating of programs and information. Unfortunately, this work is hard, time-consuming, and not nearly as glamorous as the work of creating the system. But the best system will quickly lose credibility when users start to find that the information they need is missing, wrong, outdated, or inaccessible.

KM is a hot area right now, and law offices are beginning to recognize its potential, creating firm-wide intranets and databases and buying expensive software, equipment, and consulting services. Not everyone has been pleased with the result. It is important to remember that, as with every major undertaking, success does not come from having the latest, most popular, or most expensive bells and whistles. It comes from a thoughtful definition and solution of the problem – identifying precisely who needs precisely what from the system and precisely how best to provide it – followed by a careful implementation of the solution.



The Learning Lab: Tips & Tools for Creative Lawyer Training

(Editor’s Note: This column highlights best practices and new approaches to common challenges of in-house training managers. We invite your comments and your suggestions for future articles. You can reach us at (703) 719-7030 or maraeg@profdev.com.)

Job Aids: Improving Performance Without Training

A litigation partner I once worked with had a habit of putting a binder together for every major case. All the significant papers and other key items of information Partner A wanted to keep handy were under numbered tabs in that binder, with an index at the front. The binders were lined up in order on a large bookcase behind his

desk, which was always neat as a pin.

Partner B at the same firm, a brilliant and renowned trial lawyer, had created checklists for his case teams to use for trial preparation and for managing complex document productions.

Both these lawyers were using job aids – knowledge and information that support job performance, but that are stored externally rather than in one’s head. Job aids are some of the “low-hanging fruit” in professional development, because they are already-existing resources that, if plucked and passed around, can often be easily used or adapted by others to improve their own performance.

The law office intranet provides unparalleled opportunities to pass around our low-hanging fruit. Not all of it is best installed on an intranet, however, or is even broadly useful – Partner A’s case binders, for example, would only be helpful to the people working on each particular case and might actually be easier to use in binder form. His template for such a binder, however, might be quite useful to other litigators; Partner B’s trial preparation and document production checklists surely would be.

The key is that the job aid be at our fingertips at the exact moment we need to refer to it. Besides the intranet, some of the other places job aids can reside are:

- at a central location, like the instructions on a photocopier machine or at a data terminal in the library or a model document on the firm’s intranet;
- in the user’s office, like a specialized application on a desktop computer, the firm’s attorney’s manual, other reference materials, worksheets, and checklists;
- with or on the user, like the calendar and contacts in a Palm Pilot or other PDA, or a pocket-sized copy of the rules of evidence.

Job aids can facilitate learning during group or individual training, and they can maintain or refresh learning after training. They are more durable than training, the effects of which begin to decay immediately. They can even make training unnecessary. And they can save our skins in an emergency, when a key person is laid up with the flu or has left the firm.

Job aids can be purchased “off the shelf” (such as the pocket rules of evidence mentioned above) as well as internally developed. They are incorporated in the course materials from the best CLE seminars and in-house

training courses.

Job aids are useful for professionals at every level of experience:

- To walk a beginner through the steps of an unfamiliar process (e.g., a new lawyer’s orientation checklist, a guide to filing pleadings in the local court).
- To walk a more experienced person through a task that is too complex or that they perform too infrequently to remember precisely, especially if precise performance is essential (e.g., a checklist for drafting a securities registration statement).
- For the expert, to organize voluminous information or complicated procedures for ready reference (e.g., Partner A’s case binders, Partner B’s trial and discovery checklists) in order to work more efficiently and prevent inadvertent missteps or omissions.

Job aids can even be developed for clients – for example, to lay out the basics of compliance within a complicated regulatory framework and identify the red flags that should get them on the phone with your office immediately – and can generate revenue for the firm.

For all their many uses, there are a few situations in which a job aid has little or no value. Those include:

- Situations where referring to the job aid would impair the lawyer’s credibility or would be logistically impractical. Such a situation calls for thorough preparation and/or good punting skills.
- Situations where it is critical that the correct response be instantaneous (as, for example, in many situations in the courtroom). Here the solution is “overtraining” – providing so much training and practice that performance becomes instinctive.

But in the overall scheme of professional development, job aids are an extraordinarily useful and low-cost tool whose value is too often overlooked.

– Gaye Mara

Professional Developments

Events

Some interesting fall conferences are coming up:

- 9/23-25 in Anaheim: Online Learning Magazine's 5th **Annual Online Learning Conference & Expo**, with pre- and post-conference workshops on September 21-22 and 26. There is a star-studded faculty and numerous sessions on online learning basics, course design and evaluation, and knowledge management. \$795-995 for the conference, \$395-595 for each workshop. More information is available at www.vnulearning.com.
- 9/26-28 in Chicago: **Performance-Based Instructional Systems Design Conference** of the International Society for Performance Improvement, with preceding three-day institute 9/23-25 and workshops 9/25. Faculty is superb, sessions are targeted to experienced instructional designers, and attendance is limited to 250. \$879-1129 for the conference. Info at www.ispi.org/isd.
- 10/21-22 in Scottsdale: Conference on **Designing and Implementing Succession Planning and Leadership Development** of the International Quality & Productivity Center, with half-day post-conference workshops on October 23. Some topnotch presenters, all are large corporate and government settings. \$1799 for the conference, plus \$500 per workshop. Info at www.iqpc.com.
- 10/27-30 in Orlando: **TechLearn 2002 Conference**, sponsored by the Masie Center. \$1099/1149. Not much information available yet; check www.teachlearn.com in a few weeks.
- 12/3-4 in College Park, MD: ASTD/ROI Network 2002 Conference: **Prove the Value of Training with ROI** [return on investment], plus beginner- and advanced-level pre-conference workshops on 12/2. Conference sessions address how to "isolate and/or forecast [training] effects; convert [the] effects to ... quantifiable measures; calculate the worth of your program investments; and determine the impact of your investments on your bottom line." \$620-950 conference, \$127/150 each workshop. Contact ASTD, www.astd.org.
- 12/5-6 in Washington, DC: 2002 **Professional Development Institute** of the National Association for Law Placement, specifically targeted to "hands-on

... skill development of professional development administrators." Not much information available yet; check www.nalpo.org in a few weeks.

Resources

ACLEA has put 12 educational seminars online for CLE and training administrators. The courses are recordings of conference sessions from ACLEA's February 2002 meeting in Fort Worth. Format is audio + video + graphics, with the option of audio + slides format instead. Some sessions that may be of interest: Ida Abbott on Trends in Law Firm Professional Development, Larry Center on Creating a Climate of Constant Learning, Jill Castleman on Contract Negotiations (with facilities and presenters), Ward Bower on Changes in the Legal Profession. Individual courses range from 32-75 minutes long, and tuition from \$45-90. Contact www.aclea.org.

ISPI, whose September 26 conference is listed in the preceding section, has put some articles by speakers related to their conference presentations on the web. An article by Chuck Barritt, a Program Manager for Cisco Systems, explains how using learning objects can alter the instructional design process (www.ispi.org/pdf/Barritt.pdf). An article by Professor David Merrill explains his "pebble-in-the-pond" model of instructional design (www.ispi.org/pdf/Merrill.pdf).

Sunergia Group (www.sunergiagroup.com) has developed a Web browser that adds new dimensions to web surfing. When Browse3D launches, three vertical panes appear on your screen. The large center pane shows the Web page you are currently viewing. The left pane displays thumbnails of the pages you've already visited, and the right pane shows pages you might want to visit next, either as selected by you or based on the links embedded in the page in the center pane. At any time you can click on one of the thumbnails in a side pane to zoom in on it, or double-click one of them to move it into the center pane. Browse3D is available for \$30; there is a free demo on Sunergia's web site.

Amusements

Try **Googlewhacking** next time you use the Google search engine. As explained at www.googlewhack.com, the goal of the game is to "find that elusive query (two words – no quote marks) with a single, solitary result!" The site lists past successful whacks, including "ambidextrous scallywags," "insolvent pachyderms," and "flibbertigibbet boogers."

MCLE Watch

Louisiana has expanded its special subject matter requirement for newly admitted attorneys, who must now fill 8 of their 15 annual CLE hours with courses in legal ethics, professionalism, or law office management. Details appear on the Louisiana Supreme Court web site at www.lasc.org/rules/#SupremeCourt.

Maine has clarified its requirements for nonresident attorneys. A Maine bar member who is admitted and resident in another mandatory CLE state may satisfy Maine's requirement by complying with the requirement of the state of residence. At a minimum, the attorney must complete at least one hour per year in ethics or professional responsibility, whether or not the state of residence requires it. See www.courts.state.me.us/news/baramend.html.

Nevada has eliminated its 6-hour cap on alternative formats, such as online and telephone seminars and computer self-study. See www.nvbar.org/publicServices/indexCLE3.php3.

Pennsylvania has announced a two-year Distance Learning Pilot Project beginning January 1, 2003. The

project will allow lawyers to earn up to 3 of their annual credits by completing interactive distance learning courses that have been pre-approved by the Pennsylvania CLE Board. See www.pacle.com/distlearn/Press_Release.htm. In response, the Pennsylvania Bar Institute has announced, at www.pbi.org/press.html, that it will expand the offerings of its Online Campus by the beginning of next year.

The **Virginia** MCLE Board has solicited comments from Bar members on its proposed MCLE Opinion No. 17, which gives guidelines for determining whether a law office management course will qualify for CLE and/or ethics/professionalism credit. Examples of courses that will *not* qualify are new associate orientation sessions on the firm's unique internal practices and systems such as timekeeping and billing, general computer training, and client development courses. The proposed opinion will be considered for adoption at the Board's August 12 meeting. See www.vsb.org/mcle/opinion17.html. **Reminder:** Starting this fall, Virginia lawyers must now fulfill their MCLE requirement by October 31, with reports due by December 15.

The Capital CLE Calendar

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How to Read This Schedule: The following course schedule lists, first by topic and then by date, live continuing legal education (CLE) courses offered on and after August 1, 2002. The course provider code in all caps at the end of each course listing keys to a provider listing in the provider directory which follows the course schedules. (If a program has multiple sponsors, the provider listed first is the suggested contact for registration.)

All course listings indicate the delivery medium, such as telephone conference, online seminar, satellite broadcast, etc. Each listing also includes, if available, the beginning and ending times, tuition fee, and total CLE credit hours approved or pending for the course (credits appear in brackets at the end of the listing). Please note that CLE credit requirements vary by state and credit arrangements vary by course and provider. If credit is important to you, be sure to confirm in advance with the course provider or appropriate CLE Board whether and how the needed credits are obtainable.

Course Providers. Contact information for the sponsoring organizations follows the course schedules. More detailed information on the courses in this schedule is available from the course providers.

Registration and Fees. Most course providers will fax brochures and registration forms on request and will accept credit card registrations by phone, fax, or on the Internet. Many discount registration fees for members (in the case of membership organizations), for government and public interest lawyers, or for early registration, multiple registrants, or multiple courses for the same registrant. Some permit registration at the door for an additional charge. For some courses, however, especially those noted as "limited enrollment," advance registration and payment may be required.

Materials. Most providers sell their course materials separately. These may offer the most comprehensive and up-to-date survey of the law on a given topic that is currently available.