

Finkelstein & Partners shares dangers of texting and driving with Cornwall students

Commit to quit - don't text and drive was the urgent message attorney Kenneth Fromson left with nearly 500 seniors and juniors at a recent program at Cornwall High School. Fromson, a partner at Finkelstein & Partners LLP, one of New York State's largest personal injury firms, spoke to the students about the dangers of texting while driving as part of the law firm's active community relations program.

Finkelstein & Partners has teamed up with Cumulus radio stations to build awareness among people of all ages, and especially young people, about the deadly consequences of texting while driving, also known as distracted driving.

"First and foremost," Fromson said, "texting while driving is illegal in New York and 28 other states across the nation. Is there anything going on that's so critical it can't wait until you can safely pull over or arrive at your destination?" asked Fromson.

"According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), it is the under-20 age group with the greatest proportion of distracted drivers," said Fromson. "Of all drivers younger than 20 involved in fatal crashes, 16 percent were reported to have been dis-

tracted while driving. That's why it's so important that we make them understand



Attorney Kenneth Fromson of Finkelstein & Partners LLP.

now, while they're still learning to drive, that texting, and other distracting activities, including messing around with

friends, is not only dangerous, it can kill," continued Fromson.

To illustrate the serious nature of the issue, Fromson shared the following facts with the Cornwall students, all of whom were of driving age:

20 percent of injury crashes in 2009 involved reports of distracted driving. (NHTSA)

According to a recent survey nearly half of people under the age of 24 admitted to texting while driving

Drivers who use hand-held devices are four times as likely to get into crashes serious enough to injure themselves. (Insurance Institute for Highway Safety)

Using a cell phone while driving, whether it's hand-held or hands-free, delays a driver's reactions as much as having a blood alcohol concentration at the legal limit of .08 percent. (University of Utah)

The students who participated in the Commit to Quit program were invited to

create a poster to share the lessons they learned with their fellow Cornwall students. The winning poster will be displayed throughout the school.

"Texting while driving is an exceptionally serious issue, especially for our young people," said the firm's managing partner, Andrew Finkelstein. "We're proud to be able to use the resources of our firm and the knowledge of our attorneys to communicate the issues of distracted driving. If our Commit to Quit Texting While Driving program prevents even one accident, saves even one life, then it served its purpose," continued Finkelstein.

For more information about the Commit to Quit Texting while Driving program visit the Community Relations pages of Finkelstein & Partners website at www.lawampm.com. To arrange for the Commit to Quit program at your school or community organization, contact Danielle Mackey at dmackey@lawampm.com.

Plan for a great 2012

conducts her business. When she first started working as a professional organizer, she would have five or sometimes six clients at one time, so she'd be in Ulster County one day, Manhattan the next and then Dutchess the following day.

"I was all over the tri-state area," she says. Now, instead she takes one client, focuses on his or her needs, and works intensely for a week or until the project is completed.

"I'm more focused and intense," she says. "Now, people I'm working with know when I'll be there and I'll help them get ready for something such as a renovation and I'll work steadily for five days. That happened by me taking a look at how I work best."

Learning to change is a challenge for many businesses, especially successful ones. But honest evaluations about glitches and problems now can avoid long-term chaos down the line.

"People are typically only open to change when things aren't going well and they're stressed out," says Stitham. Almost all business that contact her have one major flaw: keeping up with paperwork and filing.

"A lot of times, in people's day-to-day office procedures, these things aren't kept up with," she says. "When I do productivity coaching and assessing, I find out what's not working."

Often the solution is for an office to hire a sub-contractor to handle those duties.

"Do what you do best and let other people do what they do best," says Stitham. "I have a bookkeeper, an accountant, a graphic designer and a web person on my team. I need my team in place so I can do what I do best."

Rather than thinking of this as an expense eating into the bottom line, companies should consider it an investment.

"I go and support my team by giving them the work they do best," says Stitham. "If you're a landscaper and love

continued from page 1

working with your clients, why would you want to be in the office organizing paperwork? A lot of time in people's day is spent trying to develop office procedures because these things aren't kept up with."

An honest assessment should reveal where the kinks are.

When Stitham starts her annual planning retreat, the first thing she does is develop a master calendar to shape her work schedule. Ironically, it starts by planning what time not to work.

"I mark out all the days I'm going to be on vacation, and down time when I'm not doing business," she says. She also marks half-day quarterly retreats to evaluate how she is doing in meeting the expectations of her annual plan.

"I believe a strong balance is the key and I need to be aware of the fact that I have my own things I want to accomplish. I'm always seeking that balance where I'm working to my capacity and also taking time for the things I want to do as well. Balance is the operative word."

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