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Thursday 23 July, 2009

Launch Event for "Bright Ideas, Insight from Legal Luminaries Around the World"

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Date: Jul 23, 2009

Topic: [martindale.com](http://www.martindale.com)

I had the pleasure yesterday of attending a book launch event hosted by Leigh Dance, principle of ELD International. Many of you know Leigh through her global consulting business that helps corporate counsel and legal teams run more efficiently. She's also a frequent moderator of Martindale's C2C Forums. Leigh has just published a book, Bright Ideas, Insight from Legal Luminaries Around the World. Leigh published the book in celebration of the 15th year of her consultancy, and profits are being donated to Advocates for International Development, an international pro bono organization.

The book is a compilation of essays from in-house counsel, outside counsel, legal marketers and industry thought leaders on various topics on where the practice of law is heading. (Disclosure: One of the Book's chapters – "Lawyers Network Differently as the World Grows Flatter" was penned by Martindale's own Derek Benton).

At the launch event yesterday hosted by DLA Piper, Leigh brought together some of the authors for a panel discussion on changes in the global supply of legal management, and how leaders can drive performance in global law firms and law departments. She had an A-list group of speakers including Mike O'Neill, GC Lenovo and Tom Sabatino, GC Schering-Plough.

Some of the compelling ideas discussed at the event that can be found in the book include:

- The unsustainable business model that has supported the legal industry is now coming to an end, and creative new approaches are being born to reflect the changing times
- GC's, emerging as business leaders themselves, are driving this change, and the responsive law firms willing to think creatively will win
- Some of the great new ideas in the new business model won't come from firms looking at what other firms are doing; rather, leaders will look for new approaches outside the profession to industries known for their quality, service and responsiveness
- Establishing/maintaining long term relationships and trust will be key to success
- The need for lean efficiency, certainty and predictability are the key needs of in house legal departments and will determine which new model succeeds or fails

As lawyers, we often self-flagellate, decrying ourselves as luddites and laggards, trailing the other industries in new ways of thinking – stuck in old-world modes of thought and

practices. As Martindale-Hubbell Connected continues its Social Media Policy Week – another example of how new technologies and means of communication are transforming the legal landscape – Leigh’s great afternoon session reminded me of something. Maybe, lawyers’ habits of thinking of ourselves as behind the times – is in fact, an old way of thinking.

From where I sit, I’ve been exposed to a myriad of ideas from great legal minds, reflecting cutting-edge thinking on every aspect of the business and practice of law. And while the entire profession is not quite there yet, we’ve sure made a lot of progress. So, maybe we should sit back for a second and reflect on the great strides that have occurred, and that are under way to modernize the legal profession and ready it for the great challenges it is facing in this age of economic uncertainty and globalization.