

LEGAL MANAGEMENT

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Tracking Progress Toward Our Goals

My partner, Jeff, and I got each other Fitbits for Christmas this past year.



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We'd gotten pretty lazy and realized we needed some motivation to get us moving. You've no doubt heard about these wearable tracking devices that measure your daily step count, food intake, sleep patterns and calorie burning. The app gives you an instant read on your daily progress and even lets you share data with friends and family, to help you stay on track. Right after we rang in the new year, we charged up our Fitbits and set up our dashboards.

I got off to a slow start, as I came down with a pretty serious sinus infection that waylaid me for a few weeks. But Jeff dove right in, obsessively checking his step count almost hourly. When I got home from work, I found him frantically running up and down the stairs. I thought there was some emergency. As it turned out, Jeff was only a few hundred steps shy of 10,000 for the day. After getting over the cold, I got hooked myself. We were soon tracking our own progress and each other's, creating some (relatively) friendly competition. One rare day, I managed to outstep him. We were sitting on the couch watching TV, when out of the corner of my eye, I noticed Jeff kicking his legs as if he were riding a bicycle. "What in the world are you doing?" I asked. He said, "Making sure I have more steps than you today."

The Fitbits and competition are working. Jeff and I both have lost weight and greatly improved our overall health. We've got more energy and feel less stressed. And with positive reinforcement from measuring our progress and our fellow Fitbitters, we've been able to sustain our motivation to stay on track.

We'll continue to monitor our goals and track our progress to ensure we achieve success.

Several studies have found that setting specific goals and measuring progress toward them improve the chances of success in achieving them. And that goes for organizations as well as people. As part of our strategic plan, ALA has its own "Fitbit dashboard" to measure our progress against our four strategic goals. As we look forward to the start of a new year, we wanted to let you know how we are progressing on our plan.

Goal No. 1: Strong, sustainable growth. 2014 was a great year for ALA membership growth and retention. In addition to achieving an 89 percent retention (very high for professional associations like ALA), we also had our strongest year of growth since 2008, adding 1,485 new or reinstated members for a year-end net membership of 9,708.

Goal No. 2: Highly satisfied customers. Reviews for the 2014 Annual Conference, Business of Law Conferences and specialty conferences are in. We made a concerted effort to enhance the quality and depth of our educational programs and the evaluations show we are succeeding. Session and speaker ratings across the board jumped considerably from 2013. Open rates and click-through rates for ALA email has also risen dramatically, as we incorporate more news, education and resources into our communications. Also, we have received positive reviews on both the electronic and print versions of our new weekly newsletter, *BOLD Bites*.

Goal No. 3: Innovative product and service development and delivery. 2014 marked the first year of our all-digital, award-winning publication, *Legal Management*. Since the launch, we've had nearly 1,200 downloads of the mobile app, 9,000 users, and more than 77,000 page views. Our new, enhanced Compensation and Benefits Survey featured results from almost 1,200 participants. Registration for our online learning courses have And the inaugural Human Resources Conference received rave reviews and strong attendance.

Goal No. 4: Highly Engaged Talent. We've revamped the role of our Regional Leadership Teams to provide a greater focus on chapter counseling and support and are awaiting the results of the 2014 Volunteer Needs Survey to assess how we can improve the ALA volunteer experience. To ensure we are all focused on achieving our strategic objectives, we've created the Association Leadership Institute, an expansion of the former Regional Leadership Institute. Earlier this month, dozens of ALA's key leaders — the Board, Regional Representatives, Committee Chairs and Staff — gathered in Chicago to discuss strategies and tactics necessary to secure our role as the undisputed leaders in the business of law.

Our progress continues at a strong pace this year. ALA's "Fitbit dashboard" will show how fast we hit the ground running. We are off to a very active start. We'll continue to monitor our goals and track our progress to ensure we achieve success. Time to get moving again — the stair climber beckons!

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