

City Attorney Escape Room:

How to package legal advice for nonattorney clients

> Cal Cities, 2021 City Attorneys' Spring Conference Friday, May 7, 2021; General Session, 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Attorney Development and Succession Committee Subcommittee on Essential Skills

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The Cast



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Stream Kim, Hicks,
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Deepa Sharma Senior Associate Burke, Williams & Sorensen, LLP



Seph Petta
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Shute, Mihaly
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Commentary



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Dan Sodergren
City Attorney
City of Pleasanton



Helen Holmes Peak

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Questions and Answers



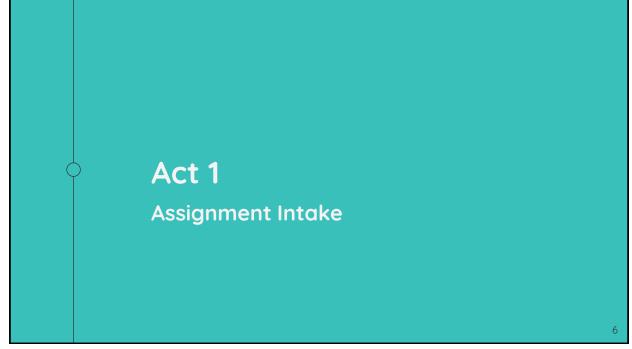
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Takeaways

- 1. Putting out fires (@#\$% happens)
- 2. Accept that mistakes occur
- 3. Communicate early and regularly
- 4. Cultivate a culture of reporting mistakes
- 5. Focus on problem solving (not blaming)
- 6. Transform stumbling blocks to stepping stones (learn from mistakes)
- 7. Own the consequences of mistakes

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Act 2

Working the Issue

Takeaways

- 1. Check in early and often with your team
- 2. Double-check information
- 3. Conduct independent research
- 4. Use the resources of Cal Cities
- 5. Contact other city attorneys
- Consider how best to communicate with department heads
- 7. Maintain good working relationships with staff

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Act 3

Presenting Options to the Client

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Takeaways

- 1. Hone your instincts
- 2. Ask clarifying questions
- 3. Present materials in an accessible format
- 4. Be budget conscious
- Proactively foster a good working relationship with clients
- 6. Be direct, specific, and focused (avoid TMI)
- 7. Practice the art of delivering bad news

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