

The Secret of Getting Attorneys to Trainings:
“The Magariel Magic”

It’s always a delight to speak to Stinson Morrison Hecker’s Library Director Dale Magariel, because her passion is always beaming its way through the phone. Dale has been in the law library business since 1972, which is shocking because when I met her in her Kansas City office, she looked far too young to have been a professional for more than 35 years. I asked her what she ate and drank, because I thought it must be youth serum. Over the course of talking to her, though, I realized that it’s her passion that keeps her young. Keeping things in perspective and not taking things too seriously helps keep her young. One thing she does take seriously, though, is getting her attorneys trained to use her library resources as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Dale’s enthusiasm for training is infectious. I always know I will have an eager audience at Stinson trainings. Most people wouldn’t use the term “eager” when speaking about groups of attorneys, but there’s something in that “Magariel Magic” that draws it out of everyone.

Recently I was blown away by that Magariel Magic when Dale gathered a pretty big group of attorneys from her Omaha office to join me for a telephone/web training. I told Dale how impressive it was to motivate such a big group of people who weren’t even in her home office. After some prodding I convinced her to share some of her wisdom, tricks and tips for getting attorneys trained.

1. Get Related to Gain Trust - Dale is most passionate when she speaks about face time with attorneys. “With e-mail and electronic research, it’s so easy for librarians to avoid seeing attorneys altogether,” she said. Whenever she can visit other Stinson offices, she makes a point of meeting as many attorneys one-on-one as possible. When she returns from these visits, she always has a huge increase in questions and requests from those attorneys. She also knows she builds trust on these trips, and that the attorneys are far more apt to listen to her future suggestions and training invitations.
2. Find a Partner in the Department - “The key is finding an interested partner and getting them involved,” Dale said. If partners are not supporting the products, she sits down with them for a few minutes and hits them with the financial factors: “We are spending substantial money for this, and we need to have people use it, and **use it efficiently**,” she tells them. If they aren’t committed, she shows them the necessary bells and whistles until they get fully behind its value.
3. Training at Lunchtime – It’s an efficient use of the attorney’s time when they can attend a training session and have lunch. With the help of the

Division Chairs, she sets up training sessions at department lunches, where the participants' attention is already captured.

4. Breakfast Meetings for New Associates - The amount of training that new associates have these days is so time-consuming that Dale needs to be a little creative when it comes to finding time to introduce them to the library. She does "Breakfast in the Library," first thing in the morning during orientation, and has her staff mingle with the associates, discuss library resources, and answer questions. "It's easy these days to make the library a low priority," she said. But, she doesn't allow it. The effort really pays off, as she is able to show them how the Library and its resources can save them time and make their lives easier. She also sets the tone for getting them to trust her as soon as they come to the firm.
5. R-E-S-P-E-C-T - Even though she knows there will always be attorneys who don't think the library is important and who permanently divert library e-mails to a folder that never gets opened, Dale says that generally there is a lot of respect for librarians and their knowledge. I can't imagine anyone disrespecting Dale, and I think this is because her overriding intention is always clear. "Our job is to save you time and make your job easier," she tells attorneys. And once she makes that clear, she makes it her business to prove to them what the library can do to make their lives easier.
6. Putting a Face on the Library = Great Marketing - Dale gets to the point: "You have to market yourself." Dale, like most librarians, is not excited to get out and talk to people or - heaven forbid - make presentations. And her staff is no different. But, because she sees the enormous benefits of face time with the attorneys, she requests that her staff deliver books, documents and other materials in person whenever possible, give presentations and generally stay connected with the attorneys. This helps the attorneys feel comfortable connecting with the library staff. "Now, I'm not going to drive a book to St. Louis," Dale said, "and our office has nine floors, but whenever possible, we connect with the attorneys. If they know you, know your face, and know you are there to help them, they are more likely to come to you for help."
7. E-mails - To get people to read her e-mails about trainings in particular, Dale uses a few little tricks:
 - Use big, bright, colored font for the lead in line to get their attention. If they read that, and are interested, you've got them!
 - Put the message in the body of the email. NEVER send attachments. They will never open them. If it can't fit on one page, it's too much information.

- Have a partner send the training announcement, when appropriate. If it comes from a partner, the motivation factor increases.

As I looked over the notes I took during this interview, I see one of the first comments I wrote was “It’s tough.” Dale was acknowledging right off the bat that getting people to trainings is a real challenge. What is impressive is how she faces the challenge and stays focused on her goal: making attorneys lives easier.