

RESPONDING TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

YOUR FIRM'S CULTURE IN A POST-COVID-19 WORLD

An MPF Webinar – June 10, 2020

by

Uri Gutfreund

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BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE

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Uri Gutfreund is The National Law Firm Practice Leader at Risk Strategies Company, a top 25 national insurance brokerage and The Founder and Moderator of The Managing Partner Round Table™, a regional peer-to-peer professional development group. This unique program has quickly become a leading venue for thought leaders in the legal industry.

At Risk Strategies, Uri is responsible for the development and execution of all insurance and risk management services to the company's law firm clients. He oversees all of law firm specialty areas including: Health, Professional Liability, Property and Casualty, Cyber and EPLI. His practice leadership combines 20 years personal experience with cutting edge innovation remaking law firm insurance programs using the latest technology, peer benchmarking, and real time best practices to serve the company's law firm clients.

He is a Registered Professional Liability Underwriter since 2001 and a frequent speaker and writer on law firm leadership, law firm business practices and insurance and risk management at national and regional conferences.

Selected Publications and Presentations:

- "Everything You Need to Know about Insurance For Your Firm in 60 Minutes," Speaker of the Month, St. Louis, Atlanta, 2016.
- "2015 Tax Deduction Opportunity: 5 Steps to Overpay For Your Professional Liability Insurance," 2015.
- "Is Your Firm the Next Target for Hackers?" Business of Law Conference, 2015.
- "Change or Be Eliminated: Why Every Administrator Should Become a CFO," Business of Law Conference, 2015.
- "Disability Insurance for Law Firms – It's All in the Details," Association of Legal Administrators - Annual Conference Speaker, 2015.
- "Errors, Omissions & Scares-PLI! Professional Liability Insurance Unmasked," Association of Legal Administrators - Annual Conference Speaker, 2014.

- “Buying and Selling a Law Practice,” Westchester Bar Association Speaker, 2014.
- “Suing for your fees: Three insurance considerations to safely collect what’s rightfully yours,” 2013.

April 2019

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Terry M. Isner

CEO, Marketing & Branding

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Well recognized as a creative trailblazer in the legal industry, Terry is the rare mix of business strategist and artist. He is never content to follow trends, but always seeks to set them. Terry has been the creative force behind a number of high-profile national campaigns that have pushed the envelope in professional services marketing. Terry is aggressive in providing opportunities for his clients to be the first to launch a cutting-edge tactic or style. He has a unique understanding of law firm strategy, the experience and skill to increase ROI, and the creative vision to provide campaigns that show results. Often he draws inspiration from other markets, removing boundaries and finding innovative approaches to apply creative marketing tactics within the legal industry. He was named by Lawdragon as one of the top 100 legal consultants in the country.

Throughout the years, Terry has developed groundbreaking and award-winning advertising campaigns, websites, and innovative logo and branding identities that have instantly raised brand awareness and positioned firms as leaders within their industries and markets.

Whether firms need a bold new identity, an effective website, an eye-catching and flexible electronic or printed brochure, innovative advertising, or novel direct mail campaigns, Terry will make it happen. He believes strongly in the power of unique and captivating creative campaigns that provide effective and custom solutions that reach and resonate with clients' target audience, goals and objectives.

Over nearly 30 years, Terry has become the go-to source for trendsetting and original creative concepts. Terry believes that a significant measure of the value he provides to clients flows from his experience as a law firm insider. He has acquired firsthand an intimate understanding of the challenges faced by law firm marketing professionals, and knows how to help build consensus among important internal audiences.

Terry has served in-house as creative director for Howrey and Chief Marketing Officer for Patton Boggs; in both firms creating award-winning campaigns that stepped way outside of the traditional law firm marketing model.

Terry has operated a successful graphic design business, providing solutions to marketing and communications problems for a variety of organizations – in industries ranging from consumer products, to professional services, to associations – including Kellogg's, the Holocaust Museum, National Geographic, Ernst & Young, and the World Bank.

Terry graduated from Frostburg University in 1985 with a degree in fine arts and graphic design.

April 2019



Leah Nelson
Executive Coach, Corporate Consultant
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Leah Nelson is an experienced leader with over 25 years of leadership experience in the business and military sectors. As a Leadership Mentor and Executive Coach, she has helped individuals achieve next level outcomes and businesses build market share. Leah's experience in leading teams allows her to carry a unique leadership perspective combining the need for both relationships and results whether personally or professionally.

Leah is an engaging speaker, coach and facilitator. She completed her undergraduate studies at the United States Naval Academy, and served for 13 years in the Navy, where she was a Helicopter Pilot and a Leadership Instructor/Facilitator. She received her Masters of Organizational Leadership through the Townsend Institute of Leadership.

In addition to Executive Coaching, she also has extensive experience in leadership training and development as well as small business development. Leah works with many privately held companies, non-profit organizations along with governmental agencies, in industries including aviation, biotech, construction, cybersecurity, distribution and manufacturing, financial services, healthcare, higher education, law, professional services, real estate, recruiting, technology and utilities.

Helping others achieve their goals and design their lives with excellence and balance is one of Leah's greatest joys. An avid athlete, Leah recently completed the Boston Marathon.

BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE

John Remsen, Jr.

President

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John Remsen, Jr., is widely recognized as one of the country's leading authorities on law firm leadership, management, marketing and business development. Since 1997 TheRemsenGroup has consulted with more than 400 law firms and thousands of law firm leaders to help them develop and implement long-term strategic objectives to improve cohesiveness, profitability and sustainability.

John is a frequent speaker and author on law-firm leadership and marketing topics. He has spoken at national and regional conferences of the Legal Marketing Association, Association of Legal Administrators, American Bar Association, and numerous state and local bar associations. His articles have appeared in dozens of highly respected legal publications, including the ABA Journal, Law Practice Management, Law Practice Today, Law360, Legal Management, Marketing for Lawyers, Marketing the Law Firm, Managing Partner, National Law Review and New York Law Journal.

Since 1988, John has been an active member of the Legal Marketing Association, and he has served as President of LMA's Southeastern Chapter, Executive Editor of Strategies (LMA's newsletter) and a member of LMA's national Board of Directors. He is also an active member of the Association of Legal Administrators and a popular speaker at ALA meetings and conferences.

In 2002, John created The Managing Partner Forum, a highly acclaimed conference series and community for managing partners and law firm leaders. More than 1,200 firm leaders from 900 law firms from 43 states have participated in 26 conferences. In addition, John distributes The MPF Weekly, an electronic newsletter to more than 10,500 firm leaders throughout the U.S., Canada and 28 other countries.

John's influence was underscored when he was inducted as a Fellow of the College of Law Practice Management in 2013, in recognition of his 25 years of demonstrated expertise in law firm leadership and management. Founded in 1994, the College honors those who "inspire excellence and innovation in law practice management." Membership is by invitation only and includes just 200 individuals.

And the College was not alone: in 2016, John was recognized by LawDragon as one of the "Top 100 Consultants and Strategists" to the legal profession; and in 2017, John was recognized as one of the world's top "leaders and influencers" in the business of law by the Association of International Law Firm Networks.

A native of West Palm Beach, Florida, John holds an MBA from The University of Virginia (1985) and a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from the University of Florida (1980). Prior to enrolling in graduate school, John was Executive Director of The Florida Council of 100, an organization comprised of Florida's top CEOs and other business leaders.

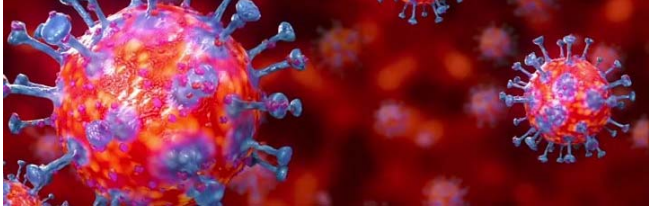
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Responding to the Coronavirus Pandemic
Law Firm Culture in a Post-Pandemic World
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- President & CEO, Managing Partner Forum
- Strategic Planning, Marketing/Business Development, Firm Retreats, COO/CMO Search
- Fellow, College of Law Practice Management
- Speaker:
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 - Association of Legal Administrators
 - Legal Marketing Association
 - MPF Annual Conference
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- Education:
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 - BSBA – University of Florida

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Uri Gutfreund

- National Law Firm Practice Leader, Risk Strategies Company
- Founder, The Managing Partner Roundtable
- Speaker:
 - American Bar Association
 - Association of Legal Administrators
 - Managing Partner Summit
 - MPF Annual Conference
 - Law Firm Networks
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 - BA – Yeshiva University



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Terry Isner

- Owner/CEO-Marketing and Branding, Jaffe
- Fellow, College of Law Practice Management
- 28 years in legal industry
- Speaker:
 - American Bar Association
 - Association of Legal Administrators
 - Managing Partner Forum
 - Legal Marketing Association
- Education:
 - Frostburg State University



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Leah Nelson

- Founder, Nelson Leadership, Inc.
- Executive Coach, Leadership Development, Business Consultant
- Adjunct Professor, Concordia University
- US Navy – Leadership Facilitator, Helicopter Pilot
- Education:
 - Huntington University – MA Org Leadership
 - US Naval Academy



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TODAY'S SESSION

- Opening Remarks
- Survey Results
- Comments from Terry and Leah
- Group Discussion
- Audience Polling and Questions
- Recording and Handout Materials



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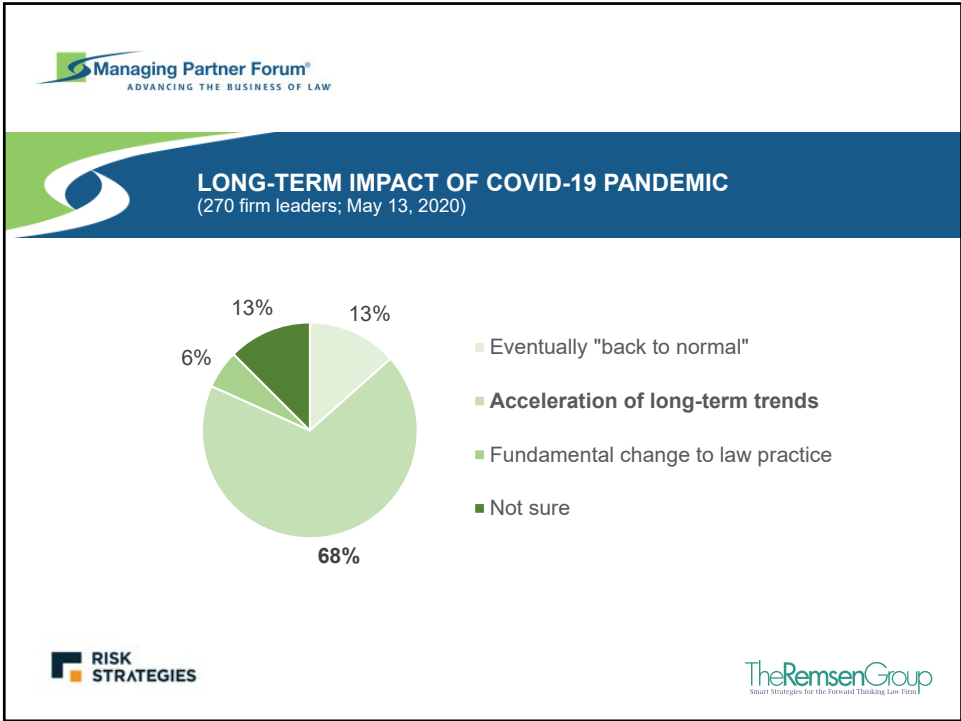


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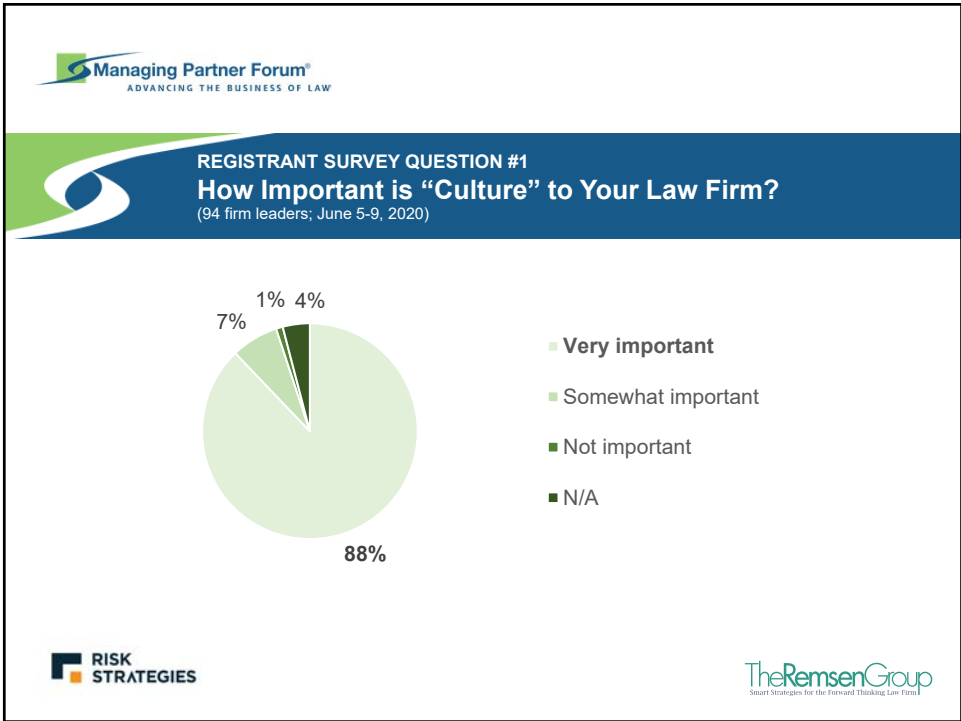
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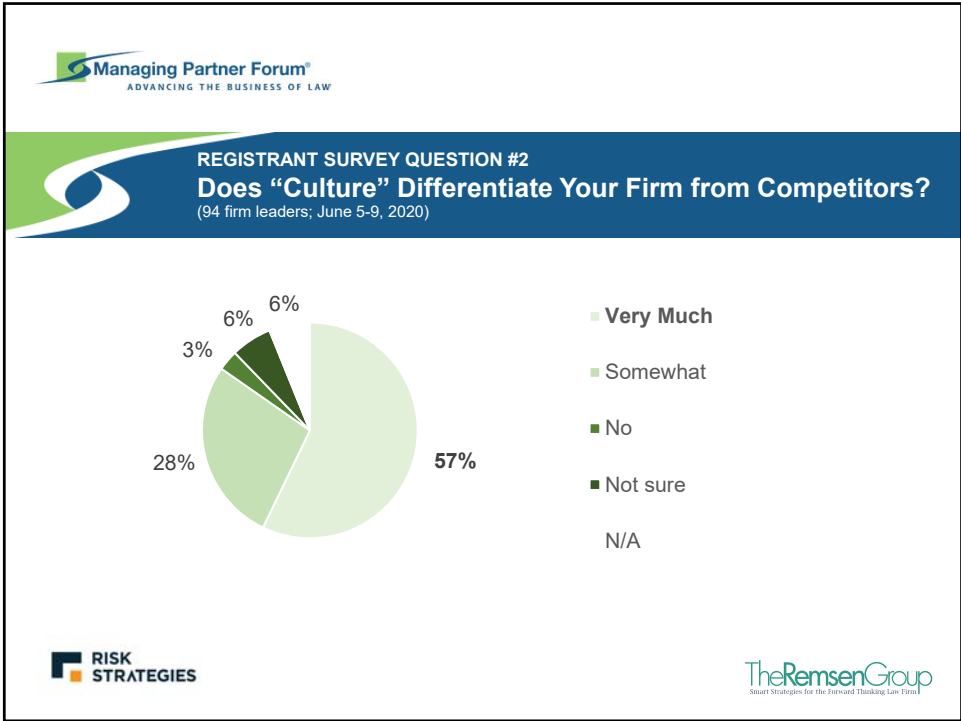


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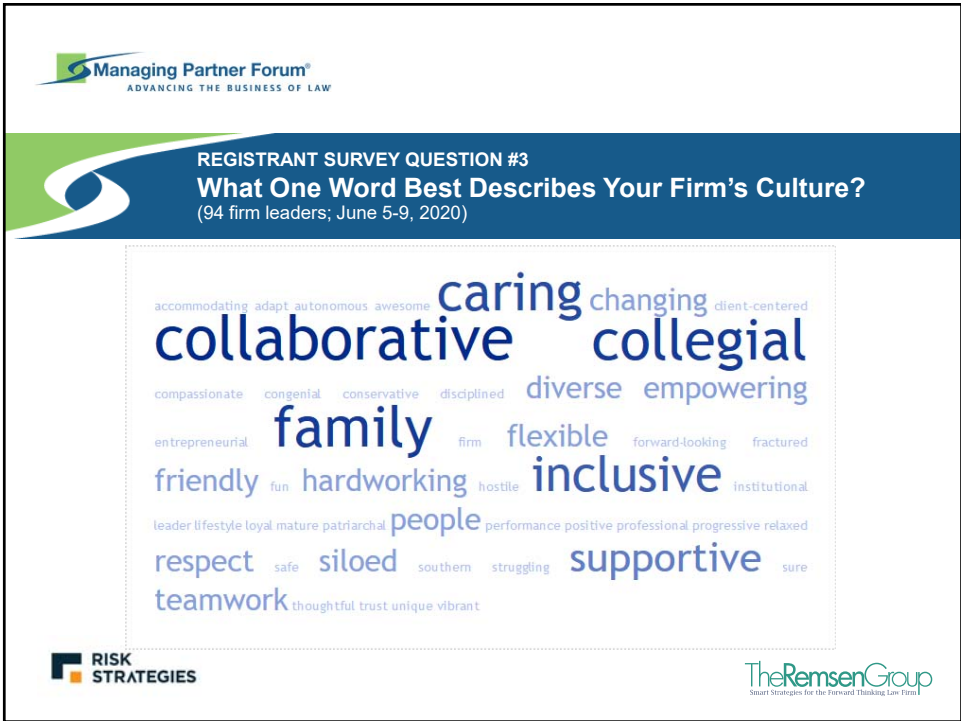


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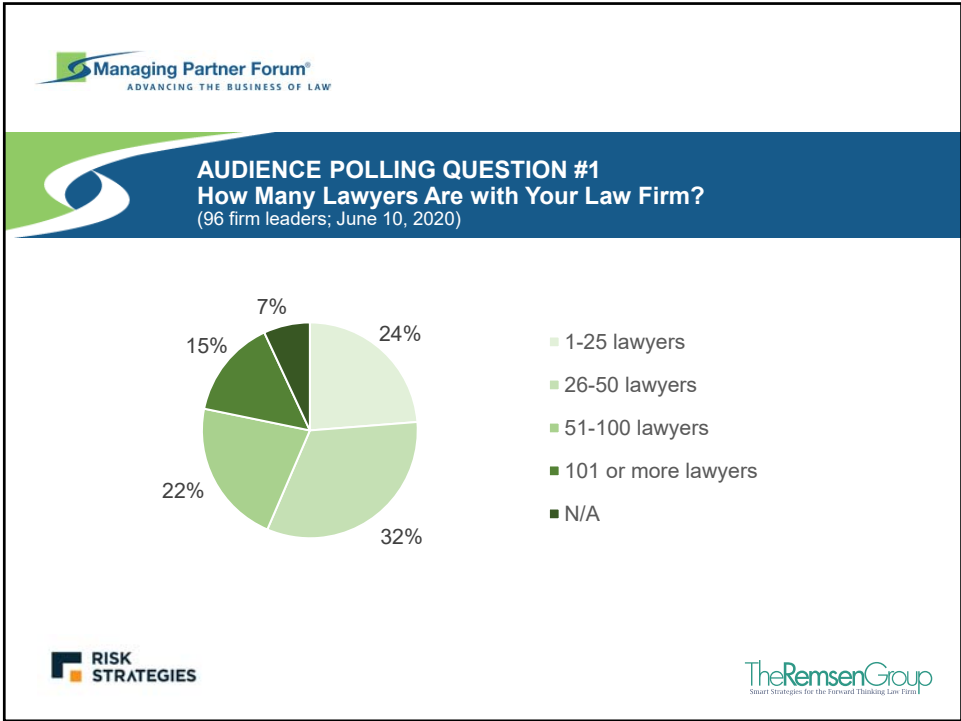
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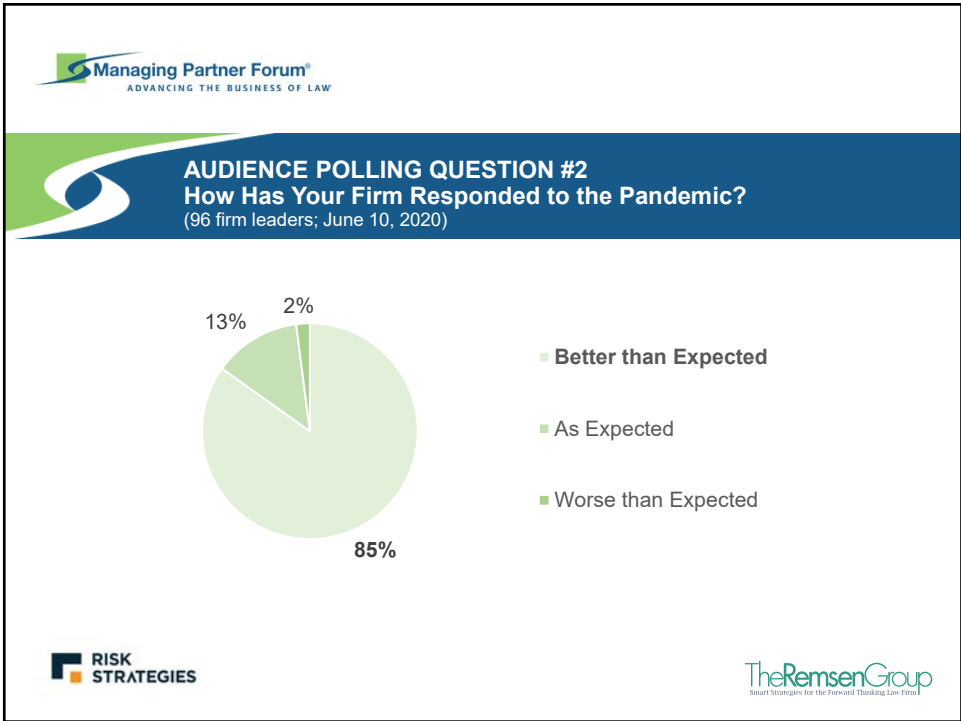
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Culture = Values x Behavior

Only when we **take our values off the wall** and actually **live them** can we say we have a **strong corporate culture**.



"What if we don't change at all ...
and something magical just happens?"

CartoonStock.com

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Culture dictates clients' and employees' **experiences**.

Quite simply, **culture** is the biggest lever that any organization has, to **drive performance**.



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"I want you to find a bold and innovative way to do
everything exactly the same way it's been done for 25 years."

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Culture gives purpose and direction and creates structure and foundation.

Culture extends to every aspect of how the organization does business, makes decisions, and interacts with its employees, clients and the community-at-large.

Culture exists whether you've been intentionally developing it or not.





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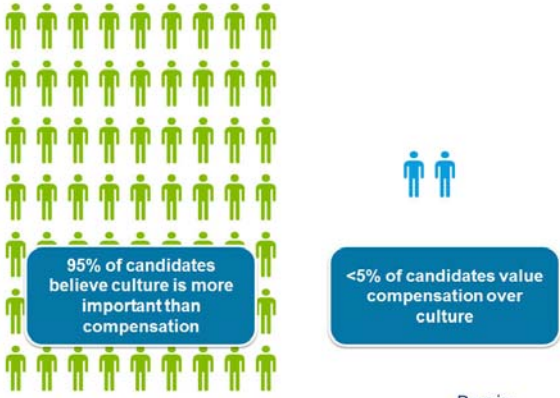
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Importance of Culture



95% of candidates believe culture is more important than compensation

<5% of candidates value compensation over culture



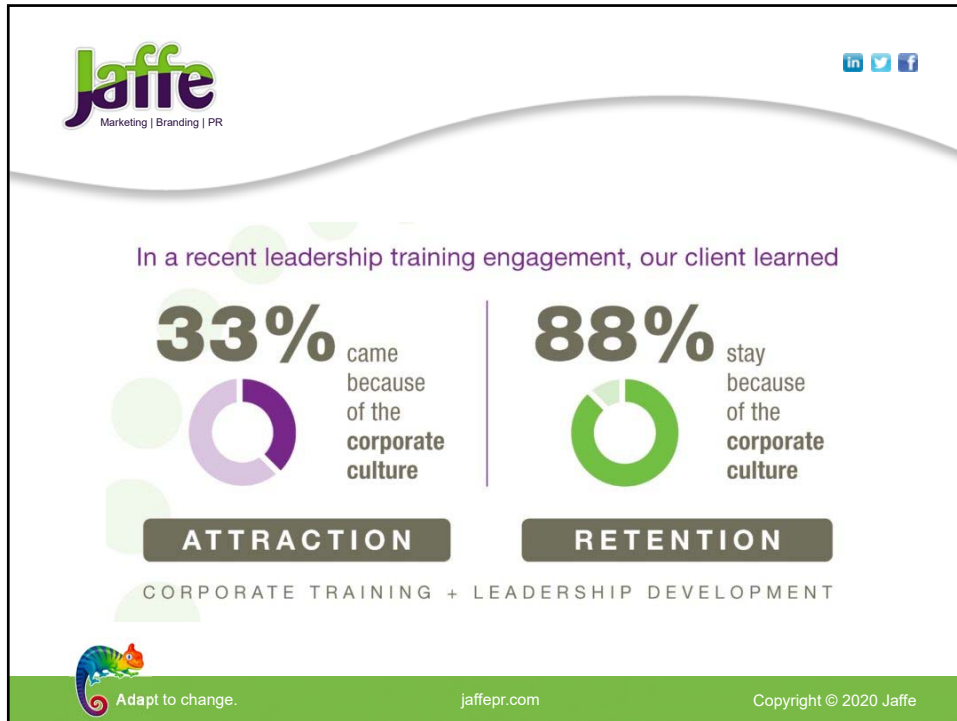
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Culture in the Changing Environment

- 62% of workers have worked remotely in pandemic
- 59% of workers prefer to stay working remotely even after restrictions lifted
- 41% prefer to return to the office
- 38% workers actively engaged, while 13% are actively disengaged (ratio of 2.9:1 highest since 2000)
- Well-being has hit a record low of 46.4% with WORRY & STRESS leading causes (last low 2008)

Gallup

NL
NELSON LEADERSHIP
CORPORATE

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Culture in the Changing Environment

- Results + Relationships
- People are on the other side of every task
- Be EXCEEDINGLY HUMAN
- Decisions from both a results-mindset AND a people-mindset
- Recognize people are overwhelmed by change and uncertainty right now



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Culture in the Changing Environment

- People have a deep need to feel HEARD and UNDERSTOOD
- LISTEN WELL before making changes
- Stance:
 - Curiosity
 - Empathy
 - Responsiveness: Understanding, Validation, Care

Neuroscience tells us to have LASTING CHANGE, you must have 3 things:

- Psychological Safety
- FOR-you stance
- Novelty



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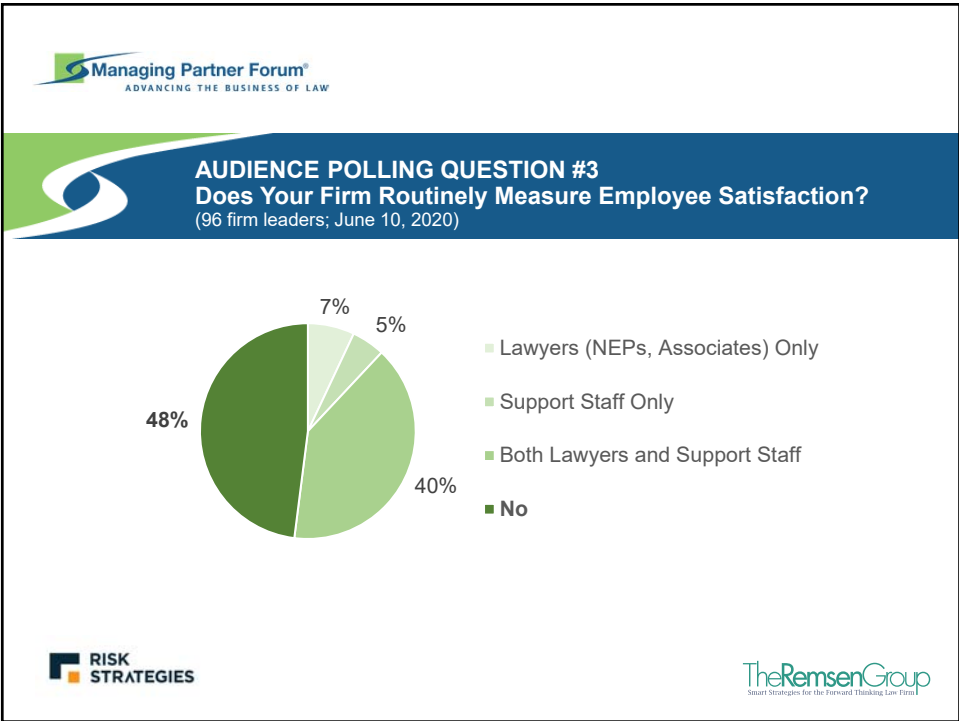
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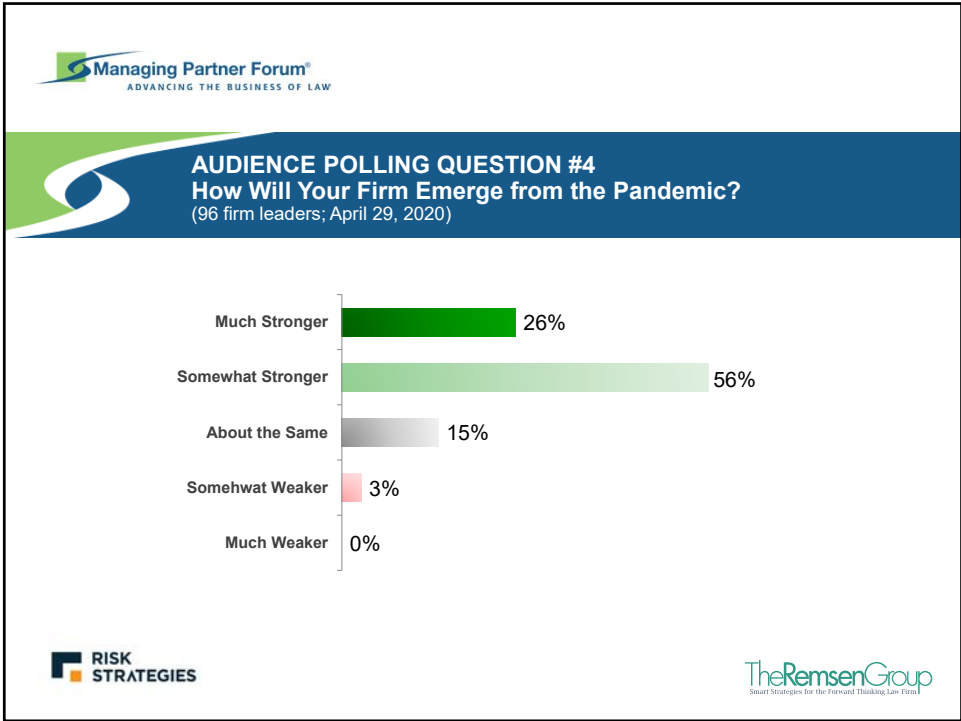
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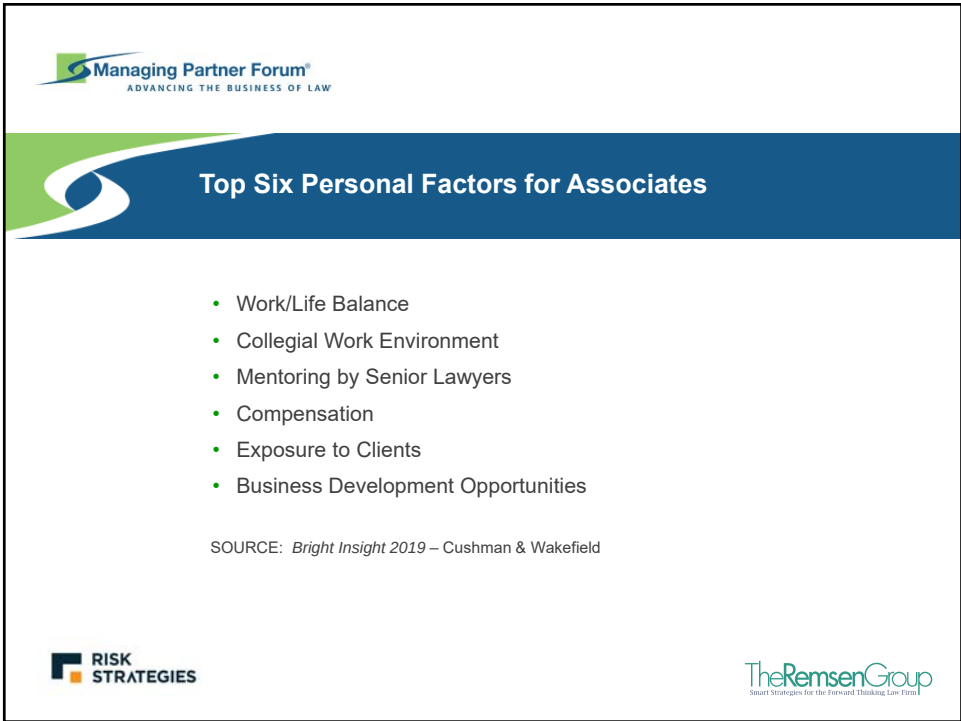
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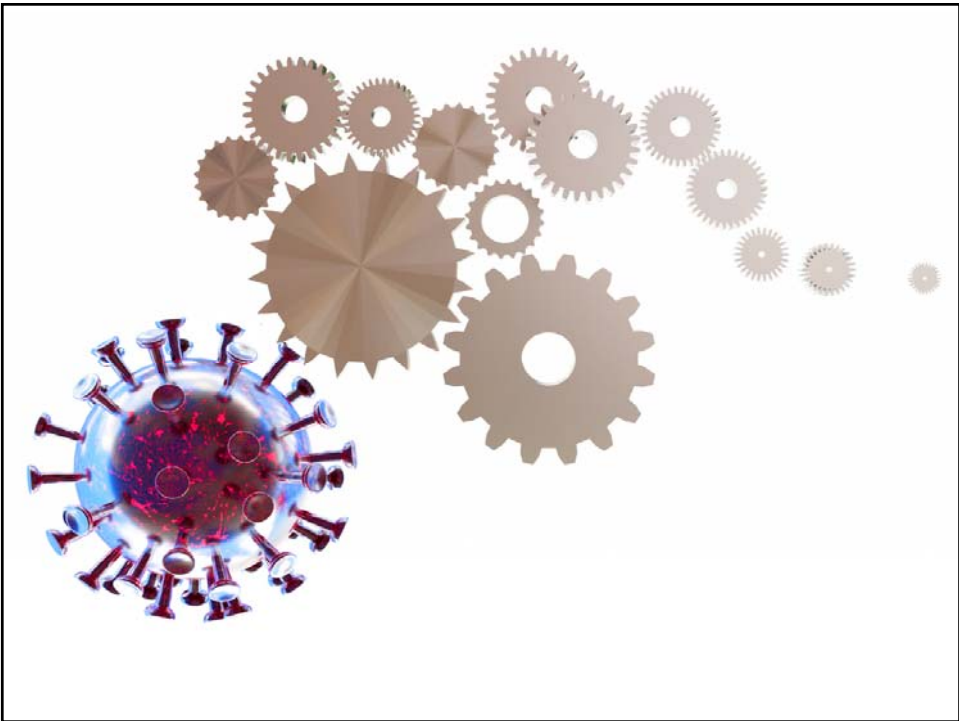
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GUIDANCE FOR LAW FIRM LEADERS

- Demonstrate Care for People, Clients and Community
- Stay Educated and Updated
- Think Strategically
- Communicate Clearly and Frequently
- Keep Open Communication Lines
- Stay Cool, Calm and Collected
- Refer to the Experts
- Maintain Credibility, Reliability and Intimacy



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MPF RESOURCES

- MPF Website – www.ManagingPartnerForum.org
- *The MPF Weekly*
- MPF Webinars and Handouts
- Next Up: You Tell Us!
- MPF Leadership Conference – Sept 30-Oct 1, 2020
- MPF Listserv and MPIE Conference Calls
- Webinars for Your Firm or Organization



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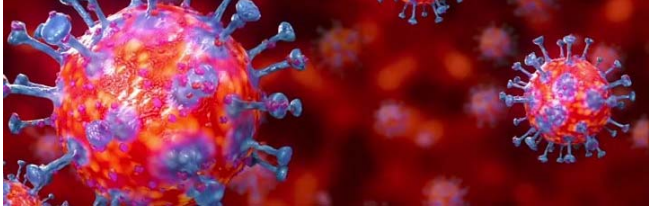
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Culture Club: Don't Underestimate the Power of a Law Firm's Culture

In marketing, we talk a lot about **branding** and the importance of differentiation. There is no greater differentiator than a firm's culture. Competitors can take your clients, staff and market share, but they can't take away the one unique thing all organizations have: culture.

Corporate culture is defined as the behavior of people within a company and the intent or meaning associated with those behaviors. Keeping in mind that, although behavior defines the culture, the culture in most cases influences behavior, which in turn influences the culture. Because of this, culture is one of the hardest corporate differentiators to change and, in most cases, trying to change it will most likely lead to failure.

Why Does Culture Matter So Much?

It is said that culture is the soul of an organization. Your firm's culture defines for all how a firm does business, solves client problems, interacts, attracts and retains. A strong law firm culture, in which partners, associates and stakeholders agree upon core values and are like-minded in their beliefs, will improve performance by motivating, inspiring and coordinating team behavior for success. Businesses with a well-defined and practicing culture tend to perform higher in hiring and retaining, and client growth and longevity.

What Makes a Good Law Firm Culture?

Each corporate culture is unique to itself. In most cases, unless you are creating a new company/firm/agency, culture is already in place. You cannot simply create a new culture for your law firm, but you can change it. However, that is not as easy as it sounds.

What makes a good corporate culture?

- **Mission statement and firm vision are stated.** This defines core values, principles and purpose.
- **Practice what you preach.** Culture and core values mean nothing if they are not enforced, reinforced and practiced every day in all aspects of operation.
- **Like-minded.** People are the key to cultural success. Culture thrives when everyone shares the same values and operates by those values.
- **Oriented to sharing.** Every firms, businesses and corporations has its own story to tell, along with history and examples of success to share. This is where firms and corporations need to tell, commit to and articulate their culture and values to better align with strategic partnerships and client targeting.



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The Not So Easy Culture Shift

Changing an organization's culture is not easy. The challenge is why a lot of folks talk about it, yet few actually do it. Knowing your law firm culture is key before trying to change it. Recognizing the positive and [negative attributes related to your firm's culture](#) allows you to build on what is successful, relevant and attractive to others. Culture is a living, breathing entity, so changing it has to be very strategic, well-communicated and consistent. Don't try to change an entire culture all at once, and be sure *everyone* is part of the process. Don't try to enforce it as a new management-issued mandate.

Corporate Culture Matters: It's Not Just a Trend

Culture is no longer that warm and fuzzy descriptor that hangs out in the background. Corporate culture is now part of marketing, business development, HR, management and client services. Culture is how people are sizing us up, aligning with us and measuring results. Everyone is part of and contributes to an organization's culture, whether we want them to or not. This is why identifying and living a culture is so important. Communicate your culture proudly and consistently; if not, others are left in control to make assumptions that might have a negative outcome.

Need help understanding your firm's culture? Contact me, [Terry M. Isner](#), at tisner@jaffepr.com.

Does Your Law Firm Culture Have an Uber Problem?

In her song "[Victim of Circumstance](#)," Joan Jett sings, "Just a victim of bad reputation/I got no chance of shakin'." Well, last month was not good for the reputation of Uber, the behemoth online transportation network company. Allegations of a dysfunctional company culture surfaced that included [claims of rampant sexual harassment](#) and fierce, internal competition among employees.

In 2010, at an elaborate staff retreat, Uber CEO Travis Kalanick unveiled the company's 14 values, which reportedly took hundreds of hours to conceive. Unfortunately, in the context of recent events, it seems that corporate values may have been little more than an afterthought for Uber.

Uber, like most companies, is under a tremendous amount of pressure to produce results, and its culture is not unique. According to a recent [article](#) at Law.com, "The legal profession has never been more cutthroat. As the race for revenue intensifies, firms are putting more pressure on their partners to perform in a number of criteria. If they don't, it will be reflected in their compensation, title and possibly their place in the firm."

Every organization, including law firms, has a culture. Company culture can be understood to equate to the personality of a company. It includes a variety of elements, including work environment, company mission, value, ethics, expectations and goals. The problem is that your law firm's culture affects far more than how your attorneys and staff feel about the firm and their work. Work culture also plays a part in how the outside world feels about your firm and can improve or hurt the performance of a business in a number of areas.

Current and Potential Clients

In today's technological landscape, how current and former employees feel about your company culture can make an appearance quickly and permanently in all sorts of online public forums, including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Glassdoor, etc. Word spreads faster than ever, and it will influence how the general public feels about your company, including current and potential clients. This can be a really powerful marketing tool for your company, or it can have the opposite effect.

If your law firm has a reputation as a "bad" place to work, even if you deliver great legal services, such a reputation may drive current clients away and may make potential clients think twice about using your firm. In addition, a well-regarded business reputation can allow a law firm to charge a higher price for legal services.



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Retention and Recruitment

In a company that values workers for their contributions to the business, employees experience high morale and a positive attitude toward the organization. Workers with a positive attitude are loyal to the organization, which reduces employee turnover. Worker turnover has a high cost to a business, with increased costs for recruitment, hiring and training to replace those who leave. A healthy corporate culture can help a company retain valuable employees and reduce human resources costs.

One of the most obvious impacts of poor company culture is on recruitment. To stay competitive, you have to attract the best talent. It's no surprise that the best talent is attracted to the organizations with the best culture. Law firms are no exception. This information is not only spread through word of mouth, but is also now readily accessible through websites like [Glassdoor](#).

Unethical Behavior

Your law firm's culture has a profound effect on the ethical behavior of your employees. A positive corporate culture encourages employees to behave in responsible, ethical ways, resulting in a happy workplace, team collaboration and employee empowerment. Negative corporate cultures, on the other hand, promote unethical behavior, such as sexual harassment, causing a wide variety of problems, some of which can lead to litigation.

Broken Cultures Should Be Fixed

A broken company culture is the result of a lot of problems. Once broken, it is difficult to correct. In his [article](#) for the *Harvard Business Review*, [Michael D. Watkins](#), an author and professor of leadership and organizational change, writes, "... culture change can be managed as a continuous process rather than through big shifts (often in response to crises). Likewise, it highlights the idea that a stable 'destination' may never — indeed should never — be reached. The culture of the organization should always be learning and developing."

Culture is a double-edged sword. It can be a positive force, driving a law firm to achievement. When it's negative, culture can hurt a law firm and its people. Want to learn more about how Jaffe can help your firm with its public reputation? Contact me, [Carlos Arcos](#), at carcos@jaffepr.com.

How Levity Can Add Positivity to Firm Culture

I admit it. I am not a baseball fan. I was relieved when my sons declared they prefer to play soccer over baseball. Baseball games are long and hot, and, once the novelty of the hotdogs and popcorn wears off, you have hours before it is time to leave. Living in Washington, though, there is something magical about when a D.C. sports team does well, and the Washington Nationals' bumpy road to its first World Series caught my attention — not because of the actual sport, but because of the “Baby Shark” song and the power of positivity that has swept this city thanks to the Nationals.

Having Fun with the Fans

Former Washington Nationals outfielder Bryce Harper brought star power to the young team that was fresh and very much valued by the fans. But he didn't have the reputation for being a team player — he was fine, but not a leader. When he became a free agent and left Washington for a bigger paycheck in Philadelphia, many thought that the team's season was over before it started.

Then in walked Gerardo Parra, who had recently been cut from the Giants and certainly did not have Harper's star power. Parra was far from the best player. From June 2 to June 22, he was 2-for-30 with 11 strikeouts in five starts. The team's morale was plummeting. Knowing that Parra was fun to be around and made his teammates feel good, team manager Dave Martinez charged Parra with bringing the energy. He did not care if Parra didn't play well as long as he helped the team have fun.

And that he did. Parra brought with him an infectious positive spirit, rallying players and fans alike. Parra decided to walk out to the Baby Shark song, probably because it was stuck on autoloop in his head from his two-year-old. Then he started the homerun dugout dance and silly sunglasses. A baby shark appeared on the dugout railing as a good luck charm, and fans learned to “chomp.”

A Cultural Revolution

Parra is credited with changing the culture of the team — on the field, in the stands and in the clubhouse. Fans arrive dressed as sharks; people are doing the Baby Shark dance. And guess what? The team starts winning. First, they won the wildcard, then the pennant, and now they're off to the World Series! The Harper/Parra dynamic in the Washington Nationals is the perfect example of addition by subtraction.

So, what is the secret? Talent? Sure. Hard work and dedication? Of course. Devoted fans? Definitely. But the Nationals had all of those elements in the past. What made this season different is that the team was having fun. They were positive. They believed in



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themselves, and they made the fans believe in them, too. And so, the magic happened.

Making the Magic Happen at Your Firm

Does your firm need a little magic? While your staff may not be walking through the halls singing “Baby Shark, doo, doo, doo, doo, doo,” inserting a little more positivity and fun into the workplace is never a bad thing. But before getting to the fun stuff, challenge yourself – and your colleagues – to think about what role you want to play on your team. Do you want to be a Bryce Harper or a Gerardo Parra? Do you want to be known for being positive, creative and inspirational? What are the qualities of the people you want on your team? As with Parra, sometimes the best teammates don’t always bring the most skills to the table, but their attitudes and ability to inspire others make them incredible assets.

Positive thinking can also help a firm’s bottom line. According to [Business.com](#), positive thinking helps people solve problems, boosts energy and resilience, and improves decision-making. Positivity is also very contagious. If you would like to see your firm make it to the proverbial World Series, think about how you can be the positive force that brings – and spreads – the change.

If you need help with injecting new energy into your office, contact me, Stephanie Holtzman, at sholtzman@jaffepr.com.

Marketing successfully in the Human Era

Marketers have to rethink their approach to marketing today. The technology revolution ushered in a dynamic, connective, yet disruptive period where humans rely on technology more than was ever imagined. We have greater access to everything, including the businesses we're interested in aligning with. The amount of information available at our fingertips is staggering and has caused us to become numb to some of it — and both forced and empowered us to become even more selective in our content consumption. Technology and all that comes with it has also forced businesses to use it to learn how to connect better with clients in a more meaningful way.



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Welcome to the Human Era

The Human Era is based on the importance of doing business with empathy and connecting on a personal and **emotional level**. When we create a more-humanized user experience with our brands, we connect with our clients on a more-personal and human-to-human level. When we build these authentic connections, we will have businesses that succeed in the Human Era.

While technology enables efficiencies, like marketing automation, it doesn't replace human connections. Technology can inform the needs, wants and characteristics of our target markets and provide the channels for communicating with them, but ultimately, technology doesn't remove our need for authentic human experiences and interactions.

The tech revolution, which moved us from slogans and selling to stories and self-expression, has forced us to empathize and to humanize our marketing. Not only has technology changed the branding and marketing game — it has improved the game by fostering an emotional connection to audiences and communities. The Human Era has us rethinking and reimagining the use of email, blogs, websites and social media with a "human-first — *always*" approach.

We need to be more empathetic in our marketing and branding programs because people want to hear from people, connect with people, and collaborate and share with other like-minded people. A Human Era brand makes an emotional connection and is where brand loyalty begins. Regardless of the technology or the platform used to communicate with target markets, no matter which form of technology we use, there is always a person on the other end.

What does it mean to be a Human Era brand?

The businesses that fit the Human Era brand success model are those that spark an emotional connection with their clients. We may focus on statistics and the transactional side of our interactions in business, but 95 percent of the decisions we make are driven by emotion. Take away emotion, and we are paralyzed in making decisions, unable to share

our experiences with your brand and ultimately, unable to choose your services. Emotions play a critical role in the Human Era. Understanding how and where emotions fit into business activity is the key to successful client relations and client retention.

Emotional Connection = Brand Loyalty.

Emotional marketing and branding is a phrase used within marketing communications that refers to the practice of **building brands** that appeal directly to a client's emotional state. It's all about knowing what makes your clients happy, frustrated or concerned and understanding what keeps them up at night.

Being a Human Era brand requires establishing — and then living — your brand values, along with nurturing a corporate culture that is client-centric — and becoming fully invested in your client's well-being.

Qualities of a humanized brand:

- **Personal** — Integrating hyper-focused personalized marketing strategies into your marketing says, "I'm listening and I know what you want. I know what you need."
- **Empathetic** — Empathy for your clients is the gateway to client loyalty; understanding your audience well and the problems they face. This is where you get crazy in love with your clients' problems and work to provide them proactively by providing the guidance they need to succeed.
- **Solutions-oriented** — Winning in the Human Era means that you must put human needs first and solve problems at the personal — not the corporate — level. Humans don't connect with or buy from corporate brands. Humans buy from other humans within a company. Humans build relationships with the individual and not the corporation. That means when you solve human problems, it becomes infectious, and those happy humans will tell other humans. That is the key to winning in the Human Era.

Want to learn more about marketing in the Human Era? Contact me, **Terry M. Isner**, at tisner@jaffepr.com.

How Do We Recover from a Worldwide Shutdown? Together.

The world is in a state of disruption. Nations are shutting their borders. Businesses and schools are closing. The stock market has taken a tumble. Grocery store shelves are emptying. Vacations have been put on hold. Sporting events and concerts are postponed. People are largely confined to their homes.

We can ask that everyone try to maintain a sense of normalcy, but let's face it: That isn't going to happen. Life is different ... for *everyone*. That is an important fact to remember — that *everyone* is being affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, whether you are infected by the virus or practicing social isolation to **flatten the curve**.

These disruptions create a lot of stress in our lives, but the key to coping is humanity. By humanity, I am referring to both the entire human race and the characteristics that are uniquely human, such as kindness, mercy, sympathy and, perhaps most importantly, empathy. Empathy allows us to be mindful that everyone is currently experiencing significant changes in their lives and that some have been affected far worse than others. Empathy allows us to be selfless by asking, "What can I do to make this situation better for someone else?"

I like to use the phrase "Humanity isn't a trend." What I'm saying is that, while we might preach the virtues of humanity because it's topical to do so, it's more important to practice it. After all, it's easy to espouse the virtues of humanity, but it takes a great deal of effort and mindfulness to cultivate and live it. We need to bring awareness to how we treat others, particularly during this time of additional stress. We need to use empathy and kindness if we are going to get through the worst of the COVID-19 outbreak. If we do this, we'll have an entirely different epidemic on our hands — an epidemic of love for others and a realization that kindness is infectious.

Bringing Humanity into the Business World

The principle of humanity affects businesses, too. In business, we talk a lot about our corporate and personal brands and company cultures. Brand is an expression of a set of values, such as integrity, caring and teamwork. Culture is the behaviors that are shaped by these values. This worldwide disruption is testing whether our corporate and personal brands are lip service or the real deal. It is putting a spotlight on our organizational cultures to reflect who we really are. Your community, your clients and prospects, and your competition are all watching. Will you act with integrity, or will your core values ring hollow?

To that end, this is a test. Who are we during difficult times, and how do we treat others? The answers may differ among generations.



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For the Baby Boomer generation, this is an opportunity to test your ability to empathize with a diversifying workforce and new ways of conducting business. Dismount from your high horse and embrace change, such as using technology to work remotely. It is also a time for Baby Boomers, having faced these kinds of disruptions before – perhaps not a pandemic – but a problematic event nonetheless, to impart their knowledge to younger generations. Sharing learned experiences helps those who are facing the greatest disruption so they may weather these trying times.

Millennials and Generation Z, now is the time for these generations to step into the role of leader. You know how to thrive in a technologically advanced world. Be empathetic, and take time to educate those who might not be as savvy, including your bosses, coworkers, parents and grandparents. Position them for success, and you will be their hero. On a broader scale, you can tap into social media to take part in humanitarian efforts aimed at helping those affected by the disease, whether physically or economically.

To everyone, regardless of what generation you are part of, practice kindness. Have empathy for the employee who is a little late with an assignment. Have compassion for the colleague who has a crying child in the background on your conference call. If lines at the store are longer than expected, stay calm and know that everyone is there for the same reason you are. We are all in this together, and we don't need to add to the stress many of us are already feeling.

If kindness and empathy are the tide, and we all practice it daily, then we will rise to overcome this hardship and prove that humanity isn't just a trend.

Corporate Social Responsibility: Today's New Normal

Compassion is part of human nature, and is often why people find time or money to help a cause they feel strongly about. For a lot of people, the cause they take on is driven by a connection that has touched their lives in some way, whether directly or through a family member or a friend. For example, a person who recently lost a pet might volunteer at the local pet shelter, or someone whose mother was diagnosed with breast cancer might chair a walk/run for cancer research.

Today, being socially responsible no longer only applies to individuals. Businesses have evolved to weave social responsibility into their company cultures. Organizations also have become more aware of the social, environmental and economic effects their operations have on their communities and are choosing to make changes that are more responsible and in line with public and employee expectations.

Welcome to the **Human Era**, the era of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

CSR is no longer a trend. The younger generations in today's workforce are **much more attuned to being socially responsible**, and they are looking for jobs at companies that have a strong presence in making a difference. This is referred to as the triple bottom line: people, planet and revenue.

So why does corporate social responsibility matter? It matters because a company's culture can attract *or repel* potential new hires. Likewise, purchasers will gravitate toward companies with CSR programs they believe in or turn away from those that are not aligned with their own values.

Why Is CSR Important for Companies?

Being socially responsible, and having it part of your **corporate culture**, attracts talent, builds your brand, improves your image, increases sales, and draws awareness to issues that matter to your company and its customers. Employees want to identify with an employer that shares their values. Customers show loyalty to companies that prioritize the same issues they do. By drawing lines in the sand for where you stand on certain social issues, you can attract committed, like-minded individuals.

CSR is scalable. That means it is not just for the big players within your industry. If you are a local business, your CSR program can be on a local level — assisting a local charity or helping local families who are in need. If you are a larger company, you can take on a national or global program, working with large, international nonprofits to build out your CSR initiative.



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Note that a CSR program goes beyond financial donations. Companies have been sending checks of all sizes to charities for many years. Taking it a step (or two) further to contribute to a cause in a more-direct way elevates the program to a whole new level. For example, [Wine to Water](#) works to supply clean drinking water to areas that would otherwise not have access. A company might choose to partner with Wine to Water to host a team-building event where employees assemble water filters to help provide a decade's worth of clean drinking water to families in need. That's something Jaffe has pioneered through the Legal Marketing Association conference for the past couple of years, and firms have responded by participating during those events and creating their own events afterward.

Examples of CSR Programs

As a company, you have a more-prominent platform than an individual in which to share your CSR efforts and results. By sharing details of your CSR program, you may draw attention to a cause that often goes unnoticed. For example, Lacoste recently swapped out its signature crocodile icon for a number of endangered animals. The campaign coincided with International Day for Biological Diversity, helping to raise awareness of this important issue. Proceeds from sales of the limited-edition polo shirts with the endangered animals went to the International Union for Conservation of Nature to support its conservation efforts. The shirts quickly sold out online. As an international brand, Lacoste's impact was significant.

An example of a company that executed a CSR campaign on a local level is Coca-Cola, with its [recycling campaign](#). The soda manufacturer took their iconic signature ribbon and transformed it into a directional arm that it placed on billboards, soda machines and transit stop shelters to lead people to recycling bins. The company might have minimized its wordmark, but the silhouette of the mark along with its brand colors keeps the company's brand awareness front and center.

Benefits of Corporate Social Responsibility for Employees

When launching a CSR program, one of the most crucial steps to take early on is to involve your employees in the decision-making process. Create an internal team to take charge and interview people in the company at all levels to choose a cause that fits your culture. Getting involved with something your employees are passionate about can increase engagement, foster a sense of community, and lead to financial success.

Engaging your employees also helps create accountability. Decisions about a CSR program that are made behind closed doors often make people suspicious. Questions about the genuinely altruistic nature of the program may arise, and there may even be questions of whether monetary donations are actually going to the charitable entity at all. To head off such controversy, make sure your CSR program is transparent to your employees.

What to Avoid When Creating a CSR Program

A CSR program does not have to be complicated, but there are a few things to consider. Avoid participating in charitable efforts that are not related to your core business focus or ethical standards. Don't blindly send money to a completely unrelated organization. Find a purpose that your company believes in and put your efforts toward a project in the local community. If you have multiple locations, consider expanding your program to all your locations – a program like supplying books and reading to children in schools in underserved areas is easily scalable.

Another important point: Your CSR program should not be solely for marketing purposes. Running a CSR campaign as a quick marketing scheme often backfires when your business doesn't follow through. Avoid a one-time act. Your program should be long-term with an ongoing effect. Employees and customers tend to react positively to companies that embrace long-term social responsibility programs.

Developing a CSR initiative is truly a win-win for everyone involved. The impact of your actions will not only appeal to socially conscious clients and employees, but can make a real difference in the world.

What CSR program is your company doing? How has it benefited your company culture? Leave a comment or send me a note. If you are looking for a program that fits your company's culture, reach out to me, Alan E. Singles, at asingles@jaffepr.com.



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ARTICLE **ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE**

Build a Culture That Aligns with People's Values

by Natalie Baumgartner

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PAUL LINSE/GETTY IMAGES

Candidates are seeking workplaces where they can intertwine their [beliefs](#) with those of the company, and work together on a common vision of purpose and success. As leaders grapple with how to recruit top candidates and retain employees, they must rethink how they're shaping and building a culture that unites people around a common cause. Great culture should provide continuous alignment to the vision, purpose, and goals of the organization.

Today's employees have high expectations of their employers, and it goes far beyond just a paycheck. In fact, a recent [LinkedIn survey](#) found that people would rather put up with lower pay (65%) and forego a fancy title (26%) than deal with a bad workplace environment.

The survey also showed that employees care about whether companies foster environments where employees can be themselves (47%) and have a positive impact on society (46%). Today's workforce wants to know that they're making a difference within their companies. While work cultures are unique to every organization, the foundation of what enables a culture to thrive is the extent to which employees are empowered to be engaged, feel valued, and be heard. This is where leadership comes in.

Are leaders effectively driving culture?

According to a recent survey by the [National Bureau of Economic Research](#), 85% of CEOs and CFOs believe an unhealthy culture leads to unethical behavior. What's more, that same survey found that nine out of 10 CFOs believe improving company culture would increase their company's business value and performance.

Although leaders admit that an [unhealthy company culture](#) can impact engagement, a disconnect remains. Leaders may believe they're putting in the work to build and improve, but the reality is that employees don't agree. [Nearly half of employees \(45%\)](#) say leadership is minimally or not at all committed to improving culture. This discrepancy can lead to harrowing business repercussions, such as voluntary turnover that can [cost organizations up to two times](#) an employee's annual salary.

One way leaders can demonstrate to employees that they're taking action is to put some of the power to impact culture back into employees' hands. For example, allowing employees to speak up when they don't agree with a company's actions or to take on new projects that they're passionate about can help to establish an empowered culture. Building a culture of [recognition](#) — where acknowledgement and appreciation is given frequently and in real-time — also enhances an organization's resilience. What gets recognized gets repeated, and leaders that leverage recognition as an everyday tool for building strong culture will outperform organizations that fall flat on culture.

How can leaders build cultures of empowerment?

A [recent report](#) from Achievers and the Workforce Institute examining job crafting identified three ways in which individuals can improve their own employee experience, as well as how employers can help foster strong cultures that support those efforts:

1. **Improving role fit.** Employees should be encouraged to focus on the work they're most passionate about and where they feel they provide the most value. If an employee enjoys speaking with clients, for example, increasing tasks that enable face-to-face interactions can make their job more engaging. Employers must ask for feedback and support employees looking to branch out in these ways.

2. **Establishing connections in the workplace.** Employee experience is greatly affected by day-to-day relationships, and that's why it's important to give employees opportunities to strengthen those relationships through workplace celebrations, the establishment of social gathering spots around the office space, team building activities, and interactive wellness challenges – just to name a few. Perhaps most importantly, employers *can* encourage frequent recognition and feedback at all levels of the company. Frequent recognition at every level builds trust and open communication across an organization. Employers can also ask for feedback about employees' workplace connections and provide guidance or advice on improving relationships — encouraging employees to go on a “coffee chat” with a colleague they don't know well, pointing to groups that gather around a sport or social activity, or simply recommending that every employee work from a shared workspace within the office now and then.
3. **Connecting roles to purpose.** Do employees know if their contributions to the business are meaningful? Employers must develop a culture that reinforces the important role each employee plays within their organization. Encourage employees to examine or reconsider how their role ties back to the greater organization but remember that it's the company's responsibility to make this connection crystal clear.

For those looking to create a workplace culture of employee empowerment and engagement, companies must first reexamine their cultures to ensure they are attracting and retaining the type of talent that will drive business success. Leaders should honestly reflect on the extent to which they're listening to employees, driving cultural values themselves, and recognizing employee performance — all of which are critical to empowering a diverse workforce.

At a time when companies are making headlines for culture failures or scandals, employers must evaluate whether their own organizational culture is empowering employees to live by shared values – or to compromise them.

Natalie Baumgartner is the Chief Workforce Scientist at [Achievers](#), an employee-engagement platform. She's a thought leader, advisor and speaker on corporate culture, employee experience and organizational transformation.
