

Ms. JD

Highlights from the Law & Reorder Southern California Book Launch



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I had the pleasure of attending Friday's program at the Los Angeles office of O'Melveny & Myers celebrating the release of [Debbie Epstein Henry's new book Law & Reorder: Legal Industry Solutions for Restructure, Retention, Promotion and Work/Life Balance](#). Ms. Henry was joined in the discussion by Kiko Washington, Executive V.P. of Worldwide Human Resources at Warner Bros. Entertainment; Leah Weil, General Counsel of Sony Pictures; and Carla Christofferson, Managing Partner of O'Melveny's Los Angeles office. The most notable features and comments of the event were:

- The crowd. The organizers really deserve kudos for attracting such a diverse, broad ranging audience. Men, women, associates, partners, law school administrators, in-house counsel - they were all there. It made for a great tone and discourse.
- The frank discussion. Leah Weil admitted that *actually* she doesn't care about her outside counsel's flexible work policies if they produce quality work. But she also explained that she's willing to talk about flexibility in ways her predecessors never did and how that creates opportunities for lawyers in her outside firms to find solutions to work/life balance concerns.
- A really good reality check. Joe Calabrese, a partner in O'Melveny's Century City office, called out the in-house counsel who demand responsiveness above all else - even over the weekend - and then expect firms to institute flexible work policies.
- The point. Ms. Henry's theme is a smart one. There are three constituents in the profession: lawyers, firms, and clients. Right now their interests are not aligned. Lawyers want more flexibility from clients and firms. Firms want more hours from clients and lawyers. Clients want predictability in billing and work product from firms and lawyers. Smart innovations like alternative fee structures and job sharing can address these gaps and realign the constituents.

Congratulations to all those involved. It was a great event, celebrating a great book.