



Straightline

Standing Firm

How to state your case, win over detractors, and see your ideas get implemented

So you're in a meeting—could be a Fortune 500 board of directors or your school's PTA—and the next item on the agenda is something you care deeply about. Unfortunately, the rest of the room either doesn't care much about it or, worse, they disagree with you on it. Vehemently.

If the thought of speaking up in such an environment fills you with anxiety, you're not alone. Many women are reluctant to chime in, even when they care deeply about the subject being discussed.

In this issue of *Straightline*, we'll dissect the critical components of making your case, show the necessity of bringing in opposition (it's not the reason you think), and illustrate how three simple words can mean the difference between furrowed brows and nodding heads.

MAKING YOUR CASE

First, you need to know your case—cold—but don't let the minutiae bog you down. The devil may be in the details, but arguments are usually won or lost on big ideas. So make your arguments succinct, grounded in common sense, and resonant to your intended audience.

The right language can also help. Try working in one of these three powerful words: fairness, choice or accountability. According to Chris St. Hilaire, author of "27 Powers of Persuasion," they almost invariably get heads nodding in agreement. They're used consistently in politics (note how many pieces of legislation or advocacy movements use them), and with good reason. Who could oppose fairness, or the concept of choice, or people being held accountable? If you can frame your idea with one of these thoughts, you've lowered the barrier to buy-in.

Obviously, knowing your audience and their hot-button issues is critical to winning them over. Is their chief concern budgetary? Reduced paperwork? Retaining talented workers? Whatever your audience's key issues are, speak to them. That may require some re-crafting of your message, but if your idea won't improve your audience's world somehow, it won't get much of a hearing.

Mostly, though, keep it simple. Your idea isn't about reducing copy costs by 13 percent. It's about saving money that can be used to upgrade technology. Present your idea as a way to achieve something everybody in the room already agrees on.

Finally, adjust your attitude before you start talking. When you arrive, find something to like about everybody in the room. It may just be their tie or their hair (although feel free to make it more substantive), but turning negative feelings about your audience into positive ones will come through in your demeanor.

ANTICIPATING OPPOSITION

So now you know your arguments, you know your audience's concerns, and you've found something to like about everybody, even the blowhards. All that's left is presenting your idea, putting it to a vote, and popping the cork on your celebratory

Making your case, particularly in front of a hostile audience, takes both moxie and practice. But whether you're advocating for a good idea or speaking out against a bad one, preparation and common sense are your best friends.

champagne, right? Wrong. First, you have to get past opponents and generate enough enthusiasm for your ideas that they do more than get approved; they get implemented.

Your opponents aren't necessarily wrong or evil. They may just have interests opposed to yours or they may simply be reluctant to change. Whatever their motivation, according to John Kotter, the author of "Buy-In: Saving Your Good Idea From Getting Shot Down" and professor emeritus at Harvard Business School, they will probably use one of four tactics to defeat your idea:

Confusion. By throwing enough objections at your idea, even if those objections don't necessarily make sense, your opponents can succeed in confusing others enough that they don't feel that they have the time or energy to untangle it all and determine whether your idea has merit.

Fear mongering. Merely by injecting the phrase "slippery slope" into the conversation, those who oppose your ideas

Welcome to Straightline

Straightline is a publication from Andrews Kurth for women, by women. We will give you the bottom line on women's issues, be on the front line for timely substantive legal topics, and serve as the hotline for firm news. We'll introduce you to fresh faces at Andrews Kurth, provide a pipeline of topical legal updates, and promise to infuse some fun features, facts and resources along the way. So join us for what promises to be Straight Talk on women's issues. No lawyer-speak. No double talk. Just the most direct line between you and our women lawyers.

can raise concerns that the only logical result of your plan is bankruptcy, homelessness, humiliation and ruin. Who on earth would want to take that risk?

Death by delay. By far the most effective and most reasonable-sounding opposition to an idea is to recommend "further study." Nothing kills an idea faster than inertia, and simply tabling an item for further discussion (maybe next month, maybe not) can be the clearest path to victory—for your opponents.

Character assassination. Because of the risk of backlash, this tactic is rarely used. But when done right, it can be very effective. Opponents can question your or your supporters' background, expertise and motivations, thereby planting the seed of doubt among any potential backers.

Anticipating how opponents could attack your proposition is the first step to being prepared to address them. What possible conflict of interest (or appearance of conflict of interest) do you or your idea's other proponents have? What might happen if the idea is delayed? What "slippery slope" scenario will opponents likely paint? Spend some time being your idea's harshest critic and compose responses to these possible attacks.

"Standing Firm" continued on page 2



"Like" us on Facebook
Andrews Kurth LLP



Follow us on Twitter
twitter.com/andrewskurthllp

Sidelines

The Dallas Association of Young Lawyers selected **Tamaron Houston** as their “Lawyer to Watch” for June 2010.

The Washington, DC office participated in the Lawyers Have Heart Run/Walk on June 12. The Andrews Kurth team included Charles Crout, **Diane Ham**, **Annisha Hayes**, **Fran Hewitt**, Warren Mickens, **Elizabeth Parris**, **Shemin Proctor**, **Lisa Purdy**, Bill Rappolt, **Lauren Staph**, **Liz Tingey**, Andy Tucker and several guests and dogs.

Vera Rechsteiner moderated a panel at Platts 13th Annual Private Power in Central America conference in Miami Beach, Florida, on June 25. Her panel was entitled “Financing Power Projects in the Current Climate.” Andrews Kurth was a sponsor of the conference.

Andrews Kurth was a Patron Sponsor of the 85th Annual National Bar Association (NBA) Convention, which attracted close to 1,000 attendees and took place August 9–13 in New Orleans. **Shemin Proctor** was featured on a Managing Partner panel; **Angel Hall** participated in the Young Lawyers Division activities; and **Shemin** and **Elizabeth Campbell** participated in the Corporate Leadership Forum.

Rick Drom and **Jennifer Spina** gave a CLE presentation on North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) compliance issues to employees of Baltimore Gas & Electric on August 30.

On September 11, Andrews Kurth helped sponsor the 25th Annual UNCF Walk for Education held at Tom Bass Park in Houston. The firm had 20 walkers participate and raised approximately \$1,800 in funds to help support the education of college students in Texas.

On October 5, Rick Drom and **Lisa Purdy** delivered four CLE presentations to the Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC) Commissioners and members of their staff. The KCC is the public utility regulatory agency for the State of Kansas.

At The Williams Companies Legal Conference 2010, held on October 5 in Tulsa, Oklahoma, **Shemin Proctor** participated on a panel titled “Care and Feeding of In-house and Outside Counsel.”

The annual meeting of the National Conference of Bankruptcy Judges was held in New Orleans October 13–16th. On October 14, **Robin Russell** served as a panel member on the ABA/NCBJ Presentation “Something in the Way They Move: Motion Practice in Bankruptcy Appeals.”

Kathleen Wu spoke at the recent National Dialogue on Workplace Flexibility on October 20 in a panel titled “Flexible Work Arrangements.” The dialogue—the first in a series—was hosted by the Women’s Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor and discussed the challenges and successes of making flexibility work for businesses. Kathleen also authored an article, “Law Firm Clique: High School With Nicer Clothes,” which was referenced in two *ABA Journal* articles online.

On October 28, the Dallas office received the Bronze Award for pro bono service from the Dallas Bar Association. This award is based on total hours of pro bono service provided through the Dallas Volunteer Attorney Program (DVAP), a joint program of the DBA and Legal Aid of Northwest Texas. Pro Bono Committee Member and pro bono coordinator for the Dallas office, **Linda Stahl**, accepted the award on behalf of the firm.

The Houston and Austin offices raised funds and participated in the 2010 Race for the Cure®, respectively held on October 2 and November 7. Funds raised for both races will be donated to the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation.

The New York office was a sponsor at the 25th Annual Benefit Dinner for the New York Police & Fire Widows’ and Children’s Benefit Fund, which provides for the families of police and firefighters who are killed in the line of duty with an annual gift. The dinner was held on November 3.

continued on page 3

Standing Firm

Continued from page 1

Preparation is obviously key. And the higher the stakes, the more preparation you’ll need. You probably won’t be able to foresee every possible objection, but you should have a handle on the major themes. If you don’t have much prep time, even a minute or two spent writing down your most important points is better than nothing.

STYLE POINTS

Regardless of the content of your responses (which will vary, of course, according to the situation), keep these four ideas in mind:

Invite your attackers in the room. Of course, one reason to have the opposition involved is that they may find legitimate holes in your plan and help you to fix them. But the most important reason to bring in the opposition is to attract attention. The biggest impediment to being heard is that your audience is probably tuned out and uninterested. Why listen to the woman at the front of the table when there’s e-mail to be checked or games to be played on your phone? But controversy piques interest; it engages otherwise

bored, overwhelmed or distracted audience members and tells them that maybe this meeting is more interesting than they thought it would be. Getting others engaged, and winning them over, can turn a “sure, why not?” vote into a “heck, yes, and what can I do to help?” vote.

Keep your answers brief and based in common sense, not bogged down in details. State your case and stop. Talking the other side into submission is a risky tactic.

Be respectful at all times. Chances are you’re not going to change the mind of someone who is adamantly opposed to you, but if you are sufficiently respectful and knowledgeable, you stand a better chance of winning over the undecideds, who would be turned off by sarcasm and anger.

Watch the rest of the audience. Unless you’re making your pitch to an audience of one, the others in the audience will give a good indication of where you stand. Are they nodding when you talk? Do they roll their eyes when your opponent makes a point? Are they texting or otherwise not paying attention? Keying in to the rest of the room—not just your opponent(s)—can help you adapt your presentation (or know when to stop talking).

Making your case, particularly in front of a hostile audience, takes both moxie and practice. But whether you’re advocating for a good idea or speaking out against a bad one, preparation and common sense are your best friends.

You may not win them all, but it’s better to speak up and risk losing than to stay silent. ■

Change for the Better in 2011

Our guide to easing into the new year with a few positive changes

With the new year looming in just a few weeks, it’s time to start thinking of how to ease our way into 2011. We may consider ourselves past making resolutions, per se, but that doesn’t mean we can’t find it in ourselves to make a few positive changes.

Here’s a *Straightline* guide for making some of those changes that may have eluded us in the past:

Get organized. There are as many ways to conquer clutter and disorganization as there are junk drawers in your home, but you won’t do any of them if they don’t work for you. So first, figure out what kind of organizer you are. Do you prefer to dedicate a weekend to a project and bang it all out at once, or are you more likely to do it if you work on it for 30 minutes a day for a few weeks?



If you’re the “bang it all out at once” type, you have to schedule the time to do the job or it won’t get done. Once you’ve cleared your calendar for a half-day, day or weekend, analyze the room you’re organizing, write down your specific problems in that room, and draft your strategy for solving those problems. For guidance, Julie Morgenstern’s “Organizing from the Inside Out” and Marilyn Bohn’s “Go Organize!” both offer plenty of room-specific tips.

If you’re not up for that approach yet, take a more piecemeal approach and dedicate 15–30 minutes a day to decluttering and organizing. Even if you skip one day a week, you’re still spending 1.5–3 hours a week decluttering and organizing the hot spots in your home or office, and you probably weren’t doing that before. (For more tips on decluttering in 15 minutes a day, check out flylady.net, an internet-based domestic goddess.)

An Organizing Tool Kit should make the job easier, Marilyn Bohn advises. You’ll need: a timer, to take regular breaks or just limit how long you spend in any one room or drawer; a tape measure, to measure spaces for containers, etc.; wide double-sided tape, to put under containers in drawers to keep them from sliding; cleaning cloth and

cleaning spray, to clean shelves and other surfaces as you clear them; notepad and pen, to jot down notes about what you need to buy or fix; hammer and screwdriver, to hang pictures and make other minor repairs or adjustments.

Eat better. If you’ve tried to lose weight several times and either gave up or succeeded but gained it all back, the problem isn’t that you didn’t have the right program. Any nutritious diet plan, when followed, should result in weight loss. It’s the “when followed” part that trips most of us up. Our schedules get hectic, we get tired and tell ourselves a cheeseburger and fries are okay this once, we feel deprived and suck up whatever candy we can find—you name it, we’ve done it.

Of course you can lose weight, if you can get your head in the game and develop coping strategies for those times that sap our willpower and determination. Judith Beck’s “Beck Diet Solution” suggests a 6-week, cognitive therapy approach that attempts to change people’s approach to food and exercise by practicing mindful eating, exercising the “resistance muscle,” distracting yourself when you want to eat, ignoring cravings (apparently it’s possible), and getting back on track after slip-ups.

Show gratitude. Maybe you’re one of those people who immediately sends gracious, hand-written thank you notes after you receive a gift or act of kindness. We admire you and want to be like you when we grow up. There’s just something so old school and genuinely touching about a hand-written, personal thank you note. For those of us not yet in this wonderful habit, etiquette experts advise keeping on hand at all times a supply of note cards (the prettier and more elegant the better), a book of stamps, and return address labels. Also, vow to follow the 48-hour rule: All thank you notes must be written within 48 hours of the precipitating gift or kind act. This prevents the note from becoming the “to do” that never gets done. ■

Top of the Line

Holiday gift giving and New Year living



Holiday

1. FOR THE TECHIE

Leather antique case, \$38

Beautiful Skin's gorgeous handmade cases fit an iPhone, iPod or iPad. The London-based duo also designs Kindle and iPad skins. Made of 100% leather. www.etsy.com/shop/tovicorrie

2. FOR THE CHOCOHOLIC

Chalk-late Box, \$43

Send your friends a sweet holiday message with a one-of-a-kind chalk-late box by a criminal-attorney-turned-chocolate-maker. Box includes chalk, blank top and a delectable selection of chocolate bars. www.askinosie.com

3. FOR EVERY BUDGET

Scarf, \$195 & \$16.99

The scarf is a versatile gift for all seasons—and all budgets. Whether you choose a luxury piece like a lightweight merino wool shawl from Canadian textile designer Virginia Johnson (www.virginiajohnson.com) or a budget-friendly option like the All Eyes on Me from ModCloth (www.modcloth.com), you are sure to warm hearts.

4. FOR THE TRAVELER

Miniemergency Kit for Her, \$12

Good things come in small packages. And this one houses 16 emergency essentials. Choose from seven metallic cases. The mother/daughter company founded by two sisters and their mother specializes in novelty survival kits. www.msandmrs.com

5. FOR THE FASHIONISTA

Elva Fields Earrings and Necklaces, prices vary

Give your gem of a friend a timeless design by Emily Wheat Maynard, owner/designer of Elva Fields Jewelry. Elva Fields offers three treasured collections—Elva (one of a kind), June (limited editions), and Deb (vintage). www.elvafields.com



New Year

6. FOR YOUR COMFORT

Long Sleeve Pajamas, \$58

Refresh your basics in preparation for the new year. Treat yourself to a new set of pajamas by Needham Lane, sure to bring you colorful dreams. www.needhamlane.com

7. FOR YOUR KITCHEN

Dabney Lee Recipe Box and Cards, \$80

Whether you want to share your favorite holiday recipes or you simply need to organize your kitchen to get ready for the new year, this set of 50 monogrammed and lined cards with coordinating lucite box is a recipe for success. www.dabneyleeathome.com

8. FOR YOUR HEALTH

Fitbit, \$99

New year, new resolutions. So snap on a new gadget to help track the healthy details of your life. Fitbit tracks calories burned, steps taken, distance traveled and sleep quality by following your movement in 3-D and converting it into useful information. www.fitbit.com

9. FOR YOUR WORKOUT

Yoga-Paws, \$34.95

Start 2011 on the right foot with mini-size yoga mats for your hands and feet. Yoga Paws will keep you firmly planted while practicing yoga or Pilates. And they are small enough to stash in your purse or pocket for travel. www.yogapaws.com

10. FOR YOUR PHOTOS

Pinetti Vintage Moscow Photo Albums, \$115

Organize your newest holiday photos in a beautiful, metallic album from Jenni Bick Bookbinding that you will treasure for years to come. www.jennibick.com

Sidelines continued from page 2

We are pleased to announce the election of the 2010–2011 Policy Committee. The Policy Committee serves as the principal governing body of the law firm and is composed of partners elected by the general partnership. Women lawyers serving as members of the committee for the 2010–2011 term are **Terri Lacy** (Houston, Austin, Washington, DC), **Robin Russell** (Houston) and **Kathleen Wu** (Dallas). Advisory members include new member **Brigitte Kimichik** (Dallas) and **Shemin Proctor** (Washington, DC, Houston).

The Andrews Kurth Women's Initiative Team has pledged ongoing support for the Houston Area Women's Center (HAWC) projects this year, including the recent work at their shelter to revamp a waiting room and to refurbish and supply a work skills training center. To complete the room makeovers, the firm collected donations of computers, software, furniture, building supplies and other necessities, and pledged \$15,000. The leaders of these projects, associates **Lauren Charboneau** and **Angel Hall**, with the assistance of associates **Shay Bryson**, **Natalie Kurz** and **Morgan O'Neill**, assembled a team of lawyers to volunteer. The team consisted of **Marcela Berdion-Straub**, **Lauren Chapman**, James Greer, Philip Haines, Dilshad Kasmani, **Jennie Miller**, **DeLaina Mulcahy**, **Ebon Swofford**, **Laura Trenaman**, **Eleanor Verret** and **Chasless Yancy**. HAWC is an organization that assists those affected by domestic and sexual violence to help move their lives forward.

Elizabeth Campbell has developed an interactive presentation for attorneys, paralegals and human resource professionals that demonstrates the benefits of a comprehensive diversity and inclusion strategy from a legal or compliance perspective. Most recently, she delivered the presentation to the Houston Corporate Paralegal Association.

Gene Locke (president of the Houston Urban Debate League's Advisory Council), Griffin Vincent and **Elizabeth Campbell** (HUDL Board members) welcomed the start of HUDL's third year. HUDL now reaches almost 1,000 students in 30 HISD high schools. Andrews Kurth was instrumental in the creation of the HUDL, whose mission is to restore policy debate to the Houston public high schools.

Andrews Kurth received high rankings in the *Legal 500* (2010) and two of our women lawyers were specifically recognized for the work and achievements:

Melinda Brunger – Mergers, Acquisitions and Buyouts: M&A: Middle-Market (sub-\$500m)
Doris Rodriguez – Finance: Project Finance: (Advice to Lender)

Andrews Kurth was ranked as one of the "Top 100 Law Firms for Diversity" by the publishers of *MultiCultural Law* magazine. Additionally, the firm was ranked as one of the "Top 100 Law Firms for Women," "Top 50 Law Firms for Partners" and "Top 25 Law Firms for Native-Americans."

The Washington, DC office coordinated a two-week book drive to benefit DC LEARNs, an umbrella organization for adult, child and family literacy programs in the District of Columbia. The office collected more than 450 adult and children's books which were distributed to the various member organizations of DC LEARNs.

Together we can make a difference in the fight against hunger. To view a special Season's Greetings from Andrews Kurth, visit:

www.andrewskurth.com/2010holidaycard



“ACCESS”

2010 Word of the Year

Melinda Brunger, Partner, Andrews Kurth LLP



In 2010, following a protracted battle at the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), access to Board leadership in public companies became a viable objective for large shareholders or groups of shareholders.

Shareholders who seek to bring diversity or accountability to public Boards of Directors have access to the company’s proxy statement, provided they meet the standards in the SEC’s rules (and assuming the recent SEC stay is lifted). Conversely, company insiders are mastering new rules to manage or counter activists who seek access to the Board.

The SEC’s roadmap to access illustrates classic lessons in leadership, both for activists seeking access and for incumbents seeking to remain in sole control of the company. These classic lessons of leadership are described below in plain English, extracted from 451 pages of the SEC’s rule-making release. The full technical range of the rules appears on the SEC’s website at <http://sec.gov/rules/final/2010/33-9136.pdf>.

After 30 years of debate, leadership in the corporate world now follows 451 pages of rule-making summarized in a single word: access.

“ACCESS” in the form of Board representation favors investors who...

Hold a sizable investment. Hold 3% or more of the outstanding shares, either individually or in aggregate with other activist shareholders.

Attract support and team up. Form a group to meet the ownership threshold for the purpose of submitting director nominations, as the SEC release notes may be necessary in many cases. The nominating shareholder or group with the highest percentage of the company’s voting power would have its nominees included in the company’s proxy materials.

Take a long-term view and state future intentions. Hold the required shares continuously for 3 years before submitting nominations; in addition, agree to hold the qualifying shares through the date of the meeting, and state intentions for continued investment after the election of directors.

Demonstrate distinctive qualifications. Explain whether the nominee of the activist or group meets any director qualifications in the company’s governing documents.

State a concise position. State a concise position in support of the shareholder nominee or nominees. Under the rules, the activist’s supporting statement is limited to 500 words per nominee, and may be excluded by the company if it exceeds that length.



Maintain independence. Meet objective standards of independence. Access under SEC rules is limited to board candidates who meet objective independence standards of the relevant securities exchange. In addition, as a condition to using the access rules, no agreements may be entered into between the nominee and the company regarding the nomination.

Plan ahead. Prepare to nominate candidates in a stated window of time far ahead of the meeting date—no earlier than 150 days, and no later than 120 days, prior to the anniversary of the mailing date of the prior year’s proxy statement.

Anticipate challenges. Prepare to respond within 14 calendar days after receipt of any written notice from the company in order to correct any eligibility or procedural deficiencies identified by the company.

Managing or countering activists who seek “ACCESS” requires insiders to...

Know key stakeholders and their objectives. Monitor the company’s shareholder base, and respond to the financial and other objectives of key investors. Track voting results for the incumbent slate of directors and recent management proposals, and research the reasons behind any failed proposals or marginal votes.

Plan ahead. Strengthen the company’s board of directors and corporate governance quotient to retain the support of key investors.

Communicate. Develop and articulate a concise message about the company’s leadership objectives and business strategy.

Negotiate. If a nominating shareholder or group files a notice of nomination, consider negotiating. The company may agree to include the nominees of the activist or group on the company’s proxy card as company nominees, and in that case those nominees will count toward the 25% maximum set forth in the shareholder access rules.

Understand and use the rules preemptively. Understand the ground rules for activists to gain access, including standards of share ownership, and prepare to deny access when standards are not met. For example:

- Access is barred for any shareholder who holds any of the company’s securities with the purpose, or with the effect, of changing control of the company or to gain more than the applicable limit of seats on the Board allowed under the SEC access rules (the greater of one seat or 25%).
- If the activist or group fails to continue to hold the required number of shares through the meeting date, a company may exclude the nominee or nominees.
- A company may include disclosure in its proxy statement that the shareholder nominee would not meet the company’s subjective standards of independence or other qualifications.

If life imitates art, then (a fortiori, as lawyers might say), life imitates law. After 30 years of debate, leadership in the corporate world now follows 451 pages of rule-making summarized in a single word: *access*. ■

Fresh Faces

With much excitement, we welcome these new lawyers to the Andrews Kurth team. We are pleased to have them aboard and look forward to their contributions.



Dr. Ping Wang (Washington, DC)

has joined our Intellectual Property section as a Partner. Ping’s practice focuses on all aspects of intellectual property law, including patent prosecution, patent interference and patent litigation. Her experience is primarily in drafting, filing and prosecuting of patent applications in the fields of pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, chemical/organic chemistry and medical devices. She is also experienced in counseling clients on issues of patentability, non-infringement, freedom-to-operate, validity, design around and due diligence work in connection with mergers and acquisitions in the biotechnology industry. Ping earned her J.D. in 1999 from Franklin Pierce Law Center. She received her M.D. from Kunming Medical College in 1986.



Leasa Woods Anderson (Washington, DC)

has joined our Corporate Compliance, Investigations and Defense section as an Associate. She received her J.D. in 2005 from William and Mary School of Law and served as a member of the William and Mary Moot Court Team and Board. Leasa received her B.S. in biology in 2000 from the College of William and Mary.



Jessica Chue (New York)

has joined our Bankruptcy section as an Associate. Jessica advises investment banks and hedge funds on legal issues related to the purchase and sale of loans and securities of distressed and bankrupt companies, including bank debt, notes and trade claims. She received her J.D. in 2007 from Boston University School of Law and her B.S. in 2004 from Cornell University.



Crystal Jamison (Dallas)

has joined our Litigation section as an Associate. Crystal received her J.D. *cum laude* in 2009 from the SMU Dedman School of Law where she served as Staff Editor of the *SMU International Law Review*. She received her B.S. *cum laude* in journalism in 2005 from The University of Texas at Austin.



Serving Up 2011

New Year’s resolutions are just around the corner, and if working out is at the top of your list, you might consider picking up a tennis racket! Whether you are a beginner or just need to brush up on your serving skills, the United States Tennis Association (USTA) has an array of tips and resources on their website to help you get started. For more information, visit www.usta.com/Improve-Your-Game.

Straightline

Editor in Chief:
Kathleen Wu, kwu@andrewskurth.com

Editorial Board:
Donna Kim
Shemin Proctor
Laura Trenaman

For more information, please contact
Courtney Culver at 214.659.4689
or courtneyculver@andrewskurth.com.

Team WIT

Co-Chairs:
Bob Jewell, bjewell@andrewskurth.com
Meredith Mouer, mmouer@andrewskurth.com

Members:
Tammy Brennig
Elizabeth Campbell
Marty DeBusk
Deborah Grabein
Amy Hancock
Donna Kim
Peter McKee, Jr.
Thomas Perich
Shemin Proctor
Robin Russell
Michelle Schwartz
Lisa Shelton
Laura Trenaman
Kendall Wade
Kathleen Wu

Advisory Members:
Howard Ayers
Courtney Culver
Brittany Thompson

Book Nook

From strategies on persuasion and leadership to organization, diet and clutter control, this issue we feature 10 titles to take you successfully into the new year.



27 POWERS OF PERSUASION

27 Powers of Persuasion

Simple Strategies to Seduce Audiences & Win Allies
by Chris St. Hilaire with Lynette Padwa



THE ART OF WAR FOR WOMEN chin-ning chu

The Art of War for Women

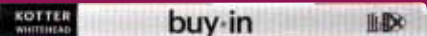
Sun Tzu's Ultimate Guide to Winning Without Confrontation
by Chin-Ning Chu



the Beck DIET solution

The Beck Diet Solution

Train Your Brain to Think Like a Thin Person
by Judith S. Beck, Ph.D



KOTTER WHITEHEAD buy-in

Buy-In


Saving Your Good Idea From Getting Shot Down
by John P. Kotter and Lorne A. Whitehead



GO organize! CHANGING CLUTTER IN 3 SIMPLE STEPS

Go Organize!

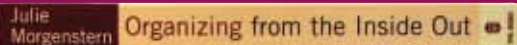
Conquer Clutter in 3 Simple Steps
by Marilyn Bohn



MARC LESSER LESS

Less

Accomplishing More by Doing Less
by Marc Lesser



Julie Morgenstern Organizing from the Inside Out

Organizing from the Inside Out

by Julie Morgenstern



THE POWER OF LESS LEO BABAUTA

The Power of Less

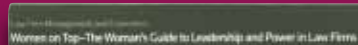
The Fine Art of Limiting Yourself to the Essential... In Business and in Life
by Leo Babauta



Take the U Out of Clutter MARK BRUNETZ and CARMEN RENEE BERRY

Take the U Out of Clutter

The Last Clutter Book You'll Ever Need
by Mark Brunetz and Carmen Renee Berry



Women on Top—The Woman's Guide to Leadership and Power in Law Firms

Women on Top

The Woman's Guide to Leadership and Power in Law Firms
by Ida Abbott
(www.idaabbott.com)

Holiday Traditions

We asked readers to submit their favorite holiday traditions in the last issue of *Straightline*. We hope this selection of responses will inspire you to continue your own traditions and possibly adopt a new one this season.

Decorating

The transition to college can be tough, and even more so as the holidays approach. One tradition our family has always enjoyed is decorating for the holidays together. **As our children have gone away to college**, we take pictures and send them as a reminder of home. They love to receive these pictures and look forward to displaying a bit of home life in their dorm room!

Thankful Giving

Growing up, **our family would “adopt” a less fortunate family** through our church for Christmas, buying them food and simple gifts that they had asked for. My parents would take my sister and me along on the shopping trip, explaining to us that Christmas wasn't about getting tons of expensive presents. Of course, that didn't sit too well with us at the time, but today, as an adult, I have carried on the tradition of adopting a family through our local women's shelter. My family's favorite day is always the day we deliver the gifts to the shelter—we stop for hot chocolate and cookies on the way home and revel in the magic of the season.

Christmas Carols

Some families go around the table at Thanksgiving or Christmas, with each family member stating what they are most thankful for and why. In our family, it was different, starting with the year **we got a home karaoke machine**. From that time forward, each holiday required everyone to sing a favorite song in front of friends and family. As the champagne continued to pour, the numbers would get more and more showy, with everyone collapsing with laughter over Grandma's disco medley or my uncle's “Blue Christmas.” When I left home for college, my parents sold their house and have moved twice since. The family is scattered all over the country and no one knows what happened to the karaoke machine. We may not get to spend the holidays together very often, but I'll always have great memories of our Christmas concerts.

Hanukkah Happiness

When I was a kid, I loved Hanukkah. I still do. I thought we were so much luckier than the Christian kids because we got eight whole days of gifts! On top of that, I was put in charge of adding a lightbulb each day to our electric menorah. My family had moved out to Long Island at that point, so it was a **big deal for my grandparents to come in from the city**. We'd meet them at the train station and I'd try to look in their shopping bags to see what they brought me. But it never worked. One of my favorite Hanukkah memories was me sitting in the kitchen watching my grandmother make latkes from recipes she'd gotten from her mother and her grandmother. My brother and I still use her recipes, but they don't seem to taste as good as they did during those wintry days of childhood.

On Parade

Growing up in Houston, one of my favorite Thanksgiving memories from childhood was going to the **Foley's Thanksgiving Day parade**, our version of the Macy's parade. My parents would bundle us up, load us into the station wagon, and drive downtown with our thermoses of hot chocolate in hand. I remember all the floats seemed so big, the marching bands so loud and precise, and always the arrival of Santa Claus at the end. That's how we knew Christmas was truly on its way. Today, all you have to do is walk into Walgreen's in September and the Christmas season is on full display.

Auld Lang Syne

My family has always had huge New Year's parties. In fact, my parents prefer New Year's to Christmas, which is why it feels like such a big deal to me today. Each year at the stroke of midnight, guests were invited to volunteer their resolutions for the new year. After a few minutes, my father would descend the staircase, dressed as Father Time, and walk out the front door. **“Out with the old!”** he'd shout, and slam the door. Then he'd return wearing regular clothes and resume his duty as the bartender. He still does it today, and his act never fails to elicit cheers and plenty of laughs.

Holiday Album

Each year, my mom asks us to bring an old family picture to Holiday dinner and explain why we love it. We go around the table and present the pictures, usually trying to out-do each other. Last year, I found a picture of my brother dressed as a bald eagle for Halloween when he was nine. I couldn't even finish my presentation without everyone laughing so hard they were crying. Some families look at treasured albums; **we find the odd and silly are more interesting**. But it's not just an activity to make dinner more fun, it allows us to share memories of growing up in a great family. ■

Site Seeing

From travel to gift giving, our favorite online stops will help you through the holidays

Freeshipping.com

Get free shipping at over 3,000 stores with this online shopping resource for free shipping codes, coupons and promo codes.

Next Flight

Okay, so it's not a website or a blog, it's an app. But you don't want to miss it. Want to see if there is another flight you can catch or wonder if you can hop on an earlier flight? This application is for you.

Plasticjungle.com

Premier destination to sell, buy, exchange and donate gift cards in a trusted environment.

Sportsexpress.com

Plan to golf or ski this holiday season? Check out this luggage shipping service, which provides sports equipment and luggage delivery.

TasteBook.com

Cook up a family recipe book around the holidays. This tasty website makes it easy to collect, organize and share your favorite recipes and create your own personalized hardcover cookbook online.

Semi Unplugged

Finding tranquility in a frantic day

Chances are, you owe at least a portion of your success to multi-tasking. High-powered professionals are seemingly hard-wired to do more than one thing at a time, whether it's talking on the phone while folding laundry or checking e-mails during a staff meeting.

And you probably already know that your performance suffers when you take on too much at one time and neglect to focus sufficiently on a single task.

With the ubiquity of technology in our lives, though, it's hard to find a moment that we aren't plugged in. It's as if there's no such thing as boredom anymore.

But a bit of boredom is actually good for the brain. Continual stimulation actually inhibits our ability to process new information, remember any of what we just learned, or live up to our creative potential. A slew of studies in recent years have shown the negative effects of being continually connected and the positive boost we get from giving our brains a rest. (*The New York Times*' "Your Brain on Computers" series offers a good primer on the subject.)

But turning that knowledge into action—particularly for high-performers whose work can require almost constant connectivity—remains elusive.

We're not suggesting you take up a half hour of daily meditation—unless you already do, in which case, bravo—but small changes can reduce the mental fatigue and stress that continual multi-tasking can cause. Of course, everybody's need for downtime is different, but if you suspect your creativity and energy are lagging because of technological overload, it's time to build some quiet time into your day.

HOW TO "BE"

Give yourself permission to do nothing. If you feel guilty about taking a break, whether it's a 10-day vacation in the mountains or a 10-minute walk after lunch, remind yourself that you're actually going to be more productive afterward because you've given your brain a much-needed rest. If you need more justification, Google the phrase "technology overload" and spend a few minutes browsing what you find. Constant connectedness takes a toll on relationships, creativity and health, so it won't take long for you to find more than enough reasons to build occasional breaks into your day.

Acknowledge what you get out of being plugged in. Just like lab rats are rewarded with pellets whenever they do what the guy in the white coat wants, we get little pellets

whenever we receive a text message or an e-mail. They're confirmation that we're important, that someone needs us. In reality, though, not every text message or e-mail requires an instantaneous response. In some cases, you may very well need to stay connected, but in many others, the world can probably live without you for an hour or two—long enough to finish dinner and help your son with his trig homework.

Set workable boundaries. It would be great if you could leave the office at 6 p.m. and not think about work again until you're back at your desk at 8 a.m., but for most of us that's probably not realistic. So make some rules that you can live with but that also give you and your beleaguered brain the break you both need. Even if you only unplug during the dinner hour, it's better than nothing. Eventually, you'll want to find ways to expand your "no tech time" (although you'll obviously need to be flexible to respond to work demands). You'll be surprised at the problems you solve when you're walking your dog at 6 a.m., sans iPod, with nothing but the sounds of your neighborhood coming alive being piped into your ears.

Resist the impulse to check. Be conscious of how frequently you check your phone or computer for incoming e-mails and texts outside business hours and just say "no" every once in a while. Just a few years ago, humans had the ability to drive entire city blocks without checking their e-mails at every stoplight. Imagine that.

Be mindful of the moments you get. Chances are, you already have a few natural breaks in your day but you don't appreciate them. Rather than stressing that you can't get a signal as you drive into your parking garage, revel in the silence. If you're stuck in line or sitting in a waiting room, remind yourself that you may not get another quiet moment today and to appreciate the break. Strike up a conversation with a stranger. Breathe deeply and do some neck rolls and shoulder shrugs. The world will still be here when you get back.

Get your sleep. The 6–8 hours you spend in bed are the most disconnected you'll get all day, so protect those hours with extreme prejudice. Not only does that rest reboot your brain, but getting enough sleep can actually help with weight loss because the hormones that govern hunger and satiety are closely linked to sleep. One way to maximize your rest is to keep your bed as tech-free as possible. Some studies have shown that the iPad, with its bright colors and backlighting, may cause insomnia for some people, so be mindful when using it that it doesn't affect your sleep. If it does, you may want to limit your iPad usage before bedtime.

Very few of us have the wherewithal, let alone the desire, to quit our jobs and devote our lives to meditation and mindfulness. The good news is that even small doses of tranquility can make a big difference in our well-being. ■