

Hartz & Minds 15: Continuing Education

This spring, I had the pleasure of presenting to a group of 200 lawyers as part of an Institute of Continuing Legal Education class co-sponsored by the Nonprofit Law Section of the State Bar of Georgia. The diverse audience was attentive and appreciative and asked many questions, which I was delighted to answer at the time or in a follow up communication. My lecture on corporate social responsibility (CSR) came immediately following Colin Blalock's talk about body language; needless to say, I was more self-conscious than usual!

The corporate social responsibility segment covered its definition, history, terminology, key success factors, today's reality, several examples, and the role attorneys can play in creating efficient and effective partnerships among for-profit, non-profit, and government entities. As an aside, one of the participants recognized me a couple of weeks later and shared how much she learned from the session; it's not every day that people stop strangers to pass along a compliment. It made my day; we should all pay-it-forward more often.

To refresh our memories, corporate social responsibility is "capacity building for sustainable livelihoods. It respects cultural differences and finds the business opportunities in building the skills of employees, the community, and governments." As I've always said, my job is the best because I stretch my mind to help companies and families stretch their investments and hearts. I advocate corporate investment, which provides a return, but I also feel that the actual human beings we touch within and outside the business can be changed for the better forever.

Back to **continuing education**: all of us as individuals, parents and children, leaders and followers, employers and employees, local or international in scope, must remain abreast of the latest best practices and coming innovations which impact us. Bringing in experts to talk about their area of mastery is a great way to stretch our minds and approach our daily duties with a new perspective and renewed energy. The motivational speakers take in large fees, but I wonder how much of it lasts once the noses are back to the grindstones.

What is beautiful about the CLE seminar on CSR, is that it strategically addresses ideas and realities both within and outside of everybody's responsibilities and interests. The participants were offered specific insight into what business executives, nonprofit leaders, and communities need and expect. When I bring my whole self to view the world through the lens of social responsibility, the synergies I can envision are different than the run of the mill initiative to "run up the flagpole." The solutions will never come from one place, but from the constellation of research, people, products, services, programs, and communications, each bringing their unique light to shape a new picture of our future.

In closing, please invite Corporate Hartz or civic leaders to educate your staff or families about their perspective on the world. Enjoy the summer, Jennifer Levine Hartz