COORDINATOR/MODERATOR AND PANELIST GUIDELINES 2017

Before the Conference

1. The Track Coordinator and Moderator should participate in a conference call to discuss the duties and responsibilities of the Moderator at this Conference.

2. Moderators should schedule and convene regular telephone conferences with all panelists during the months preceding the Conference. Track Coordinators should be invited to attend if possible particularly in the early calls. Specifically, it is recommended that there be no less than one conference call per month each of the five months preceding the Conference beginning in June; don’t wait until the end to start scheduling calls! It can take time to prepare a panel outline and to create A/V material for the conference. Sufficient planning calls are a necessity in the Moderator role. The first call should involve a discussion of the format of the panel presentation, what the panelists should be prepared to discuss, and what the papers should cover. The second call should refine the format, the content of the presentation, and what the papers will cover. Subsequent calls should involve more detailed preparation for the presentation, including a dry run. The coordinator/moderator should take notes him or herself or ask a participant on each call to take notes and circulate them to the group after the call.

3. Moderators should periodically update their Track Coordinator on the progress of the panel preparation, papers, and any other issues regarding the presentation.

4. Moderators should submit a one page outline of the program, including a description of the presentation format to the Track Coordinator by July 21, 2017. It should follow the Planning Committee’s previously provided guidance for the panel.

5. Moderators should ensure that the panelists’ oral presentations are coordinated, that they flow and transition smoothly, and are not redundant. A dialogue is recommended; individual speeches, otherwise known as “talking heads,” should be avoided as much as possible. Circulating an outline for the panelists as a guide for the presentation has been noted as a successful technique in the past.

6. Moderators are responsible for supervising the written materials to ensure they are high quality and are submitted by October 9, 2017. Each coordinator/moderator should review each written submission prior to the final deadline to ensure its quality. At least one submission must comply with CLE requirements; others may be in outline or checklist format.

7. If the panel decides to use a PowerPoint Presentation, the Moderator should oversee and supervise its timely submission and review it to ensure
it meets the guidelines for PowerPoint Presentations (see guidelines below, e.g., 36 point font).

8. Moderators should gather speaker biographies and releases from all speakers and from all authors of written materials and submit them by October 9, 2016.

9. Moderators should confirm with ABA staff in advance any technology or other special needs for their panel and reconfirm the week before the Conference that these needs in fact will be addressed. For example, if there will be a role play, sufficient microphones and chairs need to be available so the audience can see and hear the “actors.”

10. It is highly advised that the Moderator schedule at least one in-person preparatory meeting before the panel presentation, most likely at the Conference.

Once the Conference Begins

11. Each program must start promptly and on time. Moderators should not read the entire bio for each panelist but should otherwise very briefly introduce each one, highlighting their experience and demonstrating why the panelists were chosen to address the particular topic where applicable (e.g., “So and so argued the case before the Sixth Circuit.”).

12. Moderators should use time control methods to ensure that speakers’ comments are kept to appropriate lengths. Tips will be given as to how to control the presentation during the moderator webinar described above.

13. Moderators for all panels are presumed to be “speaking moderators.” What this means is that in addition to organizing the preparation of the panel presentation and the paper in advance of the Conference, the moderator should be actively involved during the panel presentation by facilitating and transitioning the speakers (such as asking transitional questions, or otherwise by making transitional statements to help the audience understand the flow of information, e.g., “Now, Arnie Pedowitz will talk about the employee’s perspective on the protection of company trade secrets.”). In addition, the coordinator/moderator is expected to contribute substantively to the panel and the papers from the perspective of the constituency that the coordinator/moderator represents in his or her normal practice (e.g., employee, government, management, union). The Planning Committee will expressly indicate if for any given panel coordinator/moderator should not be a “speaking moderator.” (Note: “Speaking Moderators” will be eligible for Speaker CLE Credit (e.g., 3x normal CLE credits in NY).)

14. Presenters should be reminded not to read from or refer excessively to notes or other written materials; instead, the goal should be to use the presentation for the purpose of highlighting important developments, issues and trends.
15. Moderators should ensure that the substance of the presentation is advanced, unless the program is billed as a “Fundamentals” program. If necessary to provide a basic statement of the law to level set, such introduction should be brief, if possible less than five minutes.

16. Moderators should allow time for audience questions, decide in advance when the panel will take the questions, and let the audience know at the beginning of the program. Each question must be heard by the audience, either by asking the questioner to speak into a microphone or by the coordinator/moderator repeating the question for all audience members to hear and for the sake of the recording.

17. Moderators are responsible for overseeing that their panelists speak into microphones. We have had complaints in the past that panelists turn their heads from the microphones to directly address other panelists or, at times, do not have the microphones at the correct angle or sufficiently close to them to be heard.

18. Moderators should try to have each presentation provide at least three takeaways or practical pointers that are summarized for the audience at the end of the presentation.

19. It is the Moderator’s responsibility to ensure that the panelists’ discussion is appropriate and remains collegial. Moderators should work with their panelists to ensure that the panelists refrain from making offensive comments (but this is not meant to suppress legitimate differences of opinion provided they are respectfully expressed).

20. Moderators should remind the audience to complete electronic evaluations that will be emailed to all Conference registrants at the end of each day.

Written Materials

1. Written materials meeting CLE requirements pertaining to the presentation must accompany every program in order to obtain CLE credit. As long as at least one paper meets CLE requirements, other submissions may consist of outlines or checklists that would not necessarily meet CLE requirements.

2. Written materials must be submitted by October 9, 2017. Questions about paper requirements should be referred to the Section staff.

3. If the panel decides to use PowerPoint presentations as their written materials, the content must meet CLE requirements.

4. One-page Speaker Biographies and Speaker Releases must be submitted with the written papers.
PowerPoint Presentation Guidelines
(Note: Use of PowerPoint Presentations is optional.)

1. Each slide must be clear, concise and without too many words. There is a tendency to put too much content on a PowerPoint slide. For this reason, the moderator must oversee the slides to ensure they are easily readable and enhance the presentation.

2. Each slide must be readable from a distance. The font for the text must be at least 36 point.

3. Plans should be made in advance for non-interruptive setup and use of computers by panelists (to avoid delays).

4. PowerPoint Presentations that should be included on the Conference materials website should be submitted by October 9, 2017. In addition, the moderator should bring the presentation file with him/her on a flash drive to the session.

Guidelines for Hypotheticals
(Note: Use of hypotheticals is optional; they are useful when they spark lively discussion.)

1. Hypotheticals must be extremely brief and not overly complex. They should be to the point, without extraneous and irrelevant facts.

2. Think of creative ways to present your hypothetical(s) to the audience (through role playing, video introduction, PowerPoint highlights, etc.).

3. Hypotheticals must be in good taste. As employment lawyers, we see and hear offensive material frequently. However, most audience members attending a CLE program do not wish to be bombarded with that type of information.