



## Charting the Future of Our Profession

*“When you finish changing, you’re finished” – Benjamin Franklin*

Douglas S. Brown is the executive director of the Connecticut Bar Association. Prior to his time at the CBA, Attorney Brown practiced law with Tyler Cooper & Alcorn; served as in-house counsel and then as a business executive with a global logistics company; and most recently served as a consultant and executive coach. He continues to teach strategy, leadership, and innovation at The Malcolm Baldrige School of Business at Post University.

The coming years will be one of accelerating change in our profession and the market for legal services. In his book *Tomorrow’s Lawyers*, author Richard Susskind articulates three main drivers of change. First is the drive to accomplish more with less resources at less cost. He describes this as the “more for less challenge.” The second driver, which he calls liberalization, includes market pressures to expand who can deliver legal services and the business models in which we operate and develop new business models. The third driver is, not surprisingly, how advances in information technology will change our notions of practice and how people receive legal services.

Whether you believe Susskind or other prognosticators about the future, one thing is certain: change is coming and if we are to fulfill our mission as an association we must help our members understand, consider, prepare, influence, and strategize for the future.

In 2016 we are increasing our focus on advocacy for the professional and business

interests of our members. Our members have many common interests. We also have many different perspectives: plaintiffs and defendants, private practice, corporate attorneys, government attorneys, paralegals, young lawyers, mid-career lawyers, and veteran attorneys. Interests also diverge by practice areas. Sometimes these differences cannot be reconciled and we cannot take a unified position as an association. This cannot be one of those times. We must work together to understand the changes that are coming and how we can respond.

I have helped many people and organizations navigate times of difficult change. The starting point in the process is to acknowledge that change is difficult and that there are natural, and negative, reactions to change—even good change. Academic studies show that people react to change in stages, much in the way they react to the death of a loved one: shock, denial, anger, bargaining, depression, testing, and acceptance. It is natural for everyone to experience some aspects of this cycle as we confront the changes ahead. To drive forward we each must avoid getting stuck in any one of these phases. We also must remember that we have seen changes before that we have been convinced are bad, but wind up creating opportunities that we never expected.

As attorneys we can apply the skills, strategies, and talents we use to help clients to help ourselves and our profession. We

have to gather the facts, understand the rules and realities that apply, and use analytical and strategic thinking to craft and implement solutions. It will be hard because, in this case, in many ways, we are the client (and you know what they say about the lawyer representing themselves).

There are many ways in which we can and will navigate change together. We will study what is happening in the marketplace so that we can understand what is happening, and why. We will learn from what others have done and are doing. We will listen to our members to understand the diverse interests, concerns, and issues. We will create learning opportunities to help our community distinguish facts from fears. And we will do our best to facilitate strategies to help members thrive into the future.

The CBA is uniquely positioned to influence the future of our profession in Connecticut. We invite all members of our legal community to participate in the process, to make your voices heard, and to help us navigate to the future. If you have views to share or would like to be involved in some way please reach out to me at [dbrown@ctbar.org](mailto:dbrown@ctbar.org)

And know that your association is working hard to understand and advocate for our collective interests and to address the challenges ahead. **CL**