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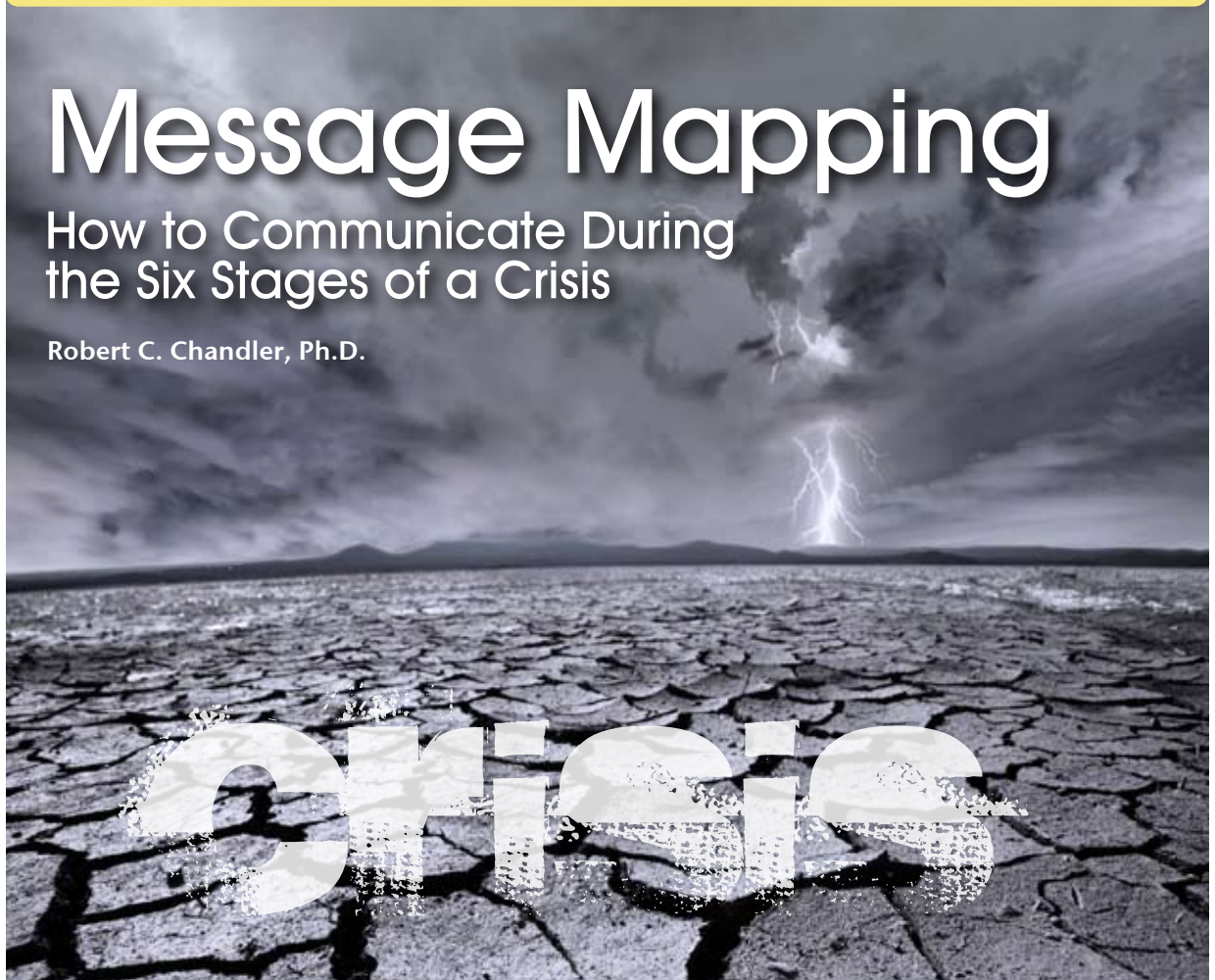


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Message Mapping

How to Communicate During the Six Stages of a Crisis

Robert C. Chandler, Ph.D.



Do You Know What You Will Say?

What you will say in the critical first minutes after receiving reports of an

- active shooter on campus?
- How about six hours into the incident?
- What will you tell people when your county issues a floodwatch?
- Or when the power in your building goes out at 10:00 a.m. on a Monday?

A crisis is like a living organism: it grows, it changes, it evolves over time. Each crisis has a beginning, middle, and end. Just as a crisis isn't static, what we say, who we tell, and how we reach them varies during every stage of the crisis lifecycle.

High-profile communication blunders have proven beyond question that ineffective communication hampers efforts and often contributes

6 ►

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Challenge to Participate

Ben Sotello, President, Northern Virginia Chapter of the ALA

As summer draws to an end and fall is at the doorstep, I hope that you found some time for a vacation filled with sun, fun and relaxation.

Many of you begin that tradition of getting back into a routine (you parents know what I mean); some will pickup those projects that have been in our inboxes and need to be completed or others will begin all of those tasks that will be involved with the end of the year. As all of this is going on, please remember that your association and the chapter are here to support you.

The association has a number of events that are coming up that can provide you educational opportunities. The Law Firm Financial Management Conference and Exposition on October 16-18 in Schaumburg, IL and the Region 2 and 3 Education Conference and Exposition on November 13-15 in Indianapolis, IN. Angela Crane, recipient of the chapter scholarship will be joining a couple of the board members at the Regional Conference.

So that the chapter will close the year on a high note, the board and committees have been hard at work finalizing a number of chapter events in the coming months; we continue to make changes and improvements to the website and we are bringing you a new and improved newsletter with

what I believe to be interesting and well timed articles.

In celebration of Professional Legal Management Week (PLMW) the chapter's Education Career Summit will be on Wednesday October 15th. The topic will be "Diversity - Understanding the Issues with our Key-note Speaker Mauricio Velasquez, President of Diversity Training Group and presenter at numerous ALA events. This will be an informative and rewarding event which will be followed by wine and food to celebrate PLMW.

There are two more monthly chapter meetings; a Small Law Firm Group and IP Group meeting before we gather for the annual holiday lunch, on December 4th at Maggianos, please check out the calendar on the improved website

www.alanova.org for dates and locations.

Your editor-in-chief, Maria Omar has packed the pages of this newsletter with a lot of chapter news along with very timely articles. I hear many of you are working on your budgets, what better information than the articles 'Five Ways to Reduce Office Supply Expenses' or 'Getting the Most from Vendor Meetings'. Also, with the recent hurricane in Texas we have Part I of a 2 part article from 3n on 'How to Communicate during the Six Stages of a Crisis'.

"I would like to challenge you all to continue your participation in the events and meetings the chapter has to offer."

really.



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On a serious note, your chapter and chapters around the United States have made contributions to the American Red Cross to help those harmed by Hurricane Ike in Texas and the Houston area. As of this article, the ALA chapters have donated over \$15,000. What a great group of individuals we have that make up the ALA.

As a special commitment for the Tenth Anniversary of the Community Challenge Weekend, ALA Headquarters is encouraging its chapters, chapter members and business sponsors to support a one-time organizational effort to make a difference in the lives of children around the world. Toward this effort, ALA has select The Smile Train, an international charity dedicated to providing free surgery to millions of children who suffer from cleft lip and palate. On behalf of its members; your chapter will make a one-time donation of \$250.00. More information on this effort will be provided at chapter events, the chapter website and the association's website.

Along with this endeavor, the chapter has selected three organizations to support for the annual community service project. The first project kicked off at the August Crab Feast, with donations of pet food and supplies that supported the Humane Society. We will close this project with the Paws for a Cause 3K Walk on October 5th in Fairfax that supported the Fairfax Pets on Wheels, a charity that brings together loving companion pets and Fairfax County residents of nursing homes and assisted living facilities. The final organization will be the Housing and Community Services of Northern Virginia and their Adopt-A-Family drive that will run through to our Holiday Lunch. We will be collecting clothes, toys, gift certifi-

cates or monetary donations that we help families in our community to have a happy holiday season.

I urge you to help support these efforts. In closing be well, and stay safe!





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WAYS TO REDUCE OFFICE SUPPLY EXPENSES

Joseph Grubb | Consultant, Mattern & Associates LLC

1 Only keep medium point pens in stock. This does not mean you should not get other point sizes when requested, but often, people will not want to wait and will just use what is available.

2 Use one size redweld. We recommend a legal size that expands to 5 ¼".

3 Stay "on contract." If you are receiving requests for items that are not on your contract list, make sure you check to see if there is a similar item on your contract list that you can substitute. If you find that you are ordering a significant number of an item that is not "on contract," track it for six months and determine whether it should be added to your contract.

4 Shop around for items. Take a few minutes and look a little further. The same item you are getting, even "on contract" may be made by another manufacturer at a lower price. If you find items like this, get your vendor to change your contract item.

5 Bulk purchases. This strategy requires that you identify items you can buy in bulk, such as copy paper or storage boxes. Identify how much you use in a given period. Then find out from your vendor the parameters for discounts. For example, buying up to 300 storage boxes may be one price, but over 300 may reduce the price. If utilizing this strategy keep the following in mind:

- a Payment terms – will you have to pay up front, or on a usage basis?
- b Storage – Often, vendors can stock the items for you for free. If not, do you have the space to store the items?
- c Changes in business – be sure to choose items that are more likely to remain necessary to conducting your business. Pre-printed items, letterhead, etc. may not be suitable for bulk purchases.

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Editorial Policy

ALA NoVa Network Newsletter is published quarterly for the members of the Northern Virginia Chapter of the Association of Legal Administrators to provide information and education for legal administrators, law office managers, law firm management, and others in law-related administration. This newsletter is not providing legal, financial, or tax advice. All articles, letters, and advertisements should not be considered endorsements by the Northern Virginia Chapter of the ALA. All written submissions are subject to editing by the editorial staff and become property of the Northern Virginia Chapter of the ALA.

Advertising is assigned on an annual basis based upon chapter sponsorship. For sponsorship information, please contact Marcie Cedor at 703-744-8007.

ALA NOVA Mission Statement

The Northern Virginia Chapter serves its members by providing a forum for improving the quality of their profession and that of their law firms through the exchange of information and by providing educational opportunities to administrators and members of their firms.

The Northern Virginia Chapter was chartered in June 1980, and today has about 55 active members representing law firms, corporate legal departments, and government agencies. The Association of Legal Administrators (ALA) today has close to 10,000 members throughout the world. There are four ALA chapters in Virginia: Hampton Roads, Richmond, Western Virginia, and Northern Virginia.

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Crisis Communication

◀ 1

Chandler's Six Stages of a Crisis™



and time is short, crafting the right message is a Herculean feat.

Learn How to Map Your Communication Strategy

This white paper dissects the various stages of a crisis and examines the intersection of communication with the crisis lifecycle. Using crisis communication expert Dr. Robert Chandler's Six Stages of a Crisis™, we apply message mapping communication best practices to every stage of the crisis lifecycle: warning, risk assessment, response, management, resolution, and post-crisis recovery. Created prior to emergency situations, message maps are clear, concise messages that simplify complex concepts and speed communication during chaos. This paper will give you the tools to define communication needs during a crisis and create messages that work.

Evolution of a Crisis

Some organizations take a blanket approach to crisis communications. However, to be effective, it's critical to consider every stage of the crisis separately as each stage dictates your audience's information requirements and your response.

According to Robert C. Chandler, Ph.D., internationally renowned crisis communication expert, a crisis has six stages: 1) warning, 2) risk assessment, 3) response, 4) management, 5) resolution, and 6) recovery.

1. Warning. Certain incident types, such as hurricanes, have very

distinct warning phases. Communication during this stage is often precautionary and intended to heighten awareness. Other incidents, such as workplace violence and

What, how and to whom you communicate varies during each of the six stages of a crisis:

- 1. Warning**
- 2. Risk Assessment**
- 3. Response**
- 4. Management**
- 5. Resolution**
- 6. Recovery**

power outages, have no warning periods or very subtle warning signs that often go unnoticed. In these situations, many organizations bypass communication completely during the Warning Stage.

2. Risk Assessment. In the moments after an incident occurs and/or is reported, a core team of crisis management decision-makers assembles to determine how to handle the situation. This team activates the organization's emergency response plan. Communications are primarily geared toward assembling team members, apprising executives and officials of the incident, and advising local law enforcement and other similar organizations of the situation.

3. Response. Once the emergency response plan is activated, crisis team members begin to notify the "masses" about the incident. Communication during the Response Stage focuses on making constituents aware of the incident, providing instructions, and calling first-responders into action. ■■■

4. Management. After the initial response to the incident, the crisis moves into the Management Stage. During this phase, the crisis gets better and moves toward resolution or gets worse with deepening layers of complexity. Organizations must respond differently according to the progression of the crisis. A significant percentage of communication occurs during this phase as organizations provide regular status updates to their various audiences, change or add to previous instructions, control rumors, conference with leadership and responder teams, and coursecorrect as needed to respond to changes in the situation.

5. Resolution. Once the crisis has been resolved and is drawing to conclusion, crisis team members communicate that resolution to all audiences in the form of all-clear alerts and messages of reassurance.

6. Recovery. During the Recovery Stage, the focus is on healing and getting back to normal. Communication often revolves around postcrisis counseling, a return to pre-crisis policies and operations, and rebuilding accomplishments.

Chandler's Six Stages of a Crisis provides the compass for understanding underlying

information needs to drive effective communications.

A Crisis Complicates Conventional Communication

Communication during a crisis is hampered by a number of unpleasant realities business continuity professionals must account for in a comprehensive emergency communication plan.

Truth #1: Stress negatively affects the cognitive process Thinking of what to say and how to say it in the middle of a crisis leads to the possibility of mixed or erroneous messages. Messages may be too long, too short, or not address relevant issues. The wrong message can contribute to existing panic and confusion. For example, during 9/11, the head of a financial company promised employees that insurance benefits would continue uninterrupted. Several months later, the company was out of business and former employees never received the promised benefits.

Truth #2: Stress negatively affects comprehension During a crisis, average reading levels decrease four grade levels. Negative dominance also occurs; during times of stress, it takes four positive statements to balance one negative statement.

Truth #3: You can't forget varied demographics A workforce may vary in geographic location, languages, and economic resources. A message's effectiveness will be hampered if it is written in a language or manner unfamiliar to employees.

Truth #4: Key personnel may be unavailable Key personnel may be unavailable due to scheduled absences or illness. Who makes decisions if the CEO is unavailable? What happens to payroll if half of the accounting team falls ill during a pandemic outbreak?

Truth #5: Business reputations may suffer You will be under a microscope. Poorly articulated or worded answers to questions can affect an organization's survival post-disaster. The perception that an organization behaved in a competent and responsible manner during a disaster is key to recovery.

Communication during a crisis is much more complex than routine communication due to stress and related factors caused by an emergency.

Communication Challenges Resolved: Message Maps

Message maps are clear, concise messages created in advance of a disaster that simplify complex concepts and improve communication during chaos. Message maps are appropriate before, during, and after an incident.

Planned message maps deliver clear, consistent communication throughout a crisis. Creating message maps prior to an incident ensures messages will be specific and appropriate. Planning ahead also allows consideration of how the message will affect and motivate all audiences.

Planned message maps:

- Eliminate the potential for dissemination of incorrect information
- Reduce rumors
- Meet elevated information demands
- Ensure the right message reaches the public
- Reassure those affected of an organization's ability to handle a disaster

Effective Messaging

◀ 7

Message maps ARE:

- Easy to understand
- Created prior to a crisis
- A simple way to organize complex information
- Distillations of complicated concepts written at a sixth-grade reading level

Message maps are NOT:

- Difficult to understand
- Created during a crisis
- Long, convoluted dissertations

on what to do in a crisis

- Written with lots of technical jargon and high-level reading words

Message maps are created prior to disasters.

In creating message maps ahead of time, organizations have the time and resources to explore all possible disaster scenarios and map out all messaging needs by audience and stage of a crisis.

Message maps are written at or below a sixth-grade reading level

Reading ability and comprehension drops approximately four grade levels during times of stress. Planned communication ensures messages are understood by the widest possible audience. Message maps are created by distilling information down to easily understood messages written at or below a sixth-grade reading level.

Message maps adhere to the 3-3-30 Rule.

Message maps consist of three short sentences that convey three key messages in 30 words or less. The best chance of getting an audience's attention occurs within the first 9 seconds of a visual or audio

broadcast or during the first 30 words of written material.

Message maps are specific to one organization.

Message maps convey information specific to an organization, e.g. work resumption, post-disaster insurance availability, and bereavement policies.

Message maps consider the needs of varied demographic groups.

Organizations may need multiple messages for various demographic groups. Creating message maps ahead of time allows organizations to take into account knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs that suggest how target audiences will react to messages. Messages can also be translated into multiple languages.

Part two of this article will appear in the next issue of ALA NoVa Newsletter.

Dr. Robert Chandler is a recognized expert on organizational behavior and communication with research expertise focusing on issues such as pandemic communications, crisis leadership, crisis teams, crisis decision-making and behavior, human factors during organizational crises, and organizational communication assessment in a wide variety of business and corporate contexts. He has written more than 75 papers and published articles and authored four books. Dr. Chandler is the Blanche E. Seaver Professor and Chair of the Communication Division in the Center for Communication and Business at Pepperdine University. He is also a member of the American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress, the International Communication Association, the American Forensic Association, and the National Communication Association.

Courtesy of Signals Communications 2008

The best chance of getting an audience's attention occurs within the first 9 seconds of a visual or audio broadcast or during the first 30 words of written material.



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Getting the Most from
Vendor Meetings



As the year draws to a close, vendors will be gathering data to provide their year-end reports. These reports and meeting are vital to fostering a meaningful partnership with your vendors. Here are some suggestions to maximize the value of these meetings.

Pre-Meeting

- Schedule in advance and meet with the vendor – while this may sound obvious, it is important to dedicate this time to meet with your vendor.
- In preparing for this meeting, review the most recent report/information provided by your vendor, as well as any notes you have from your last meeting. Make sure part of the meeting is spent updating any outstanding issues/action items.

During the meeting

- Review the historical data - Have the vendor identify any significant problems that occurred and their resolution for those problems. Also, have the vendor identify any significant improvements that were implemented and review the impact of those improvements.
- Review Scorecard – If your contract specifies that your vendor is supposed to meet or exceed certain performance criteria, be sure this is discussed in your review. Indicate what, if any, penalties will be assessed if they are not meeting the performance standards. Most importantly, be sure your vendor has, or will be submitting an action plan to correct any deficiencies and meet the required service levels.
- Discuss vendor's recommendations - Using the historical data, vendors should be providing recommenda-

tions. Depending on the vendor you are meeting with (duplicating equipment, outsourcing, supplies, etc.) you may see recommendations that address the following:

- Reducing/increasing monthly minimums based on volume
- Process/workflow changes to increase efficiency
- Headcount reductions/increases
- Equipment "balancing" (i.e., redeploying existing duplicating equipment throughout the office, swapping units from heavily utilized areas to less utilized areas)
- Additions/reductions of contract items for office supplies
- Software/application recommendations to increase efficiency/provide more capabilities
- If your vendor does not provide recommendations, ask them, "Based on this information, what do you recommend we do next?"
 - Action items – At the conclusion of your meeting, do a recap and outline any follow-up or action items, identifying who is responsible for addressing and time frame for completion. Also, be sure to set up a time to follow-up on action items, and, if practical, deter-

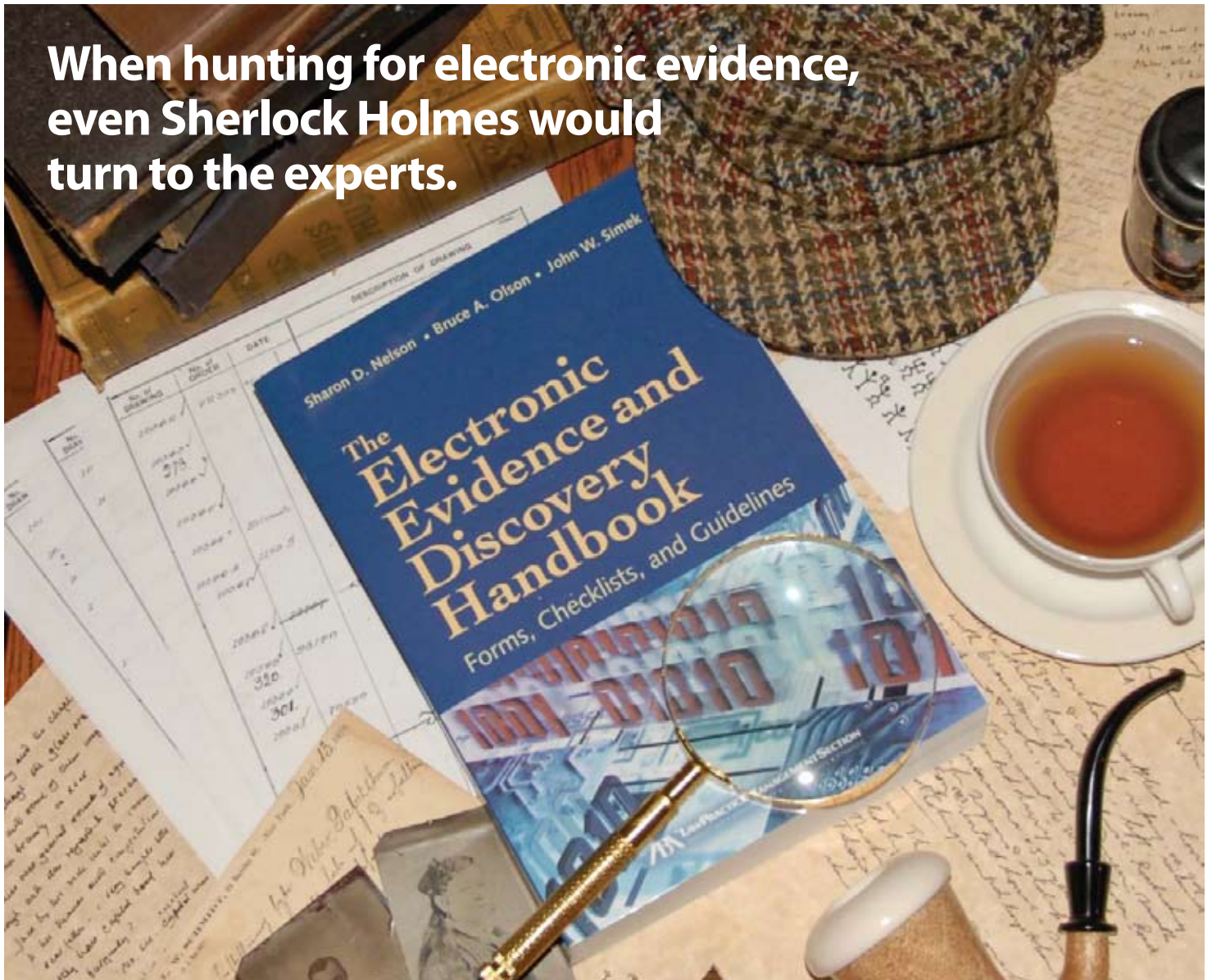
mine the date or potential dates for your next review.

Other items that may be addressed during your meeting may include:

- Financial status of vendor
- Your firm's strategic plans for the next year
- Vendor's strategic plans for the next year

Finally, if appropriate, be sure to commend the vendor for good work.

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LAPTOP SECURITY TIPS

Tip # 1: Never leave any passwords in your laptop case. If you do keep your passwords with your laptop, it's much like keeping your keys in the car. Remember that without your passwords, it will be more difficult to unlock your computer and access your personal information.

Tip # 2: Laptop theft is a crime of opportunity. Always take your laptop with you, and always keep your eye on it. For instance, if you're meeting someone, lock your laptop in the trunk and make sure it's stored out of sight. Furthermore, try not to leave your laptop in an accessible area, such as your hotel's front desk. If you do have a safe or a security cable, use it.

Tip # 3: Have sensitive data? Encrypt it. If someone gets your laptop and gains access to your files, encryption can give you

an extra layer of protection. Programs such as TrueCrypt make the job very easy. Windows users can use Encrypted File System (EFS) to encrypt files and folders.

Tip # 4: Password protect your systems. Every laptop user should protect their laptop with startup passwords. Set a BIOS password to lock the system before the operating system even starts. Windows users can set password to start Windows. Remember that startup passwords will prohibit any access to the computer at all.

Make sure you choose a good password – make it a long one and complex. Only hard-to-guess passwords will prevent thieves from guessing your password. If your laptop supports biometric authentication, you should use your fingerprint in place of a password.

Tip # 5: If the worse happens, and your laptop does get stolen, wouldn't it be great if you could trace it? There are companies that offer tracking software, allowing the stolen laptop to send its location (for example, LaptopLock). Unfortunately, those programs work only when the stolen laptop connects to the Internet.

Use these 5 tips to keep your laptop more secure when you're on the road, at home, or at work.



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Remembering Deanna Fortkort

Deanna was a true star of the Northern Virginia Chapter of the Association of Legal Administrators (ALA). While she was not among the founders of the Chapter although she had joined ALA in May 1979, Deanna soon became active in the Chapter after its formation. By 1983-1984 she was President-Elect and served the following year as President. During this time she was instrumental in presenting the "Introduction to Law Office Management" course to the Chapter.

In recognition of her Chapter activities she was chosen as Assistant Regional Vice President for Region 2 (mainly Mid-Atlantic States) for the year 1987-1988. As Regional Vice President in 1988-1989 she promoted our Region with great fanfare.

After these beginning roles in the international Association, Deanna decided to run for the Board of Directors, and won her place on the Board for the years 1990-1992. Her particular interest was the role of non-traditional education (college, etc.) for ALA members. Deanna promoted seminars and courses for all members, whether the head administrator in the firm or the functional specialist.

Because of this interest she was on the Committee which designed a certification process for legal administrators. She then took the first examination and was one of only eight administrators to be the first to receive the designation "CLM."

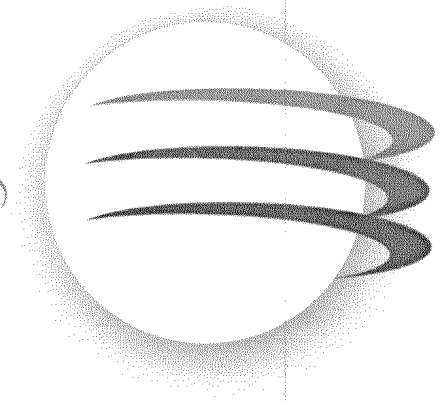
After her Board service, she continued to be active in the Chapter until her retirement.

As often happens in a volunteer organization a group of several administrators from the Northern Virginia Chapter became very close friends. Betty Rabenhorst Greene (until she moved to Seattle), Linda Manson (who, after a number of years in DC firms, left for a career as a business owner both with a tax accountant firm and an Atlantic Coast beach business), Sandy Kauffman (until she "retired" and opened a Bread and Breakfast Inn in Berkeley Springs, WVA), Maria Alvarez (until she "retired" and moved to North Carolina where she is in the real estate business), Sally Montrey (who also "retired" to Bayse, VA to become active in her community association at Brice Mountain Resorts), and myself, Carol Vodra Dodd, who "retired" from an IP law firm in Alexandria and began my next career as a consultant in a virtual assistant business.

This group met for dinners and weekend bashes at Sandy's Inn, where we would talk far into the night about our lives both personal and professional. We five are particularly saddened by Deanna's passing as she was a true friend and a great supporter of our challenging lives as legal administrators. We join with the Northern Virginia Chapter in remembering Deanna.

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Quick Takes

This year we are supporting a local group here in our community, the Housing & Community Services of Northern Virginia in an effort to help support a few families over the Holiday Season. If you wish to take a peak at their website, please click on this link: <http://www.hcsnv.org>. More details to come....



Congratulations to Tempie Tavenner, winner from the 2Q newsletter. Tempie found her name and won a prize! Look for the egg with the scrambled names in this issue. Pop me an email if you can unscramble your name and we'll give you a prize.



Welcome New Members!

We wanted to extend a warm welcome to all of our 2008 "new" members!

- Anne Decker - Duff Law Firm
- Sara Payne - Fullerton & Knowles
- Jeanne Stanford - Compton & Duling
- Joyce Hill - Squire Sanders
- Astrid Wyckoff - MG IP Law
- Bonita Huber - Howrey LLP
- Cathe Best - Cooley Godward



Comments? Send Them to the Editor

Well everyone, we are almost to the end of our news for 2008! I hope you have enjoyed the 1st and 2nd quarter newsletter. Always remember, that your voice should be heard. Send me information on what you would like to see printed, news you would like to include in the Members Highlights, we're very happy to publish for you. We welcome any comments and/or suggestions that will make our chapter's newsletter even more rewarding for everyone to enjoy. Networking and involvement in the Association of Legal Administrators is a very rewarding experience. I encourage you to continue to use your membership to the fullest.

Send comments and suggestions to:

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NEWSLETTER

WHAT TOPICS WOULD YOU LIKE PRESENTED
AT THE MONTHLY MEETINGS?

WOULD YOUR LAW FIRM HOST A MONTHLY ALA CHAPTER MEETING?

YES NO

(Only requirement is to provide a conference room – Hospitality Chair will coordinate arrangements with host.)



BookCorner

Each issue, members and contributors share what is on their bookshelf. Have a book to recommend to the membership? Please email Maria Omar at maria_omar@aporter.com.

Linkage's Best Practices in Succession Planning

by Linkage, Inc.
<http://shrmstore.shrm.org/browse.cfm/4,4237.html>

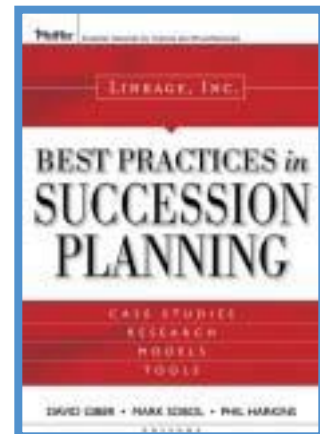
Linkage's Best Practices in Succession Planning With proven guidelines that help organizations understand the depth of their growing talent pool, this book also shows the increasing need to achieve superior growth and performance through identification and development of top talent.



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by Diane Arthur
<http://shrmstore.shrm.org/browse.cfm/4,1046.html>

Filled with sample forms, interview questions, and handy checklists, the updated and expanded book goes step-by-step through the entire hiring process and equips human resources professionals with the skills and tools to get the best people on board.



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Advertise your open positions on the Chapter's website! It's free for 60 days -- it's easy -- and it's effective!

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MEMBER SCRAMBLE!



LMAEPA KRAWLE

See the "Membership Corner" on page 19 for information on how you could win a prize by unscrambling this member's name!

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MEMBER SCRAMBLE!



ETRBRO ITOIKWKC

See the "Membership Corner" on page 19 for information on how you could win a prize by unscrambling this member's name!



