

Being “DRI for Life”

The 2014 Annual Meeting

By K. Kristann Carey



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I am amazed every year I attend the DRI Annual Meeting and this year was no exception. The caliber of speakers from the main stage to every SLG breakout was stellar. Our own Corporate Counsel Committee program featured speakers on managing high-stakes crisis, or, more importantly, managing your business partners to help them get through a high-stakes crisis. Helio Fred Garcia, a renowned crisis management and communications expert, provided our members with practical guidance on how to evaluate a crisis situation and properly advise our business partners on action steps. In a crisis, in-house lawyers must balance managing future risks resulting from the crisis and the company's need to respond quickly and definitively to the crisis. Fred challenged us to step out of our comfort zones as lawyers and look at the crisis from different perspectives, including the outside stakeholders, company shareholders, customers, and media. Cory Cahn, assistant general counsel for Entergy Corporation, gracefully shared his experiences from the power outage at the Superdome during the 2013 Super Bowl. The combination of Fred's guidance framed into Cory's real-life situation provided a case study on crisis management and how, when handled correctly, a crisis can highlight and improve a company's public reputation.

During the main stage programs, we had a chance to hear a candid conversation with David Drummond, senior vice president, corporate development and chief legal officer of Google. David holds a unique but more common role not only as a company's head lawyer, but also as a leader within a business unit. In-house lawyers balance our responsibilities as legal counselors

with the growing demand from our business partners to become a sounding board for business issues. I am willing to predict that this dual role is the wave of the future for in-house lawyers. My prediction is based on



David's statement that one of his wishes for new lawyers is that they are less specialized and more generalist. (David probably knows a thing or two about predicting the future!) As corporate generalists, we get the opportunity to touch all areas of our business and gain a broader, more strategic view of our company's strengths and opportunities.

How can DRI and C3 help you develop your skills so that you can take advantage of this changing wave in the business world? We offer you the opportunity to learn about topics and substantive areas of law that may not be in your wheelhouse. Are you a litigator who wants to know more about corporate compliance? We have a seminar for you—the Government Enforcement and Corporate Compliance Seminar. Are you an insurance lawyer who wants to know more about trademarks? We have a seminar for you—the Intellectual Property Seminar. Is your travel or training budget constrained? We have a seminar for you—the Annual Meeting. Attending the Annual Meeting is a virtual legal buffet all in one place.

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