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## 3 OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST WINTER SPORT DESTINATIONS



### » WHO'S READY FOR SOME POWDER?

town of Breckenridge for dining and activities that ditch the glitz and glamour of Vail or Aspen and take you straight to the heart of fun.

#### WHISTLER, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA

A destination that looks like a cross between a Nordic paradise and Olympic-level runs, Whistler is filled with true magic, winter activities, and a town that captivates the senses. When you see the mountains of British Columbia, you'll understand why they hosted the 2010 Winter Olympics. The location's beauty is only part of your stimulating experience, because every curve of fresh powder makes your pupils dilate. Once you're done flying down the hill where Bode Miller took the bronze, head over to the winter

wonderland of the old Olympic Village for a cozy night in a picturesque town.

#### ST. ANTON, AUSTRIA

If you want a great location for next year's Christmas card photo, there's no better place than the Tyrolean Alps. Nestled in a valley between perfectly molded mountains, the Austrian landscape provides a beautiful backdrop for your winter excursions. The densely wooded areas and the bright reflection of the snow frame the vibrant town that's just waiting to be explored. When you're ready for world-class runs, hop in one of the 11 gondolas and zip down the hills that hosted the 2001 Alpine World Ski Championships.

The sound of the first carve through fresh powder is the anthem of all winter sports enthusiasts. Here are three of the world's best places to experience that powder you've been craving all year.

#### BRECKENRIDGE, COLORADO

John Denver's anthem "Rocky Mountain High" is about the freedom he felt here. Where there are great mountains, there's even better snow. The ski resort boasts five peaks, 187 trails, 34 lifts, four terrain parks, and a renowned cross-country trail. After a day on the slopes, head into the



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JANUARY 2019

## THE YEAR AHEAD

### » Why 2019 Is Going to Be Our Best Year Yet

Our strategic planning for 2019 is a very systematic process aimed at delivering long-term results. We dress up in sumo-suits, go out in the backyard, and wrestle our issues out. At the end of the day, we're tired, and we come back to the office with a plan. Okay, that's not entirely true, but whenever you're in a partnership, sometimes it feels like that's the best course of action. In reality, we go on a retreat where we'll clear our minds in a relaxing venue and approach each line item of our business to see what went well and where there's room for improvement.

This last year has been an eye-opening experience for the two of us. We've had some significant wins, and we've improved as individuals. Anytime you bring two people together with business objectives, there are bound to be some growing pains, but as we look forward, there's nothing but blue skies ahead. Sometimes you need to take a step back to leap forward, and while our respective areas of law both benefited the firm, we definitely had to lay the groundwork for the future. Overhauling our systems, auditing our processes, relocating offices — you know, all that sexy stuff. It was a significant investment, but we're already reaping the benefits of that transition. A partnership is a lot like the first year of marriage. There are highs and lows, but it lays the foundation for habits moving forward, so it's important to get it right.

2019 is primed to be a big year for us. Anna's knowledge of Medi-Cal is going to be a significant weapon, and Christine has an excellent plan for expanding the bankruptcy side of the firm. Civil litigation and how we approach our referrals is already proving to be a more efficient strategy, and with grumbles of foreclosures on the horizon, Christine wants to make sure she can help as many people through the process as possible. We're always looking for ways to reach more people and better serve our community. Our firm is on the up and up, and we couldn't be more excited.



One of the goals we share is to establish a referral network that understands we are more than just our individual areas of law. While Anna is a lights-out expert in estate planning and Christine is an industry leader in bankruptcy, the firm as a whole has myriad vendors, partners, and friends at our disposal. We're looking to serve 300 families this year, and we believe that is just the beginning. Not only do we want to help our clients by referring them to top-notch lawyers, but we also desire our own referrals. If you know someone who is struggling with loans, Medi-Cal, or their estate plan, let us show you why Surf City Lawyers is the place to start. We're more than just wine-down Wednesdays and crochet corner. We're passionate attorneys dedicated to making a difference in our communities.

Thank you all for a great 2018, and we hope 2019 is already off to a great start. If you haven't yet, consider putting an estate plan or financial consultation at the top of your resolution list. At a minimum, come to our backyard and take bets on who will win the sumo fight. We want to show you how we can fight for you.

*-Christine Kingston and Anna Serrambana*



## HOW TO DRAW THE BEST NEW HIRES IN A RECORD-BREAKING LABOR MARKET



In a market where job seekers have the pick of the litter, employers face stiff competition when courting prospects. Here are three strategies to draw in top performers and keep them.

### 1. PAY MORE.

Excellent benefits, fancy perks, and flexible hours are important items on any job seeker's checklist, but virtually every prospect's top priority is adequate pay. Workers today have unprecedented bargaining power, and yet, according to ADP, small businesses with fewer than 50 employees boosted wages only a little over 3 percent last year, an amount quickly swallowed up by inflation and increasingly steep living costs. There's just no way around it. To attract top-tier talent, competitive compensation is paramount, especially in 2019.

### 2. GIVE NEW HIRES THE CHANCE TO GROW.

The best employees constantly hunger for new growth and development opportunities. Show prospective hires the potential heights they can

Finding good employees has always been hard, but in the economic environment of 2019, it can feel downright impossible. At the end of 2018, U.S. unemployment was the lowest it had been since 1969. For months, unfilled jobs outweighed the number of people seeking employment.

## 3 STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

reach at your organization. First, your business has to have a growth mindset that promotes loyal employees and empowers them to step into exciting new roles. Then you need to present prospective employees with challenging, rewarding projects and responsibilities and show examples of how those who've come before them have succeeded. Annual reviews and raises are a start, but you should also explain how a job at your business will improve your prospect's skills, career, and life.

### 3. GET THEM IN THE DOOR.

If you already offer a legitimately competitive salary, an expansive benefits package, and a good work environment with opportunities for growth, the only challenge left is to get on your ideal candidate's radar. One of the best ways to do this is to implement an employee referral program. Ask your team if they know anyone who'd fit the empty role. If you end up hiring their prospect and they stay on the team for, say, six months, then reward the referrer. Cash, PTO, and other benefits will encourage your loyal employees to bring in their skilled friends.



## WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM ERIN BROCKOVICH

### HOW ONE WOMAN CHANGED THE LIVES OF 634 PEOPLE

In 2000, Julia Roberts won her first Academy Award for her impassioned and somewhat impetuous portrayal of Erin Brockovich, a real-life Kansas legal clerk. Roberts marches through the film like a force of nature. Granted, the movie gives her all of the best lines — not to mention its focus on her eye-catching wardrobe. But the actress tackles the film's eponymous role with a blazing kind of possessiveness and injects the character with all the energy and drive she can muster.

The movie tells the incredible true story of Erin Brockovich, a foul-mouthed ex-beauty queen who, as a low-wage employee at a small law firm, managed to put together a lawsuit of such magnitude that it is still talked about today. While setting up a file for

a pro bono real estate account, Brockovich stumbled across medical records that confused her: Hundreds of residents throughout California's Mojave Desert had suffered side effects from the extreme poisoning of their water supply. Their medical records were paid for and covered up by Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E). Brockovich began digging deeper into the case and found evidence that the groundwater in the area was seriously contaminated with carcinogenic hexavalent chromium, but PG&E had been telling residents that they used a safer form of chromium and that their medical conditions, including recurrent tumors and Hodgkin's Disease, occurred merely by coincidence.

These families — 634 plaintiffs in total — were poisoned by PG&E for years, but Brockovich's efforts ensured that they would receive \$333 million

in compensation for their medical bills and the emotional and physical turmoil that plagued them each and every day. While she had an associates degree in applied arts, Brockovich had no prior legal experience. She relied on her quick thinking, her empathy for others, and her desire to obtain social fairness to help her clients get the help they desperately needed. She remained resolute in her determination when other attorneys questioned her abilities, she fought for clients even if they were initially unsure of the process, and she still proved her worth at work as a clerk and at home as a single mother of three. Here at Surf City Lawyers, we continuously strive to have the same tenacity and grit as Brockovich as we work to help our own clients get the assistance they need and deserve. Call us today with questions!

## YOUR ONE-STOP SHOP FOR ANY LAW SITUATION

### Let Us Help in Your Time of Need



As a law firm that specializes in several fields — bankruptcy, Medi-Cal, estate planning, business planning, and civil litigation — many of our clients assume that if they have a need outside of these areas, they will have to go elsewhere for attorney services. While we don't handle divorce, personal injury, or other fields of practice, that doesn't mean we can't help. With our expansive knowledge in this industry, we've developed a network of attorneys and vendors who can help individuals and businesses of all shapes and sizes. These are experts in their fields and dedicated professionals who get proven results.

We demand the best from ourselves, and we expect the most from our referral network. We personally vet each person we interact with so that our integrity and good name are never compromised by the actions of others. When we refer someone to another lawyer, you can rest assured that individual is someone we'd use if we had to. Here is what we look for in a referral partner.

#### COMPETENCY

It's crucial that those associated with us demonstrate the ability to accomplish tasks at a high level.

#### INTEGRITY

Simply put, people need to represent us in the most honest and ethical manner possible.

#### COMMUNICATION

No one should ever have to chase after someone to give them their hard-earned money.

While these three values are crucial, above all else, we trust those with a heart to serve. Anytime you need a lawyer, odds are that the situation is very stressful, and we understand that. Let us be your resource for anything law-related. If you ever need anything, give us a call and let us put our vetted network at your disposal.

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## PEANUT BUTTER AND BERRY FRENCH TOAST

Inspired by Delish

### INGREDIENTS

- 8 slices brioche, 1/2-inch thick
- 1/4 cup creamy peanut butter
- 2 large eggs
- 1/8 cup heavy cream
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- 2 cups cornflakes
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 cups mixed berries
- Powdered sugar, to sprinkle
- Maple syrup, for serving

### DIRECTIONS

1. On a large baking sheet lined with wax paper, place 4 slices of brioche and spread 1 tablespoon of peanut butter on each. Cover with remaining slices, creating sandwiches.
2. In a pie plate, beat eggs with cream and vanilla. In another, coarsely crush the cornflakes. Return to baking sheet.
3. Lightly soak sandwiches in the egg mixture, then dredge in cornflakes, pressing to adhere.
4. In a large skillet over medium heat, melt 1 tablespoon butter. Once melted and up to temperature, add sandwiches, cooking on one side until golden and crisp, about 2-3 minutes.
5. Return sandwiches to baking sheet, add remaining butter, and repeat on other side.
6. Top sandwiches with berries, sprinkle with powdered sugar, and serve with maple syrup.