



Avena of Garfunkel Wild; Plan your work and work your plan!

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Name: Suzanne Avena

Title: Partner/Chair of Environmental Practice Group

Company/Firm: Garfunkel Wild, P.C.

Years with company/firm: Joined Garfunkel Wild, P.C. in 2004

Years in field: 19 years (since 1994)

Years in real estate industry: 19 years (since 1994)

Telephone: 516 393-2200

Email: savena@garfunkelwild.com

URL: www.garfunkelwild.com

Real Estate Associations/Affiliations:

How do you and/or your firm use social media?

My firm maintains an active website (www.garfunkelwild.com) and blog (<http://healthlawblog.garfunkelwild.com>). I maintain my Linked In page and actively update my website biography on the Garfunkel Wild website.

What is your biggest leadership challenge, other than the "glass ceiling"?

Garfunkel Wild, P.C. is very forward thinking in giving women at the firm the opportunity to advance, so I don't have any "glass ceiling" issues in that regard. In terms of leadership of a deal, sometimes environmental issues are the last to be contemplated by transaction parties. I often get 11th hour requests to analyze complicated pollution conditions in order to save the deal. Fortunately at this stage of my career I've learned to anticipate these circumstances and have enough "tools in my toolbox" to get the parties agree on how to allocate the risk and save the day.

What is the most daring thing you've done for your career? How did it turn out for you?

More than once I've taken positions where the environmental practice was non-existent in a firm. That was that case at Garfunkel Wild. I love the challenge of business development, in addition to practicing environmental law. I can get out there and really identify the concerns and needs of those businesses faced with environmental issues. Payback may not be immediate in terms of engaging a client, but inevitably I'll get a call from someone saying they heard me speak or read one of my articles or heard about me and were impressed enough to call to retain us.

Which project, deal or transaction was the "game changer" in the advancement of your career?

At my last firm we had a high profile Manhattan real estate transaction that involved a \$100 million dollar cleanup and a multi billion dollar re-development of 10 acres along the East River. The deal was immense - not only in terms of environmental issues, but land use issues, historical preservation issues, and complicated environmental insurance products. The closing took 36 hours. I was a relatively new practicing attorney and I learned a lot on that deal that I have put to use ten

times over. I also developed many wonderful relationships with those involved.

What do you consider to be the most successful way to increase referrals?

First, do the best job that you can for the client and develop a good working relationship. That will lead to repeat business and referral from that client to others. Be active in bar associations. If you practice in a niche area as I do, you will get referrals from other attorneys who will one day need your expertise. Obtain speaking engagements for trade associations containing businesses that can use your services. Attend meetings of organizations for professionals that are involved with your potential clients. Continuously cultivate the contacts you make along the way by sending them copies of your firm's alerts.

What is the BEST advice you have ever received?

Plan your work and work your plan!

What is your favorite tip for balanced living?

Find one or more activities that you love to do outside of the office with your family and friends, and be conscientious about scheduling that time just as you would to schedule your business time. I enjoy sports and am pretty addicted to spin class.

Where would you like to be in 10 years?

Well, besides working to maintain success at my law practice, I would love to continue writing and "give back" through either teaching or mentoring. I would also love to get my golf score below 90.

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