

Engaging Your Core

By Jill Snitcher McQuain

Some of you may know that I am somewhat of a fitness geek (some might say a teeny bit maniacal). I enjoy various forms of cross-training and weightlifting. In the past few months, I have stepped up my training substantially – trying mostly to get through a plateau and ignore my age. A common chant I often hear in various training classes is “engage your core.” I have come to appreciate that, if you really concentrate on engaging your core, you can augment the strength in your legs, hips, and arms with remarkable returns.

For me, my fitness regimen is as much about mental health as it is about physical health. It is my time during the day to clear my head, which (ironically) makes me think even more. During these sessions of intense concentration and contemplation, it occurred to me that “engaging your core” has meaning far beyond the gym. By engaging your core, you are much stronger – whether it’s physically, mentally, or professionally. Think about what your core strengths are (beyond your abs), focus on them and you, too, will be stronger for it. And, so will your career.

The Columbus Bar has spent a lot of time over the past year focusing on its core strengths throughout the Long Range Planning Process.¹ The Board has devoted significant attention to deciding what our core strengths are – gone are the days of trying to be all things to all people. Indeed, it is a valid exercise to focus on what we do well and how we can do it better.

We didn’t just ask ourselves what we’re doing right or wrong. We went out to the legal community at large, talking with lawyers, judges, court personnel, law school deans, and even some public constituencies. And, we heard from national consultants. While we learned a lot through the process, we also appreciated hearing how much the legal community respects the bar association and what we do. In some ways, it was reinforcement that we’re heading in the right direction.

In the end, it comes down to vision. The role of the Columbus Bar is to be a key partner in the professional success of legal professionals – lawyers, judges, paralegals, and law students. By focusing on this core constituency, we will become stronger, and we will make our legal system stronger. (The final Strategic Vision is available on our website.)

The Columbus Bar leadership understands that a long range plan is not shelf-paper. It is a guide for fulfilling its fiduciary obligations to its membership and ensuring the overall strength of the organization. It is something we will have to concentrate on to make sure we remain strong, both organizationally and financially. It, and you, are our core. If we engage our core, we, as an organization, will be stronger for it.

And yet (to invoke another fitness adage), sometimes you need a spotter. Even when you may be engaging your core and giving it your all, you just can’t quite seem to get through those last few reps. When your strength gives out,

so does your form, and that’s when mishaps occur. A spotter gives you that extra edge you need to hit your goal without calamity.

Even though we might be giving it our all at the CBA under a seemingly well-guided path, our form could suffer, and we may need a spotter. Feel free to step in and give us a hand and we’ll do the same. If you find you are having trouble reaching that next level, call us. That’s why we’re here.



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¹ The definition of “Long Range” has admittedly changed over time. With the advent of technology, volatility in the marketplace, and generational distinctions, forecasting more than three years out is difficult, if not dangerous.

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Sometimes, the peanut butter, as well intentioned as it may be, is just unwilling to meet the jelly half way.

That’s where I come in.



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