

HOT-BUTTON ISSUES

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'CHANGE OR DIE'



7 Ways Our Firm Adapted to Keep Helping Clients in 2020

Journalist Alan Deutschman popularized the phrase “change or die” back in 2007, and ever since then, business writers have used it to describe the dilemma of companies in crisis. “Change or die” is what every business has to do in response to a recession, a natural disaster, or, in our case, a pandemic.

Last March, a switch was flipped and the concept of “business as usual” evaporated. Suddenly, BLF was left standing in the dark. Then, COVID-19 hit us with the one-two punch of a statewide lockdown and a recession. We had a choice: Adapt or give up and close our doors.

I’m proud to say that we chose to step forward instead of backward. While other companies were holding their jaws, we took seven steps to make sure we could keep helping you through 2020.

1. **WE SHUT DOWN EARLY.** I made the tough decision to close our office and switch our team over to working remotely a week before lockdown. This gave us a head start on adjusting to the new way of doing things, and we had our new processes and technology sorted out ahead of other law firms.
2. **INSTEAD OF STEPPING BACK, WE DUG IN.** I believe that the only way to get through adversity is to dig in and fight to get better, even when it’s hard or boring. Our team here at BLF focused on increasing our efficiency and refining our operations during lockdown. We never stopped working, and if there was nothing to do, we looked for a new project. Zoom depositions, virtual mediations, endless phone calls, video conferences, virtual hearings — we attacked it all to keep our cases moving.
3. **WE REFOCUSED ON OUR COMPANY CULTURE.** Suddenly stuck at home, Ashley and I asked ourselves, “What training can we give our team that we haven’t tried yet?” This took our leadership style and company culture in a new direction (see Pg. 2 for more on that), and made us a stronger team. We found that some people were no longer good fits, while others thrived under the new system. As crazy as it sounds, COVID-19 brought our firm closer!

4. **“RESOLUTION” BECAME OUR MANTRA.** Our goal has always been to resolve as many of our cases as possible, but while courts were closed, we had to look for other ways to make that happen. We found a half-dozen strategies that helped us settle cases successfully and get our clients the compensation they needed. Winning a case for a client always means a lot, but it meant even more during the pandemic because the families we helped truly needed that extra money during this tough time.
5. **WE ASKED, “HOW CAN WE MAKE THINGS EASIER FOR OUR CLIENTS?”** Our virtual and physical spaces are easier to navigate now. We have a brand-new website and we’re working on a new set of videos, too, so it’s easier to understand what our team stands for and how we can help people with their day care injury, catastrophic injury, and car accident cases.
6. **THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS, WE EXPANDED OUR NATIONAL REACH.** My goal has always been to take BLF nationwide, and this year my team leveraged our connections with lawyers across the country to help people in even more states! We worked cases in Montana, California, Louisiana, West Virginia, Missouri, and Kansas last year.
7. **WE GOT CREATIVE, HAD FUN, AND SPREAD HOPE.** Pre-pandemic, our team used to take pictures with all of our clients. This year, we finally hung those snapshots up on a huge wall in the office! It makes me happy every time I see it. We also came up with new ways of staying in touch with our clients, such as the BLF Thanksgiving cookbook we mailed out last year. We also gave back to the community with donations, volunteering, and fundraisers.

Now that we’re heading into a new year, I plan to keep up all of these successful steps and go even further by expanding our team! Keep an eye on this newsletter to meet new BLF family members in the coming months.

—Russell Button

BUSINESS LESSONS FROM A NAVY CAPTAIN

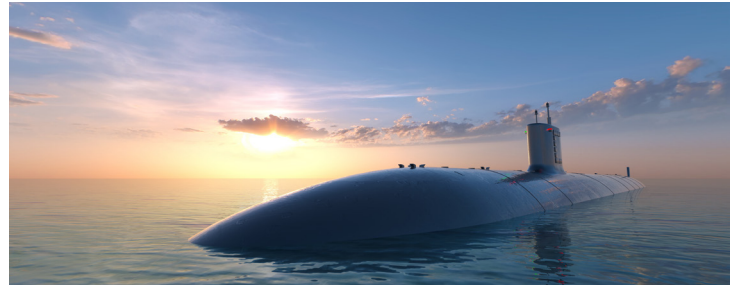
RUSSELL REVIEWS ‘TURN THE SHIP AROUND!’

I'm excited to fill you in on a book I just finished reading: "Turn the Ship Around!: A True Story of Turning Followers Into Leaders" by L. David Marquet. It wasn't originally on my reading list, but references to it kept popping up in texts like "Leaders Eat Last" and "Extreme Ownership." Eventually, I couldn't resist picking up a copy!

"Turn the Ship Around!" was written by a former Navy Captain who upended military tradition and established a new leadership protocol onboard his submarine. Before Marquet, it was normal for a submarine commander to know his vessel inside and out and tell everyone else what to do. But when he ended up leading a sub he hadn't trained on, he had to find a new way of operating.

A leader-leader model creates true empowerment. Too many firms claim they've "empowered" their employees to make decisions without giving them the tools they need to succeed. This is false empowerment. "Turn the Ship Around!" taught me that to really empower our employees, I have to make sure they have the training, qualifications, and abilities necessary, then give them the space to use them.

To be effective, you need to learn to lead differently. To put Marquet's model into action, Ashley and I decided that we needed to change our style of leadership. Instead of delegating all of the tasks for every case, now we let our team make their own decisions



as long as they explain to us what they intend to do and why. That way, if something goes wrong we can identify the issue and help them resolve it.

You have to take risks to inspire your team. When Marquet gave his crew the power to be leaders, he flipped the military's model and put his career on the line. It was a huge risk, but it paid off! We are taking a similar leap by empowering our team, but we all believe the risk pushes all of us to greater heights. We understand the benefits that come from having a team that is united, and we all feel inspired when we know we are not alone.

Whether you're a business owner or want to become a better leader of your household, I highly recommend "Turn the Ship Around." It might change the way you think for good.

CHUIE IS TURNING 10!

A Note From Russell's 4-Legged Best Friend

Hello friend! My name is Chuie, and it's my birthday this month! I keep trying to tell Russell that I'm turning 70, but he says I'm just 10 in human years. Dog years are the ones that matter, but I'll let him pretend because I love him so much.

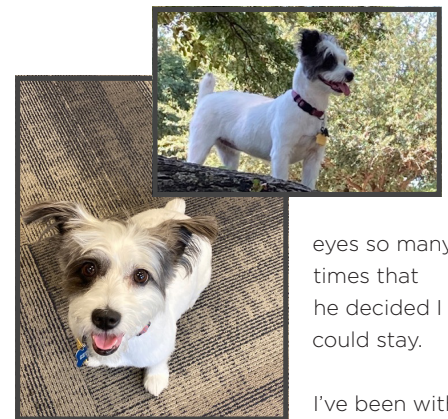
From the second I saw Russell, I knew he would be my human. It happened when I was just a puppy. I was sad and alone back then. I lived in a ditch, I was always hungry, and my hair was dirty, which might have been the worst part. I really, really wanted a friend, but no one ever came — until one day, they did.

That fall, three humans walked right past my ditch. I could smell that they were friendly, so I scrambled out and ran straight for them. I was so excited that I started running and jumping all over the

place. They didn't tell me to go away, so I followed them home.

What happened next was amazing. They gave me a bath, fed me, and even brushed my hair! Then, they took me all over the neighborhood to try and find my humans. After hours and hours, they realized I didn't have any humans. At least, I didn't before! After that, I had Russell. He gave me a sock to chew on, and even gave me a name — Chuie. Apparently, I'm named after a restaurant called Chuy's. Russell must have realized they spelled the name wrong, so he spelled mine the right way.

From there, I got to go to law school with Russell. At first, he said he was going to find me a new owner, but I really wanted to stay with him. So, I stuck to his side like Velcro. Eventually, I gave him my puppy



eyes so many times that he decided I could stay.

I've been with Russell for

decades now, and we have the best life. It seems like just yesterday I was helping him study for the bar exam, and now we have a house of our own! I love messing with the squirrels in the backyard, playing fetch, taking walks, and watching people through the window.

I'm an old grandma now, but I still have plenty of kick! I plan to live until at least 150. Now if you'll excuse me, it's time to eat my birthday treats!

BLF GOES TO BAT FOR GEORGIA VOTERS

Inside Ashley's Volunteer Work for Reclaim Our Vote

This month, a big political showdown is happening 1,100 miles away in the state of Georgia. After the presidential election in November, both Georgia senate races were too close to call, leading to runoff elections on Jan. 5. By the time you get this newsletter, those races might be decided, but a month ago they were just entering Ashley's sights.

Ashley was thrilled that our whole firm had turned out to vote for the presidential election (as you read last month). But that success didn't calm her passion for making sure every voice is heard. On the contrary, in December she was more fired up about democracy than ever!

"My efforts did not end with the presidential election. As soon as the election was done, I was searching for more ways to make an impact and encourage others to be involved and vote!" Ashley says.

That search led her to Georgia, where early voting in this month's senate rematches started Dec. 14. To get involved, she volunteered for the Reclaim Our Vote campaign, which is part of the nonprofit Center for Common Ground. In early December, she filled 90 postcards with vital voter information and mailed them from Dallas to Georgia.

"Reclaim Our Vote works in states where there are real problems with ongoing voter suppression and voter-list purging that has resulted in the disenfranchisement of millions of eligible voters in that state — especially voters of color," Ashley says. "Our handwritten postcards were addressed directly to individual eligible voters to make sure they're registered and they know how to get a ballot to vote."

Our whole team here at BLF is proud of Ashley's efforts, and we're positive that



she made a difference! If her postcards persuaded even one voter to turn up at the polls who wouldn't have otherwise, that's a victory for democracy.

As Ashley puts it, "It is so incredibly important that people do not take a back seat to the future."

To learn more about Center for Common Ground and Reclaim Our Vote, visit CenterForCommonGround.org.

BLF HIGHLIGHT REEL



Russell with the apron the BLF Team got him



The Button Family Thanksgiving table



Ashley and Cristina in Florida on Thanksgiving



Aria on Thanksgiving



The BLF Client Wall

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WE FOUND OUR DREAM IT COMPANY!

Meet Tom Lambotte, CEO of GlobalMac IT

Until last March, The Button Law Firm's IT was as in-house as it gets: Russell had the job! It's handy to have a techie founder, and he helped our team out regularly with their Mac problems. But that changed when we went entirely remote due to the pandemic. Suddenly, Russell had to diagnose our tech troubles over Zoom. That was an entirely different ballgame.

"I was spending too much time on the issues," Russell explains, "so we decided to look for some help. Amazingly, we found an IT company that specializes in law firms that run Mac-based platforms — which is literally who we are!"

That company is GlobalMac IT, an Ohio-based managed services provider that



serves law firms nationwide.

As CEO Tom Lambotte puts it, they have clients "from Hawaii to New York City and everywhere in between."

We're loving our service from GlobalMac IT, which makes sense because they've helped people just like us for more than 10 years. When we sat

down with Tom to chat about how he started the company, he told us, "It really just grew organically. I started GlobalMac IT in 2006 because I loved Apple computers and I loved business, and I put them together and just started making house calls."

Today, Tom is an expert in the field and has written three books, including "Hassle-Free Mac I.T. Support for Law Firms," "Legal Boost: Big Profits Through an I.T.

Transformation," and "Macs in Law: The Definitive Guide for the Mac-Curious, Windows-Using Attorney." He says that two things set GlobalMac IT apart: its specialization in Mac-using law firms and its company ethos.

"We're a very entrepreneurship-driven company with a very clear culture. We know what we do and who we serve, and we enjoy it every step of the way," he says.

GlobalMac IT's core values are "Grow," "Be the Hero," and "Work Smart," and it shows. We're excited to work with them as we continue upgrading our IT. If you're a Mac-using attorney (or a Mac user in general), you can start getting help from GlobalMacIT for free. They send out weekly emails with "Stupid Simple Mac Tips" that are short, informative, and easy to implement. Check out GlobalMacIT.com/SSMT to learn more.