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## On Being Selected for the 2018 National Trial Lawyers Top 40 under 40

Julio Costa and I just announced our selection to be members of the 2018 National Trial Lawyers “[Top 40 under 40](#).” This is an exciting yet humbling bit of news for us. The Top 40 under 40 is a professional organization composed of the top trial lawyers under 40 from around the United States. We were selected due to our growing reputation for excellence in client advocacy and high legal practice standards.

This sounds a little heady, but rather than celebrate, we feel the selection reinforces the seriousness of our obligations to our clients. In my case, I have successfully litigated cases involving all types of work-related injuries as well as complex, catastrophic third-party personal injury and work injury cross-over cases. In the last three years alone, Julio has recovered over 16 million dollars for his injured clients. His recoveries include complex work-injuries, including paralysis, quadriplegia, serious brain and spine injuries, and work-related death cases.

By all accounts, we seem to be in good company. Membership into The National Trial Lawyers: Top 40 under 40 is by invitation only. The National Trial Lawyers extends membership only to trial lawyers practicing civil plaintiff and/or criminal defense law. Members represent the most qualified attorneys from each state who demonstrate superior leadership qualifications, reputation, influence, stature, and public profile measured by objective and uniformly applied standards in compliance with state bar and national Rule 4-7.

Our firm has a reputation for being one of Chicago’s most effective and client-oriented personal injury and worker’s compensation law firms. This honor aligns with our strong record of success in advocating for injured workers and those entitled to compensation resulting from others’ negligence. We will take this selection to the “Top 40 under 40” as a further call for thoroughness and diligence in representing people entitled to benefits.

## A Beacon of Action and Female Empowerment In The African American Community

Thunder Walker is a special person, inspiring everyone she meets. Many people agree that she gets it from her father. Her boundless energy is apparent as she makes it her mission to empower others because this CEO's real estate skills and expertise are shared with other women who look up to her. It is a unique approach and has resulted in a satisfying career and a fulfilling life. Walker is at her happiest when she helps to make other women successful. How does she do it? She champions self-determination and entrepreneurial real estate development projects as a mentor to women in the community.

Thunder is an African American role model and has found incredible success and fulfillment in a non-traditional profession. Understanding the sometimes insurmountable odds that can hold back disadvantaged and under-educated women, Walker will always give attention and career advice to those walking on the path to financial stability and pride.

Proving it is possible to balance a career, mentoring, and a personal life, Thunder really has it all. It all starts with continuing her father's groundbreaking work in the family business, Breathe Capital Group Corporation. To give back, the Breathe House Foundation supports the community by developing properties and building homes, providing disadvantaged neighborhoods with healthy, raised gardens, air and water purifiers, energy-efficient appliances, and built-in learning centers. Walker imparts her wisdom to help young people understand the real estate business, and how it factors into economics and wellness. This is really the better part of, "Give a person a fish, and they will eat today. Teach a person to fish, and you feed the person for a lifetime."

Speaking of walking the walk, Ms. Walker has launched her cutting-edge digital magazine and podcast, "[Women Pushing Dirt](#)," an amazing digital magazine spotlighting women in the real estate industry. Her new projects are now attracting the attention of the real estate world and influential women's associations. According to the dynamic Walker, "We have in-depth discussions with established urban legends and examine the ins and outs of all types of careers within the industry. Our podcasts look at the roles of developers, architects, investors, and ranchers. We find the real estate legends for you and ask them how they put their efforts into reaching the top of their game. Join Me In 'The Dirt!'"

On October 10, 2020, Women Pushing Dirt offered a new women's real estate empowerment seminar. For one hour, Ms. Walker shared her experience, strength, and wisdom to inspire women in and out of the community to expand their career goals. This was only the first step to a new career in the real estate sector!

## Data-Driven Culture: Enabling Innovation

The idea sounds appealing. Make your organization more data-driven. Use data, also known as facts, to drive decision-making and strategy. Organizations that make decisions and measure outcomes based on data are more likely to challenge the status quo and innovate. This kind of innovation is compelling and creates a competitive edge.

Chances are that some of your people are already doing it. Why not everyone? Of course, the reasons vary, but we have observed two major inhibitors of data-driven organizations in general. One challenge is technological. Data analytics may be (or appear to be) out of reach to many employees. Yet, even if this deficit can be addressed, culture may hinder people from adopting a data-driven mindset.

The two issues intersect. A lack of intuitive, accessible analytics technology slows the move toward being data-driven. Lacking technology, the culture shuns data-driven processes. This divergence defines the problem but also shows the way to a solution. It's at once about technology, culture, and the interplay between technology and culture.

What is culture, really? Definitions abound, but answering the following questions exposes the truth about corporate culture: "How do things actually get done at your organization, regardless of the org chart? Why do instructions are followed or ignored?" For example, in a sales-driven culture, a project that appeals to salespeople as a low-risk money maker will get more attention and credibility than one that is more subjective.

What if the subjective idea was actually a better moneymaker, just one that is harder to see without quantitative proof? What would it take for the sales-minded people to see the data points underscoring the financial promise of the idea? To make that happen—to turn a sales-driven culture into a data-driven culture—you have to put the analytics into the hands of those very same sales-driven people who dominate the pragmatic decision making in the organization. Then, the water cooler conversations where real work occurs will turn to data discussions.

Moving to a data-driven culture requires a foundational transformation in the way people think as well as changes in infrastructure and the entire relationship between workers and technology specialists. Leaders set the tone, helping drive a shift in attitude where people at all levels get interested in new competencies, technologies, and methods. The leaders of the organization need to become champions for a data-driven culture, but it cannot be solely a top-down process.

Everyone has to feel a stake in becoming data-driven. In our advisory role working with organizations that want to move toward a more data-driven culture, we often perceive that data analytics is happening somewhere else. Data analysis is an "IT department thing" or a matter of "data experts...whoever they are." Unfortunately, these perceptions may be based on the truth. In many organizations, analytics is secluded in specialized departments that have access to advanced technology. It doesn't have to be that way anymore.

CenturyLink is pioneering new approaches to data analytics for everyone and creating pathways to cultural transformation around data. Our managed services, hybrid infrastructure offerings, expertise in SAP HANA, and data science come together to put powerful analytics into the hands-off anyone who wants it. With managed services and the cloud, you can speed your way to deploying analytics on a

broad, economical basis. You can give critical analytics access to your cultural influencers. Thus equipped, they can champion a data-driven approach to doing business.

Specifically, with CenturyLink, you can deploy SAP workloads up to 4x faster with integrated solutions to expose analytical insights. You can improve deployments, reduce spending, and eliminate disruption of migrating to SAP applications or migrating your existing SAP applications to HANA. We are a recognized SAP Gold Partner and a Cisco strategic partner. We can accelerate and simplify the management of large-scale SAP applications and advanced analytics initiatives.

### **Join Us at Sapphire**

This year, CenturyLink is a Diamond Sponsor of Sapphire in Orlando. Come to booth #651 and watch a demonstration of our comprehensive, integrated solutions for SAP HANA. If you're ready to learn how to use your enterprise data to build your data-driven culture, visit us for one-to-one conversations and customized demos. Or, come hear Vijay Atti, our Practice Lead / Sr. Architect - SAP HANA, BI, and Big Data deliver a presentation on May 19. For more information, or to request a private meeting, please visit.

[http://info.centurylinkforbusiness.com/2016-Sapphire-NOW-ASUG\\_Sapphire-Registration-LP-new.html](http://info.centurylinkforbusiness.com/2016-Sapphire-NOW-ASUG_Sapphire-Registration-LP-new.html)

## Budgeting for Art from the Start

What kind of artwork would give your newly redesigned living room that just-right aura you're seeking? Maybe a cute little print you picked up at an antique shop would do the trick. How about a \$5 million Jackson Pollack canvas? They both might work well, but as you can imagine, the money difference is rather vast.

Admittedly, this example is a little extreme, but I think we've all been there. The artwork is a key part of the design scheme of any interior space. The question that arises frequently, though, is how to budget for it. If you're curious about how to decide your spending on art in your design project, I invite you to join me and several of my colleagues this Sunday morning at a panel presentation on this subject.

Discussion topics include:

- Budgeting or investing? Art can be a financial investment, so it may make sense to complete your interior design with artworks that are projected to increase in value over time.
- Aligning styles. While we are all surprised by a piece that just looks amazing no matter what, in usual practice, it's a good idea to match the style of the décor with the style of the art. For example, a contemporary design goes well with contemporary art. Colonial style interiors are complemented by traditional art like 19<sup>th</sup>-century prints or oil paintings, and so forth.
- How to work with art dealers. The artworld is distinctive, in both good and bad ways. It pays to understand what's going on behind the scenes and driving prices up or down for a particular artist's work. It's also helpful to get a sense of when you should buy art at an auction versus a private sale or a gallery.

In addition to myself, panelists will include Sarah Walker, Heidi Woodman, Maryanne Hibner, Krista Nye Nicholas, and Tami Ramsay, representing the firm's Curated House, Cloth & Kind, Haus Love, Hibner Design, and of course [Marshall Erb Design](#). Susan Jamieson will serve as moderator. Breakfast bites will be served.

The "[Budgeting for Art from the Start](#)" panel discussion, presented by ASPIRE DESIGN AND HOME, will take place on Sunday, October 14, from 10:00am-11:30am. The event will take place at Zoe Bios Creative in the High Point Market, which is located at 108-110 S. Elm St. in High Point.

Sign up for the event at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/budgeting-for-art-from-the-start-tickets-50780204960>

Learn more about the event at the ASPIRE Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/2553800294637898/>

