

CMCP 2020 Virtual Business Conference:
Allyship is a Necessity, But It's Not Easy

California Minority Counsel Program:

Title of Activity: **“Allyship is a Necessity, But It’s Not Easy: Here’s Why and How – Learn how to establish and grow the relationships we call allyship: strategies, lessons learned and navigating needed but uncomfortable conversations”**

MCLE Written Materials

Date of Activity: Wednesday, September 23, 2020

Time of Activity: 1:30pm - 2:30pm

Moderator: Mohammed Elayan

Panelists:

- **Kori Carew - Chief Inclusion & Diversity Officer, Seyfarth Shaw LLP**
- **John M. Iino – Director, Reed Smith LLP**
- **Patti Perez – Founder & CEO, Persuasion Point**

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this program, participants will

- Understand what effective allyship means in the legal profession
- Have the confidence to reach out and recruit allies
- Understand the role we play in cultivating relationships with allies
- Understand that mere words, e.g., identifying oneself as an ally, is not enough for effective allyship

I. Defining Allyship

- a. There is no singular definition, but representative definitions include:
 - i. “An ally is any person that actively promotes and aspires to advance the culture of inclusion through intentional, positive and conscious efforts that benefit people as a whole.” [Sheree Atcheson](#), Forbes contributor and *Award-winning Diversity & Inclusion Leader*
 - ii. “Allyship is an active, consistent, and arduous practice of unlearning and re-evaluating, in which a person in the position of privilege and power seeks to operate in solidarity with a marginalized group.” from the Anti-Oppression Network
- b. The conception of allyship has changed over time
 - i. Initially a term used in the LGBTQ community
 - ii. Also now viewed as more of a “verb” (action oriented)
- c. What constitutes effective allyship?
 - i. Recognition of privilege
 - ii. Empathy toward marginalized groups
 - iii. Re-thinking one’s beliefs/biases
 - iv. Activism
 - v. Mentorships
 - vi. Relationships
- d. What constitutes ineffective allyship?

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- i. Mere words (e.g., saying “I support the advancement of black attorneys” without ever hiring/mentoring/sponsoring a black attorney)
 - ii. Lack of empathy
 - iii. Holding onto biases
 - iv. Lack of relationships
 - v. Holding diverse attorneys to higher standards than non-diverse peers
 - e. Truths about allyship
 - i. It requires conscious effort.
 - ii. It requires recognizing privileges and eliminating biases.
 - iii. It requires consistent effort over time.
 - iv. It requires advocating for the advancement of a marginalized group.
 - v. Relationships with diverse attorneys are important.
 - vi. Being non-diverse is not a requirement.
- II. Recruiting Allies – Strategically and Authentically
 - a. There are biases running in both directions impacting how allies are recruited.
 - i. Non-diverse attorneys may not view diverse attorneys as having similar backgrounds or interests.
 - ii. Diverse attorneys may feel
 - b. Be mindful that a potential ally fears they may “say the wrong thing”.
 - i. Authentic relationship building is key
 - c. Implicit assumptions/biases may lead to missed opportunities
 - i. confirmation bias among partners when it comes to which lawyers have potential to succeed.
 - ii. people might have an “us vs. them” mentality
- III. Attorneys’ Roles in Cultivating Allies, Including Sharing Basic Expectations
 - a. Be transparent about expectations
 - b. Openly discuss feedback, appreciation, and opportunities for improvement with the ally
- IV. Effective Allyship
 - a. How can allies can utilize their political capital to elevate attorneys of color within the firm/company
 - i. Giving visible praise/credit in front of people with political capital within the firm
 - ii. Interrupting bias – speaking up when someone is not in the room or in a position to advocate for himself/herself

Resources:

1. <https://www.lclma.org/2020/07/31/how-to-be-an-effective-antiracism-ally-in-the-legal-profession-resources-bba-program-notes/>
2. https://www.americanbar.org/groups/young_lawyers/publications/tyl/topics/professional-development/closing-gap/
3. <https://www.law.com/international-edition/2020/06/29/from-stonewall-to-george-floyd-what-lessons-can-be-learned-for-lgbtq-allyship/?slreturn=20200814235220>
4. <https://www.americanbar.org/groups/litigation/committees/diversity-inclusion/articles/2014/engaging-white-male-allies-to-champion-diversity-in-law-firms/>
5. https://www.mcca.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/MCCA_CaseStudy_Intel_Small_Final.pdf