

Phoebe Anderson Downings Legal, Perth

During YLL session on Thursday afternoon – “Pitching and Presenting in Action”, moderator Debbie Epstein Henry presented the principles on topics such as client relationship and presenting to a client in cooperation with Nicolle Schippers of ARAG North America Inc, and Pierre Nicol of Plasco Energy Group, both being clients of Meritas members....



This was a great session for the YLLs to get together and discuss what they considered to be the most important elements in the lawyer/client relationship. As junior lawyers do not typically have as much exposure to clients as senior lawyers, the focus of the session was to provide YLLs with an understanding of the issues which matter the most to clients, and how to use this information to secure business for the firm and develop ongoing client relationships. A mock scenario regarding a potential client was presented to each table of YLLs, who were then asked to prepare a group pitch to present to the client. One table was selected to present their pitch to Nicolle Schippers and Pierre Nicol, two Meritas client representatives who had

offered to provide feedback and relay their experiences with lawyers and law firms. Nicolle and Pierre provided honest, candid responses and the interactive nature of the session allowed YLLs to gain insight into what clients look for in a firm, and what turns them off.

The pitch chosen to be presented focused on the benefits available to the client through the Meritas connection, as well as showing an understanding of the legal issues affecting the client’s business and the ability to offer commercial solutions. Interestingly, the pitch presented did not address billing issues. Nicolle and Pierre’s feedback provided valuable insight about the benefit of offering tailored billing arrangements to clients.

Overall the session was a fantastic opportunity for YLLs to see the world from the client’s perspective. The moderator of the session, Debbie Epstein Henry, facilitated interesting discussion regarding the importance of young lawyers contributing to their firms’ marketing ventures, and the need for young lawyers to continuously foster their business development skills.