

Luck 101: The Map of the Quest



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If knowledge informs luck, Pepper associates are in for a great year. Legal career coach and author Sheila Nielsen visited Pepper Hamilton's Philadelphia office on November 15, 2011, to lay out her "Map of the Quest," an animated guide to achieving career satisfaction – or "luck" – published by the American Bar Association (ABA).

Nielsen likened the quest to an epic adventure and professed that if the quest is career satisfaction, then associates must "get out of the cottage and into the woods." According to Nielsen, we do not trip over luck – we create it. In other words, career satisfaction will not knock on your door; you must boldly pursue it. Nielsen's message was well-received among a room of diverse Pepper associates, Bryn Mawr College alumnae, and ABA members.

COTTAGE FEVER

Diverse associates who feel isolated may believe that the cottage, a comfort zone, is more attractive than the intimidating woods. Nielsen, however, wisely encouraged all associates to get out and create their own luck by networking with attorneys both within and outside of their firms. In fact, the woods, whatever they represent for you, are more rewarding than the cottage. The quest for professional fulfillment begins with having the right attitude, and Nielsen explained that associates who have succeeded on this quest are interactive, engaging, open, aware, tenacious and optimistic.

ALLIES IN THE WOODS

What's the importance of the woods? Only in the woods can associates find the "knights and wizards," or mentors and allies, to provide guidance and protection. The knights and wizards know the trails and are, or have been, where you want to go. Furthermore, Nielsen reminds us, every quest has challenges that can make it epic. The goal of the quest is to establish trusted contacts that make it easier to overcome those challenges, or "dragons."



Hedya Aryani and KaSandra N. Rogiers pictured with speaker Sheila Nielsen.

ADD VALUE FROM THE WOODS

By getting out of the cottage, associates can discover their true value. Nielsen called this the "career sweet spot"—that point where associates understand their aptitude, interests and skills and learn how to use them for the firm and its clients. Through the quest, associates can more accurately assess their own talents and what they enjoy doing.

DREAMS AND DILEMMAS

Almost as important as getting out of the cottage is what you do when you're out. The knights and wizards are wise, but not psychic. Nielsen stressed the importance of sharing your "dreams and dilemmas" with the mentors and allies you encounter on your quest. Tell people where you'd like to go, as well as what you believe are your greatest challenges or weaknesses. Sharing your self-evaluation with your key supporters will enable them to help you prepare for and select the appropriate trail.

In the end, associates will not only have achieved some career satisfaction, but they will have cultivated a community of mentors and allies that will support them on future quests.