



2009 CORPORATE PRO BONO ROUNDTABLE AND NETWORKING DINNER HIGHLIGHTS

The Roundtable and Networking Dinner hosted on March 5, 2009, during the 2009 Forum for In-house Corporate Pro Bono again presented some of the most valuable sessions for in-house counsel starting, developing and expanding their legal pro bono programs. The sessions dealt with many of the challenges corporate legal departments' pro bono programs are facing in the current economy and offered an informal and friendly environment for in-house counsel to exchange information and ideas on in-house pro bono.

The Roundtable began at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 5, with Esther Lardent, president and CEO of the Pro Bono Institute, speaking about the surprising growth of pro bono projects in the corporate world despite the reality of economic setbacks. Led by Laura Stein, senior vice president and general counsel of the Clorox Company, and Manik Rath, vice president, general counsel and corporate secretary of LMI, the discussion then focused on how in the face of mounting challenges that some corporate legal departments are facing companies can sustain pro bono programs. The discussion also turned to more familiar territory, sharing lessons learned and discussing common questions, including using pro bono efforts to build a sense of community within the department and creating partnerships with firms.

After this initial discussion period, the group split into two breakout groups. The first was for law departments just starting their pro bono programs. Led by Kwanza Butler from Time Warner and Larry Bennett from Intel, participants first shared issues and concerns they had from their own companies' pro bono programs and then discussed best practices to address some of those concerns. The conversation covered practices on how to launch a program, malpractice insurance concerns, adopting a pro bono policy, and how to include and recognize members of the legal department team to promote and expand a newer program. The second group, for legal departments with established programs, was led by Laura Stein from The Clorox Company, Bruce Ives from Hewlett-Packard, and Bret Parker from Wyeth. This breakout group delved into generating and maintaining momentum and interest, the geographic challenges of building a pro bono program and how to build a successful pro bono infrastructure.

After the breakout sessions the two groups came back together to enjoy a networking dinner and cocktail reception, which allowed for further discussion, as well as the opportunity for those legal departments in the same regions to talk about potential pro bono opportunities. The dinner also featured several 10 minute presentations from attendees on topics such as global pro bono, desktop remote access to pro bono, and effectively engaging General Counsels in pro bono.

The Corporate Pro Bono Roundtable and Networking Dinner is an attendee-driven, broad-based, free flowing brainstorming session where corporate counsel can discuss their experiences and address their challenges in a lively and informal environment. The Roundtable and Networking Dinner is the only national and global meeting focused exclusively on pro bono in the in-house context.

Corporate Pro Bono will host the next Roundtable and Networking Dinner in Washington, DC, at the Pro Bono Institute's Annual Seminar and Forum on In-House Pro Bono. Contact Eve Runyon, director of CPBO, for more details at erunyon@probonoinst.org or 202.729.6694.

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