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BRING VALUE TO OTHERS

To Live Your Best Life

When you think about the people who add value to your life, who comes to mind?

One of the first people I think of is my friend and fellow attorney, Scott Snellings. A few years back, after connecting through a case, Scott casually asked, "Want to go to lunch?" Plenty of people put out that offer, but often, it's just words tossed into the wind, an intention they never follow through with.

With Scott, though, I immediately noticed it was different. He followed through on getting lunch with me, and three hours into it, ideas were flowing about business, hobbies, and everyday life. I could tell I'd met someone who would be not just a professional acquaintance but also a friend.

One of the things that stood out during that lunch was the way Scott went out of his way to share ideas about me and my business. It made me feel seen and heard and established a relationship then and there.

Guided by Scott's example, I've sought to add value to other people's lives. Oftentimes, I look for ways to add value to my team, and one of the best ways to do that is to make sure I'm constantly improving. I go out of my way to surround myself with people who are smarter and more skilled than I am so I can learn and add value back to my team and the service I provide my clients. I don't want to be the person (or have that person on my team) who is the same today as I was a year ago. If we aren't getting better every day, both personally and professionally, we're not living our best lives. If you're the smartest person in the room, you're probably in the wrong room.

Recently, I had lunch with someone I consider to be big-time in the law world. I wanted to go in with 3-5 new things I could bring to him. This is one of the reasons I'm always writing down ideas — I always try to bring something new to the table by having 3-5 questions to ask. I try to take a genuine interest in the people around me, and I'm no good at small talk, so I'm the person at the party asking about someone's innermost dreams and their life's passions (a habit that probably doesn't make me the most popular party guest).



Scott and I where I was teaching him and other trial lawyers from around the country for two long days on damages.

Whether it's personal or business-related, I try to bring thought-provoking questions to ask because I believe it gets people thinking and helps them work toward living their best lives. In fact, at Scott's Christmas party last year, I met Sara, his wife, for the first time. As we quickly moved away from small talk, the second question I asked her was "What's your passion?"

Sara was stumped. What seemed like an innocent question has apparently had her thinking on it for about a year. Every time I see Scott, he mentions that Sara is still mulling over what her passion is.

One thing I learned a long time ago is that we are all interesting people. We all have a unique story to share. I used to hesitate to share my personal life with people until I realized that it was the only way they could connect and relate to me. I subscribe to the belief that when people get to know our team — Rosie, Ashley, Desiree, and me — they end up loving us. They're Button Law Firm friends and family for life. It's just a matter of people entering our orbit and learning about us.

So, whether it's taking a business acquaintance to lunch or asking your coworker about their new dog and offering to watch them, I encourage you to look for ways you can add value to the lives of the people around you. Ask someone "What can I do for you?" and genuinely follow through to build that relationship, add value for them, and steer you and them toward living your best lives.

-Russell Button

BUDDY THE BLF DOG

Meet Our Newest Team Member

When you're a kid, is there anything better than a cozy stuffed animal to hug when you're feeling nervous or scared?

Over the last couple years, our firm has turned more of our focus toward representing families and children who've been abused or neglected by irresponsible daycares. As we've taken on more of these cases, we've gotten the chance to work with some amazing kids, and we've wondered how we could help them feel more at ease and comfortable when coming to the law firm. We know it can be a bit scary when you've never been to a law office before, so we want to do our part to make this a welcoming and comfortable environment.

Remembering how exciting stuffed animals were when we were kids, we decided to put Buddy the dog into action. While teddy bears tend to be the most common stuffed animal you see, with a team full of dog owners and dog lovers, it was an easy choice to bring Buddy on board.

Buddy is the new Button Law Firm dog, and he'll be here for our clients and their families and go with them on their journeys. Sometimes Buddy might even get to join kids on their vacations or on other adventures they go on!

We're all so excited to have Buddy here, and we hope that he'll be a source of comfort and joy for all the families and kids who visit our office.



NICOLE CELEBRATES A MILESTONE

THEN AND NOW: LAW STUDENT TO LICENSED ATTORNEY

Two years ago, Nicole spent the summer between her second and third year of law school at The Button Law Firm interning as a law clerk. From day one, it was an excellent fit for everyone. “Right out of the gate, she was a standout,” Russell says. “Nicole is one of those people who, whatever needs to get done, she does it. She sets a great tone for others. Her ability to research and write is a gift, as is her ability to take ideas and figure out how to make them happen.”



Nicole knew right away that this was a firm she wanted to have a career with. “There’s an energy this firm has that I haven’t seen anywhere else,” she shares. Between finishing school and preparing for the bar exam, Nicole continued to work with us as a law clerk. While she studied for the bar exam, Russell and Ashley sent their support via encouraging text messages and study supplies. “I’m so grateful to have a big support network,” Nicole says.

In November, after months of waiting, Nicole found out she passed the bar exam. Russell and Ashley were there to celebrate with her and stood by her side during her swearing-in. It was a momentous occasion for all of us.

For Nicole, it was exciting and relieving to have the bar behind her and her career as an attorney ahead of her. “It’s really nice to have a clear path forward,” she says.

Law students study for months for the bar exam, then wait months to find out if they’ve passed. Nicole describes the three-day test as “an endurance competition.” “It’s as much that as it is knowing what you need to know,” she says.

After taking the bar exam, Nicole and a few of her law school friends set off on a well-deserved weekend getaway in Fredericksburg. “It was much-needed R & R,” she confirms. “They were the ones there with me through the ups and downs of the whole process, and no one else can quite understand the waiting period.”

Looking ahead, Nicole is excited to expand her work in the legal field, including conducting depositions, representing clients at mediations, and learning from her mentors. “It’s a team effort,” she says.

Congratulations, Nicole, and welcome (back) to the team!

SMALL-BUSINESS LEADERSHIP

Overcoming Growing Pains With a Function Chart

In the days when it was just me, Rosie, and Ashley at the firm, it was easy to know who was working on what. Now, with a growing team full of skilled people, it’s helpful to have things more defined. Over the last several months, we’ve added a few new people to our team and switched up some roles. These changes have brought home the importance of defining and understanding what we each do here.

I’ve never been a fan of titles because I think they can be limiting. So, instead of deciding everything by titles, I started by looking over each task we have and asking, “Who is the best person to get this done?” I got my team in on it during our recent training, and I’m so happy with what came of it.

CREATING OUR TEAM FLOW CHART

One of the most important things to come out of our training was a flow chart with each of our names, different divisions, and roles listed. It tells us who the go-to person is for each function, who the reviewer is, and who the back-up person is in case the primary person is out. It breaks it down into a simple visual so that we all know who is taking ownership over which project or task.

The original idea for doing this actually came from my parents. They use team flow charts in their work and have found them to be really beneficial. With a system in place for each role, the chart is great for ensuring people aren’t duplicating tasks. It also ensures we’re all on the same page.

Right now, we’re making adjustments as needed, but it’s been awesome so far. The whole team is pumped. As the new year approaches, having this system in place means we can jump in come Jan. 1 instead of trying to play catch-up. As we grow as a firm, we want to make sure we’re doing it sustainably and efficiently, and tools like this are helping us do just that.



OUR DAYCARE WEBINAR SERIES FOR PARENTS

The Live Seminar Goes Digital

In the spring, we hosted our first live Daycare Seminar for parents and members of the community, highlighting things they can do to keep their kids safer at daycare. As Russell says about the event, “This was a launching pad. It feels like we’re starting something to make a difference on all levels.”



We knew that first seminar was only the beginning, but recently, we’ve realized how far-reaching this information could be. Thanks to some passionate community members and parents, we’ve taken our daycare seminar material and turned it into an educational web series.

After we hosted our daycare seminar, we got asked by several parents who couldn’t attend if there was a way they could stream the seminar material for them to watch when they could. We had videotaped the seminar and knew that would be a great way to share the information with people who couldn’t be there. Then, clients of ours who are looking to adopt asked about the possibility of a certification program. They wanted to learn more and do their best to safely welcome a little one into their home.

Thanks to these active community members, our Daycare Safety Webinar Series was born. Each episode in the series features a different topic related to daycare safety. People who watch the entire series will be eligible for a certificate of completion from The Button Law Firm.

You can find more information about the series and each episode at ButtonLawFirm.com/reports/free-event-what-parents-need-to-know-about-daycares.cfm.

Thanks to all of you who’ve been part of jump-starting this series, and thanks for tuning in! Together we can make the daycares in our community safer. As Russell says about daycare safety, “Helping families through this is one thing; if we can prevent a family from having to go through it in the first place, that’s even better.”

BUTTON LAW FIRM HIGHLIGHT REEL



Todd Bailess and me at the damages training



Nicole, her parents and I after being sworn in, in court



Welcome Desiree our newest team member!