

LEGAL MANAGEMENT

THE MAGAZINE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF LEGAL ADMINISTRATORS

Connected Through Community

I love coffee — the taste, the smell, the pick-me-up, the mental boost and the warmth it provides.



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I started drinking coffee at a very early age. My sippy cups would be filled with it, and my dad would wake me up for school each morning with a cup in hand. But in our house, it wasn't just any coffee. It had to be Community Coffee, a Baton Rouge, Louisiana, brand.

In the early 1900s, founder Cap Saurage and his family opened a country store to sell coffee and other groceries to their neighbors. He named his popular coffee Community as a way to honor his friends and neighbors.

The success of the brand spawned a chain of "CC's" coffee shops throughout southern Louisiana, which soon became my parents' favorite hangout. If they weren't at home, they were at CC's, sipping their macchiato (with extra foam) and chatting up any and every customer. They were there so often they developed groupies, including two couples whose young children became their "adopted" grandkids. My parents had plenty of coffee at home, but the coffee at the coffee shop tasted better when it was being shared with friends and family. It really was community coffee.

Community has always been a hallmark of ALA's culture — warm, inviting and energizing.

Community doesn't just make coffee taste better. It provides us with a sense of belonging, helps us to learn and grow, and provides a network of support and resources. Our interests, motivation, health and happiness are all inextricably tied to the feeling that we belong to a larger group, sharing common interests and aspirations.

Forty-five years ago, a group of professionals responsible for managing law firms came together to form the ALA community, providing members with a safe place to share ideas, explore problems and find support.

To build on this rich history, last year we launched [ALA's Online Communities](#), digitally connecting members who share common interests. This new collaboration tool allows you to communicate and share with one another at any time.

More than a listserv, these communities allow you to ask questions, conduct surveys and share documents and resources. We've got communities dedicated to finance and profitability, human resources, diversity and information technology, among others. There are also communities for corporate legal department professionals, large firm administrators, intellectual property (IP) firm

managers and plaintiff personal injury firm managers.

Since June, nearly 2,000 members have signed on to the communities. If you are one of them, you know how valuable these forums can be. If you haven't done so yet, I hope you will check [them out](#). It just takes a minute to sign up, and we have a tutorial video available to walk you through the process. It's a great way to stay connected to your ALA colleagues and find the resources you need, when you need them.

Given the increasing complex challenges you face every day, it's nice to know you have a network of supportive legal professionals to turn to for help and support. Community has always been a hallmark of ALA's culture — warm, inviting and energizing — just like that cup of joe from the local coffee shop.

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