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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE by Nancy Piechota, Pa. C.P.

Well, spring is upon us and time for spring cleaning. No, I am not talking about washing windows, baseboards and cupboards. I am talking about cleaning our work space. I find that sometimes I need to take five or ten minutes and straighten up my desk so I can function efficiently. When you are busy, it is easy to put things into stacks and say I will do that later or forms you want to keep and put them in a folder in your desk drawer. I know that I am guilty of this at times.

Here are a few ideas to help you with a speedy spring cleaning at work:



1. **Get Rid of Old Papers** - I bet there is a chance that many of the "piles" of papers on your desk are not of any value to you. As you begin to sort through your stack of papers, begin asking yourself "Do I need this?" "Why?" "Where will I look for it when I need it?" Maybe you should create some type of filing system that will best fit your needs. Once you have done this, try to make a point to file future printouts as they are created to keep the problem from reoccurring. Always remember to ask yourself, "Do I really need to print that file", or "can it be saved on my computer in a specified folder."
2. **Distractions** - cell phones and smart phones can be a big productivity-killer. Keep your phone in a designated location and check it during breaks – not every time you hear a buzz, a beep or a ring. Remember, these are not only distractions to you but also your co-workers who have to listen to the annoying buzz, beeps and rings. A distraction to you can also mean a distraction to your fellow co-workers.
3. **Supplies** - items that you will likely need throughout the course of a day such as your laptop, pens, planner and post-it notes all deserve a spot on your desk. Other items such as tape, stapler, paper clips and envelopes should be neatly stored inside your desk. This keeps less-frequently-used items from taking up valuable desk real estate, but ensures that they are easily accessible.
4. **Organize Your Computer** - when your favorite desktop background starts getting obscured with icons, it is time to de-clutter your virtual desktop. File away documents that you'll need again, and send everything else off to the virtual recycle bin. Not only will you have a much more attractive looking desktop screen, but you will save countless hours searching for your important documents and information.
5. **Wipe Down Your Desktop** – now that we are into spring and hopefully the end of the flu season, it is really a good idea to sanitize your keyboard, mouse, desktop and telephone using anti-bacterial wipes. It has been said that the top of our desks and keyboards contain the most germs. I, personally, do this on a regular basis starting in the fall and continuing through the spring to keep my desk germ free and me from getting sick. Other people in your office will not only use your phone at time, but use your keyboards, mouse and desk in general, leaving germs behind. This is a great way for germs to run rampant through an office very quickly.
6. **Slow Down** - One of the biggest pitfalls to organization is finding the time. Invest the time to properly organize your space so files, supplies and other items are in an easy-to-find place. Once you have created a system that works for you, stick to it! Spending a few seconds to return items to a designated spot will help you save lots of time in the long run.

I hope some of these ideas will help you with your work space spring cleaning. Happy Spring!!!

# NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



## MCPA NEEDS YOU!

There are many opportunities to volunteer your time and talents to this wonderful association that we all appreciate. Get involved! Please contact an officer or board member for more information!

### ALL MEMBERS INVITED

All members are invited to come to a board meeting to express their opinions about issues affecting the Association. Meetings are held at *Mannion Prior, LLP. Mannion Prior, LLP, 840 First Avenue Suite 100, King of Prussia.*

### UPCOMING MEETING DATES

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## CLE BREAKFAST MEETING MARCH 10, 2018

By Nancy Piechota

On March 10, 2018 we held our annual Breakfast CLE Member Meeting. What a beautiful morning to gather with fellow members and listen to our speaker Sameer Somal about the topic *"Introduction to Online Reputation Management (ORM) For Attorney and Clients Part I."*

Sameer is the Chief Financial Officer at Blue Ocean Global Wealth and Blue Ocean Global Technology. Sameer is a CFA Charterholder, a CFP® professional and a Chartered Alternative Investment Analyst. Sameer is a member of the Speakers Series at the Johns Hopkins University Carey School of Business. Sameer is also a frequent speaker on the digital revolution, succession planning, technology, diversity, retirement, financial planning, entrepreneurship and leadership. In May of 2017, Sameer was named an Iconic Leader Creating a Better World for All by the All Ladies League & Women's Economic Forum.

A recent FindLaw and Thomson Reuters survey revealed that more people use the Internet to find a lawyer rather than ask a friend or relative to recommend one. A study showed approximately 75% of those who have looked for an attorney in the past year used went online.

Sameer talked about the Digital Revolution, known as the "Third Industrial Revolution". This is where we went from mechanical, analog or electronic technology to digital technology with adaptation of digital computers and digital record keeping that continues today.

We learned how important our firm's online reputation is such as:

- ⇒ A positive online reputation can help your law firm attract new clients.
- ⇒ A negative reputation can make any potential clients less likely to contact your law firm.

Next, we learned exactly what Online Reputation Management ("ORM") was. First, it was explained to us what reputation means. Reputation is comprised of impressions, emotions and perception. Reputation can be defined as the estimation in which a business, person or thing is held by a particular community or public at large.

Well then what is ORM? We learned that ORM is the process of building, monitoring and repairing digital content when an attorney, law firm or client is searched for online.

You ask yourself if the online reputation of a lawyer or law firm is critical to their success and their continued growth. Imagine what negative remarks or comments can do to their success or growth.



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## CLE BREAKFAST MEETING MARCH 10, 2018 CONTINUED

We learned that social media allows negative comments to be shared and circulated among large numbers of internet users. The confidence of existing and prospective clients depends on positive press. Sameer told us that businesses and individuals must take proactive measures to prevent and address unfavorable or defamatory content right away. They shouldn't just sit by and think that no one will notice it or that one negative review will matter.



Why is ORM so important you ask? A reputation management service can protect organizations from unwelcome content and restore online equity. Consumers value interacting with a business or service providers with a positive online reputation. ctively monitoring your reputation can prevent adverse news or negative commentary from influencing the decisions of a potential client or even current clients.

Sameer told us this interesting fact - Google and search engines influence our perception and opinion of a particular person, company or even organization. Though the world is literally at our fingertips, most people only bother to go through information on the first page of Google. He stated that in fact, 94% of people only look at the first page of Google search results. I never really thought about it, but I do that also and never realized it until he pointed this out.

### GOOGLE:

*People perform searches for many reasons including researching their next attorney. Every internet search done on a law firm or attorney will yield a Search Engine Results Page or (SERP).*

We learned Build, Repair and Monitor.

Build your online reputation through digital assets, strong profiles, SEO and thoughtful marketing. A strong online web presence lessens the impact of negative posts and drives sustainable growth in revenue.

**Repair:** Work must begin immediately a business or individual's online reputation affected by negative posts from a

Noah's Rule  
"predicting rain doesn't  
count; building arks does".

when  
is

dissatisfied customer, ex-employee or legal matter.

ORM Repair would be needed from: consumer feedback websites, court case filings, defamation bloggers, embarrassing images & videos, information and profiles that are erroneous, slander, scam reports and even past employee slander.

When Sameer is called to assist a client he will conduct a thorough analysis and share a client-specific ORM report.

Based upon his assessment and client feedback, he will provide the time frame required to suppress the negative links. Pricing is determined by the number of negative keywords, validity of the negative content, and prominence of the hosting website.

Keywords: ideas and topics of what your is about. They are the words and phrases searchers enter into search engines, also called "search queries." Primary keywords are simply words and phrases your page consists of generally.

**CONTINUED**

## **CLE BREAKFAST MEETING MARCH 10, 2018 CONTINUED**

### **Monitor:**

The monitoring stage happens when attorneys or firms get top ranking on search engine result pages. Building stage is then no longer needed but monitoring is. Sameer would monitor a client's online reputation to make sure their preferred search ranking remains.

### ***10 Strategies to Improve Law Firm's Online Reputation:***

1. Learn to See Your Online Reputation as a Valuable Asset
2. Create a Client-Focused Corporate Culture
3. Encourage Online Engagement by Providing Education
4. Prioritize Review Websites Relevant to the Legal Segment
5. Don't Focus on Association-Based Awards and Rankings
6. Diversify Your Practice to Include Review-Conducive Clients and Cases
7. Learn the Ins and Outs of Responding to Online Reviews
8. Create and Enhance Professional Profiles on Review Websites
9. Consider Blogging to Tackle Commonly Escalated Review Issues While Protecting Privacy
10. Use Your Online Reputation to Enhance Your Offline Marketing

### ***Misconceptions by Lawyers about Online Reviews:***

- I only need to pay attention to bad reviews to maintain my law firm's online reputation.
- I only need to worry about reviews on law-related websites.
- I have to pay attention to every online review site to effectively manage my law firm's online reputation.
- It's too hard for my clients to leave reviews.
- Reviews alone will make my firm successful.

This presentation had so much great information in it that it was really hard to put everything in my synopsis. What great and interesting information Sameer provided in Part I makes waiting for Part II tough. Join us as Sameer presents Part II in September. Watch for the announcement of the date, time and place for the September Member Meeting and CLE.

We would like to thank Sameer for taking the time out of his busy schedule to join us for our annual breakfast meeting and for his interesting and informative presentation. I, for one, am really looking forward to attending Part II!



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## DIGITAL REPUTATION MANAGEMENT 101

By Sameer S. Somal, CFA



Reputation is everything.

Many of the opportunities presented to us come based on our reputations.

Yet reputation is an intangible, involves impressions, emotions, and perceptions encompassing the estimation in which a business, person, or thing is held by a specific group or the public at large.

*“Identity will be the most valuable commodity for citizens in the future, and it will exist primarily online.”*  
— Eric Schmidt

ambiguous, and complex concept. It

Businesses grow and succeed through their reputations. A digital presence and online communication strategy are not just part of a company’s reputation, they form the firm’s foundation — the most critical component to its survival and growth.

But compared with traditional brand marketing, digital reputation management is a new frontier where applicable guidance and proven research are in limited supply.

Almost two decades ago, Mark Bunting and Roy Lipski proposed that online perception and opinion, regardless of its accuracy, have as great an effect on a company’s reputation as the company’s actions. These perceptions, quickly formed and shared across myriad traditional and digital platforms, create both reputational opportunities and challenges.



### How much is a reputation worth?

Today, we interact with friends, family, and colleagues largely through text messages, email, and social media, where perception and reality are often confused. So both

digital and in-person first impressions are critical.

Traditional financial education supplies a comprehensive framework for understanding the valuation of tangible assets, including the value of public and private companies. Portfolio managers and analysts make investment decisions after thorough research into a firm’s fundamentals. However, the subjective valuation of the firm’s intangibles — brand equity, relationship capital, patents, and, of course, reputation, among them — creates a larger challenge.

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## DIGITAL REPUTATION MANAGEMENT 101 CONTINUED

Burson-Marsteller, a leading global public relations and communications firm, found that 95% of the CEOs surveyed believe that corporate reputation plays an important or very important role in the achievement of business objectives. But, only 19% of these same executives had a formal system for measuring the value of that reputation.

Beyond recognizing that it does affect a firm's value and long-term growth prospects, we don't understand reputation all that well. When drawing conclusions on valuation, we often lump brand value and reputation in with other components that are inherently difficult to quantify — under the balance sheet's goodwill line item.

Reputation is both a repository of shareholder value and a means for growing it.

“Decisions to buy or not buy from a company have increasingly less to do with place, packaging, or promotion and almost everything to do with how much your friends, family, and even strangers provide online assurance that the product or service is worth the cost.” — Elaine Cheng, chief information officer, CFA Institute .

Brands accounted for more than 30% of the S&P 500 stock market value, according to The Economist. That is the consensus among corporate CEOs. Sixty percent of chief executives surveyed by the World Economic Forum and public relations firm Fleishman-Hillard said they believed corporate brand and reputation represented more than 40% of their company's market capitalization.

Better reputations do not guarantee growth, but they certainly expand the opportunities to achieve it. So firms need to focus on reputation management when they align their strategic communication with investor and client preferences. Moreover, proactive reputation management gives business owners insights into their strengths and weaknesses.

The framework for making informed inferences about reputational value has become clearer over the past decade. The “2017 US Reputation Dividend Report” supports the view that investor confidence derived from a firm's reputation drives shareholder value. Indeed, one out of every five dollars of market capitalization is a product of the confidence instilled by a company's reputation — that's about \$4.6 trillion in the first half of 2017, according to the report. Moreover, the 10 most economically powerful reputation assets among US corporations accounted for close to half of their corporate market cap at the start of 2017.



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## DIGITAL REPUTATION MANAGEMENT 101 CONTINUED

Strong brands and proactive reputation management help to mitigate investor risk and reassure for shareholders when earnings are weak.

**The world is literally at our fingertips.** So how can we protect our reputations? It starts with searches.

Every internet search yields a search engine results page (SERP). Every second there are 63,000 Google searches, and every day there are 5.5 billion.

People perform these searches for countless reasons. They may be googling themselves or looking for their next investment manager. They might even be googling you. After all, it's a fair bet that anyone to whom we hand our business card will search online for more information. Positive online reviews from real clients will foster trust with prospects and referrals. Conversely, negative hits to our online reputation will quickly damage our offline one.

*"It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you'll do things differently."*

— Warren Buffett

Search engines employ complicated algorithms. If a negative post cites relevant links and information, it will leapfrog more laudatory results. A negative link is the last thing users should see when they search for your business.

Unfortunately, most people only go through information on the first page of a search. In fact, 95% just look at that first page of Google search results, and 67% of all clicks are confined to the top five listings. So if positive information is further down, it is effectively buried.

**Guilty Until Proven Innocent.** In the age of digital Darwinism, we are now guilty until proven innocent. And even when we are innocent, we may still be guilty online.

Consider this scenario: A portfolio manager at a wealth management firm is wrongly accused of negligence by a disgruntled client. The baseless charges are later dismissed, but when the firm is googled, the accusations appear high up on the first page of the search results.

Ignoring this digital footprint could have catastrophic consequences for the company. Left unchecked, the negative commentary will not only directly affect growth, but will also lead to tangible losses. A damaged online reputation can destroy an established firm and its brand.

So the best reputation offense is a strong defense. A proactive presence builds digital resilience, protects a firm's reputation, and makes it easier to repair reputational damage.

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## NOTARY FAQ: ASSESSING A SIGNER'S MENTAL CAPACITY

*By David Thun on May 04, 2017 in Best Practices*

If you've ever had to notarize the signature of someone who's ill, hospitalized or affected by other health issues, you know it can be tough sometimes to tell if the person is signing willingly and knows what they are doing. But do you have a legal obligation to judge a signer's mental capacity?

Mike Phillips, Director and Supervising Attorney with the Jewish Family Service Patient Advocacy Program and an NNA 2015 Notary of the Year Honoree, spoke with the Notary Bulletin to answer some common questions about a signer's mental capacity.



### 1. What does assessing a signer's "mental capacity" mean when performing a notarization?

It's a tricky term, but I would say: Having the mental ability to understand the contents of the document that the person is about to sign, in combination with a reasonable understanding of the implications and consequences from signing the document.

### 2. Do Notaries have a legal obligation to assess a signer's mental capacity?

There's a difference between a legal requirement and a standard of professional practice. Even if not required by law, it's a good professional practice to look for signs that the signer may be unaware, confused or unable to communicate.

### 3. Since Notaries usually aren't doctors or trained healthcare professionals, what methods can they use to assess a signer's mental state?

The bulk of my work is done with people in psychiatric hospitals, so this is an ongoing issue for me. You have to be careful with people in a hospital setting. On the one hand, you want to protect a person in a fragile state from being forced to sign. On the other hand, Notaries need to be careful not to set so high a bar that you prevent someone who hasn't lost capacity from signing.

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## NOTARY FAQ: ASSESSING A SIGNER'S MENTAL CAPACITY CONTINUED



Personally, I tend to look for “negative” warning signs or symptoms. If the signer is communicating incoherently, or there are family members or others in the room insisting the documents be signed but the person seems unable or unwilling, those are all red flags.

**4. If a family member or other party insists on proceeding with a notarization even if the signer appears confused, what should the Notary do?**

You can request the person leave the room. But be sensitive to the signer's feelings. Don't forcibly throw a family member out if it upsets the signer. But again, if there's someone else present urgently demanding the document be notarized and the signer seems confused or unwilling, that's a clear red flag something is

wrong.

Sometimes it's suggested that Notaries ask a staff member or doctor at a healthcare facility about a signer's condition. But remember you have to be careful of privacy laws regarding medical information. A doctor or caregiver may not be allowed to share sensitive medical information with you.

**5. Any suggestions how Notaries can avoid being entangled in lawsuits or legal claims regarding a signer's mental capacity?**

Don't get yourself into a situation where you could be caught up in a lawsuit if a bit of careful practice can prevent it. In situations like this, document details in a written record. If you use a journal, document any positive or negative concerns about the signer's condition in your journal entry. That should help reduce the risk of possible legal proceedings for negligence.

*David Thun is an Associate Editor at the National Notary Association. This article was originally published by the National Notary Association. And is reprinted with permission.*



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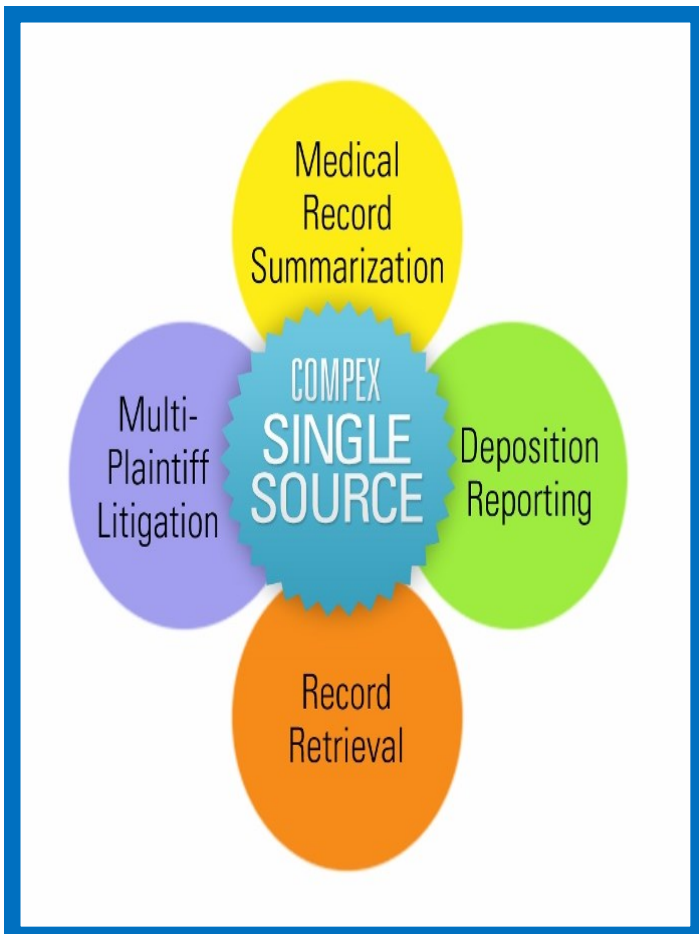
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*Nancy is a Paralegal at the law firm of Mannion Prior, LLP in King of Prussia. Nancy also sits on the Board of Directors and also serves as Chair of the Marketing Committee. She lives in Berks County with her husband, Joe and rescue dogs.*

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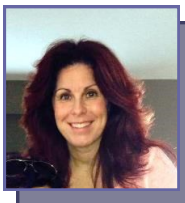
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*Kelly is a Paralegal at the law firm of Kane, Pugh, Knoell, Troy & Kramer in its Norristown office. She currently serves as the Association Treasurer, a position she has held since 2013. She is also the Job Bank Coordinator for the MCPA. She lives in Phoenixville with her husband and cat, Emmett J.*

***Christopher Gregg—Treasurer***

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*Chris works for the law firm, Kane, Pugh, Knoell, Troy & Kramer as a Paralegal. He has been an active board member for the past 3 years and serves as its Social Media Committee Chair. Chris was born and raised in Willow Grove and still resides there with his family and their dachshund Queenie.*

***Jen Kuemmerle, CRP, Pa.C.P.—Secretary***

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*Jen is the Vice President of Finance at The Luther Woods Nursing & Rehabilitation located in Hatboro. She has served on the Association's Board of Directors and was recently elected to serve as its Secretary. She lives in Hatboro with her husband and two children.*

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**Noreen Messmer, Pa. C.P.**  
(2017—2019)

Noreen is a Paralegal with the law firm of Ford & Buckman, P.C. in Blue Bell and has worked with Sarah Ford, Esquire for over 40 years. She has been a Board member since 2010 and also serves on the Hospitality/Planning Committee. Noreen lives in Blue Bell and is the mother of three and Nana to three granddaughters.



**Shari Weber Bradley, Pa. C.P.**  
(2016—2018)

Shari works for Peter E. Bort, Esquire at Bort Law which is a general practice firm. A long time member of MCPA, she currently serves as the Webmaster. Shari lives in Eagleville and is the mother of two twenty something boys and stepmother of three teen boys.



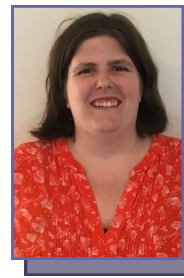
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