

THE MODERN LAWYER

By *Stefan T. E. Thomas, Esq.*

“You don’t look like a lawyer!” A comment heard all too often by the modern lawyer. The lawyer who takes advantage of artistic freedom in her choice of hair-style, shoe, or pant suit. Or, the lawyer who demonstrates his creativity through his choice of suit-fit, lack of tie, or color of apparel. The legal field has been impacted by flourishing media forms and as partakers and members become younger, a particular component of the legal field has been highly impacted—the lawyer.

The modern lawyer has no particular face, color, or creed. He is comfortable with his self-expression and able to bring that expression to the professional platform. Being the modern lawyer is more than a physical appearance, it is recognizing physical and metaphysical changes in society and the need to evolve to better assist and propel the law. There are various factors that drive the modern lawyer, she effects all areas of law, and he understands how to execute his modernity so it is appreciated, respected, and admired.

Driving Factors

The modern lawyer is no novel concept. He is simply more prevalent due to the change in times. Without going in-depth, the evolution of society, Internet communication, and opinionated branding has impacted the legal industry. Diversity in culture and background and the desire to be innovative, coupled with the aforementioned, drive the emergence of the modern lawyer.

Effected Areas

The modern lawyer is creating waves in the legal gamut, in numerous areas, from business development to environmental dynamics.

Regarding business development, it is important to understand that as society evolves so too must the lawyer’s appeal and approach. Cliental increasingly have various backgrounds ranging from blue-collar types to “creatives.” These individuals, entrepreneurs,

social moguls, and sorts are seeking legal relations with which they are comfortable.

Sought out are legal professionals who have a level of humanness/relatability and transparency in the execution of a practice. But, the modern lawyer should be aware of the cliental and potential cliental that prefers a more traditional style and could be affronted by the modern lawyer’s approach.

Occupational environments are impacted by the emersion of the modern lawyer. Some environments are receptive and learn from the modern lawyer’s approach, allowing flexibility and advancement in environmental practices. But, some maintain a traditional decorum that resists this approach and severs the relationship. Some encourage growth and offer guidance, while others build a blockade. Thus, she must choose her environment wisely.

As the modern lawyer develops, he or she should be aware of several basic principles: recognize the environment in which he or she does business; defer to commonsense; and execute his or her essence with confidence. Obviously, these rules are not guarantees to success neither are they highly conjectured principles for that matter. But, these principles should allow the modern lawyer to be an asset in whatever environment she finds herself.

Recognize the environment

The modern lawyer must be aware of the environment in which he or she is conducting business. For instance – in the courtroom, it is still a good idea for men to wear a blazer and tie to respect the courtroom decorum. Recognizing that each judge conducts her courtroom differently, one is better to air on the side of caution. In another instance, when dealing with individuals new to the legal industry, the modern lawyer should forego the legalese and starch demeanor and be understandable and approachable. All environments beg

for different approaches. Be cognizant of those environments and approaches to afford a more successful situation.

Practice commonsense

The importance of commonsense cannot be emphasized enough. It is great to be expressive and bring out new and invigorating approaches, ideas, and execution styles. However, without the exercise of commonsense, ideas and information may be rejected. If you believe what you are doing or will do may offend a reasonable person, it may be good to air on the side of caution.

Be confident

Confidence is too often overlooked. Bringing newness to any environment can be intimidating, however that newness will never be understood or respected if the executor does not believe it himself. The modern lawyer should be sure of himself when he decides to look, speak, or think differently. She should be confident in her capabilities, uniqueness, and style. However, confidence should be preceded by great product.

Great product makes the modern lawyer feel better about his innovations and it allows partakers or colleagues to respect the innovations. Great product expands the parameters for the modern lawyer because when the initial innovation, which should be mild, is successful, the mind wonders what successes could occur with greater or more fully developed innovations. But, none of this is possible without confidence.

So...who is the modern lawyer?



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