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Newsroom: What Future for the Legal Profession?

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Newsroom

What Future for the Legal Profession?

Disruptive changes are transforming the legal marketplace and profession. Lawyers who aren't prepared will be left behind. Are you ready for the challenge?



Disruptive changes in the market for legal services are transforming the profession, and lawyers who aren't prepared will be left behind.

That's the frightening – yet hopeful – message of lawyer, author and management consultant Gerry Riskin, who will deliver the Third Annual Professor Anthony J. Santoro Business Law Lecture, "The Business of Law: Disruptions in the Market for Legal Services." The event will be presented by Roger Williams University School of Law at the Omni Hotel in Providence, on Thursday, September 18, 2014, at 5:00 p.m. Admission is free of charge.

"In 10 years, UPL – the unlicensed practice of law – will be a dead letter," Riskin predicts. Meanwhile technology threatens to minimize or bypass lawyers and deliver legal services directly to clients. The emergence of "Big Data" is opening the possibility of predictive algorithms that can estimate the likelihood of litigation success before a single document is filed, and "e-discovery" programs are poised to take still more lucrative work away from lawyers

Is the legal profession doomed? Far from it – but new and creative approaches are indispensable for success.

“Your job is to create the future, which I think is extremely exciting and requires a lot of courage,” Riskin says, adding lawyers have to learn to think more like entrepreneurs, acting quickly and continually experimenting, even when the outcome is unpredictable. “We [lawyers] are afraid to fire if we’re not going to hit the bull’s-eye every time,” he said.

Riskin is a Canadian lawyer and business school graduate, author, management consultant, and pioneer in the field of professional firm economics and marketing. His books include *The Successful Lawyer: Powerful Strategies for Transforming Your Practice*. He has consulted or presented for private firms and at the request of, among others, the American Bar Association, the Canadian Bar Association, the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA), the Law Society of the UK, the Institute of Law Firm Management (ILFM), *The Financial Times*, and the National Association of Law Firm Marketing Administrators.

The Professor Anthony J. Santoro Business Law Lecture Series brings leading lawyers and business professionals to RWU Law, presenting on important issues in the field of business law while enriching the school’s dynamic learning environment with practical knowledge and valuable networking opportunities. This series is a wonderful tribute to Professor Santoro’s distinguished career as a legal educator, a past president of Roger Williams University and the founding dean of Roger Williams University School of Law.

The lecture is free and open to the public and media. Please register with RWU Law’s Office of Programs & Events by September 15 at 401-254-4659 or email lawevents@rwu.edu. The lecture has been approved by the Rhode Island MCLE Commission for one (1) RICLE credit. Registration begins at 5 p.m.; the lecture will begin at 5:30, and is followed by a reception.