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Perspectives

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It seems fortuitous that my first column as Law Practice Management Section Chair is in an issue highlighting the upcoming ABA Law Firm Marketing Strategies Conference. It is not a coincidence, though, that the conference is taking place at the Four Seasons Hotel in Philadelphia, about 20 minutes from my Moorestown, New Jersey, home. Philadelphia is the city where I attended law school, at Temple University, and where I continue to practice law as an active member of the Pennsylvania Bar. I've always found it to be the greatest city, with a legal community rich in history and relevance.

Like Philly, the second biannual marketing conference is near and dear to my heart. It was just a few years ago that I approached Section leadership with the idea of putting together this conference. As an attorney focused on business development for the past 15 years, I always felt frustrated with the lack of strong educational programming when it came to marketing. The conferences dedicated to law firm marketing were generally overrun (or simply run) by vendors, had the same list of non-lawyer speakers year after year, and were not attended by many lawyers. I figured if LPM could provide the nation's leading technology conference for lawyers in ABA TECHSHOW®, there was no reason that we could not provide the leading marketing conference for lawyers as well.

Our inaugural conference took place in November 2007 in Washington, D.C., commemorating the 30th anniversary of *Bates v. Arizona* and the birth of law firm marketing. The 2009 conference, once again, focuses on successful lawyers doing the teaching. And the timing could not be better for this year's theme of "differentiate." As 1.1 million lawyers compete for what is seemingly a more finite amount of work, the need to market is no longer a luxury—it is a necessity.

In this economy, LPM has worked hard to keep the conference cost extremely low while offering top faculty, a five-star venue and plenty of networking opportunities. I hope to see our *Law Practice* readers November 12-13 in Philadelphia. You can learn more at the conference site, www.lawpractice.org/marketingconference.

This is another exciting year for LPM. If you are reading this, you are already familiar with the Section's work, so I'm preaching to the choir. You understand the need to take our four core areas seriously as law firms find that just practicing law is not going to cut it anymore. Looking for ways to operate more effectively and efficiently is the only way to survive. So be sure to take advantage of our magazine, *Law Practice Today* webzine, books and educational programs—including our teleconferences, live conferences and meetings. If you are interested in getting more involved, do not hesitate to reach out to me or any of our Section officers. (See the leadership directory on page 18.) If you can't make it to Philadelphia, consider joining us for one of our LPM meetings—October in St. Maarten, April in Las Vegas or next summer during the Annual Meeting in San Francisco. I'm looking forward to a rewarding year. **LP**



Micah Buchdahl (micah@htmlawyers.com), Chair of the ABA Law Practice Management Section, is an attorney and President of HTMLawyers, dedicated to guiding law firms through business development strategies and implementation.