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## 'Moneyball' provides lessons in good recruitment, management

Ever since I was a little girl, I have been fascinated by the game of baseball. As a die-hard Cubs fan, the 1984 team was the '69 Cubs of my generation. I have fond memories of watching dozens of games with my dad during summer breaks and peppering him with countless questions about players and their stats.

My father was an amazing font of knowledge, having been a gifted athlete in his own right and coming closer than most to a major league pitching career. Our chats taught me why various teams were successful and both the relevance and irrelevance of certain statistics as determinative indicators of performance. It was a tremendous education that I will always treasure.

So it should come as no surprise that I love "Moneyball" by Michael Lewis. Since it first published in 2003, the book and its protagonist Billy Beane have had a profound impact on both the game of baseball and the business world. It is a story about managing a baseball team on a shoestring budget — and much more. So as "Moneyball" celebrates its 10th anniversary, it seems apropos to reflect on a few of its many lessons.

"Moneyball" is a thought-provoking discussion about innovation, particularly in the context of talent recruitment and management, and in how organizations define, pursue and achieve success.

For many years, baseball scouts have taken great pride in traveling long distances to identify and study athletic talent, and this method has long been considered state of the art. However, as the general manager of the Oakland

A's, Beane had woefully few dollars to spend and he had to make every dollar count. Since he could not compete with other teams financially, he was forced to innovate. His scouting ideologies and techniques ran counter to all of the other franchises; people thought he was crazy. And then he started winning games.

Recruiting baseball talent is not all that different from recruiting the next generation of lawyers. Just as Beane recognized that traditional scouting methods do not necessarily beget success, the same is true with lawyers.

Raw talent of any kind is not always discernible to the naked eye and must be examined in its context. And just as a baseball player may be more valuable as a pinch hitter rather than in the starting lineup, a lawyer's value should be measured in the context of existing clients, strategies and goals and the overall synergies that will result from their contributions to the team.

Like the Oakland A's, we need to think differently about how we define talent and identify those individuals who are most likely to succeed. We need to look beneath the surface, be open-minded and consider the possibility that the standard metrics which have been traditionally viewed as strong indicators of talent, value and productivity may not be so effective anymore.

As the world continues to undergo profound, rapid change, "Moneyball" invites us to consider the possibility that these age-old metrics may not be quite so valuable after all and perhaps there are better ways to measure the value attorneys bring to their organizations and client relationships. We need to understand the

### PARADIGM SHIFT



CHRISTINA  
L. MARTINI

*Christina L. Martini is a practicing attorney, author and columnist. She is vice chair of the Chicago intellectual property practice group at DLA Piper and has been in private practice since 1994. She focuses her practice on domestic and international trademark, copyright, domain name, Internet, advertising and unfair competition law. She frequently speaks and writes regarding the legal and business landscapes and appears monthly in Chicago Lawyer magazine as a columnist of "Inside Out." You can reach her at [christinamartini.paradigmshift@gmail.com](mailto:christinamartini.paradigmshift@gmail.com).*

limitations of certain types of data and look for new ways to effectively benchmark a lawyer's true value.

It is important to recognize that success is more about what we do with raw talent than it is about recognizing it in the first place. It is not so much about the promise someone shows when they first

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walk in the door. Rather, it is about their performance over time, how effective we are at harnessing their strengths and capabilities and helping them flourish over the long run. We must find individuals who are able to do what we need them to do, who are committed and focused on doing those things really well and who are receptive to mentoring and guidance.

We also need continued alignment between our talent base and the skills that our businesses require. As the life cycles of our organizations and the markets for our offerings continue to change, these needs will likewise evolve over time. We should be realistic in forecasting how this process is likely to unfold and what we can reasonably expect our workforce to accomplish, including how much time we will give recruits to demonstrate their value to our organizations and what success looks like.

And just as baseball players are often traded or leave teams as free agents, some lawyers will move on and contribute their talents to new employers whose business models and strategies are better suited for their skill sets. And so the recruiting cycle continues.

"Moneyball" invites us to go against the grain and to think differently about our businesses and the legal profession. In our never-ending quest to do more with less, strategic innovation in areas such as talent recruitment and management can trigger a fundamental sea change in how we run our organizations.

As Billy Beane so aptly recognized, we simply cannot hold onto a model that no longer works.