

Making Work Extraordinary



ASSOCIATION OF LEGAL ADMINISTRATORS®
The Source of Legal Management Information and Knowledge

"Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing."
Theodore Roosevelt

Echoing the quote from TR, what work can be more worth doing from the perspectives of those in leadership positions in businesses like law firms, than working hard at making that business – that law firm – an extraordinary place to work?

By definition, when something is "extraordinary" it goes beyond what is usual, regular, or customary. It is noticeably and positively different from what you generally find. It is exceptional or special. In the context of that definition, an extraordinary place to work is something more than just a place to spend some time and collect a paycheck.

Our lives are inescapably better when the places where we work are places we trust; where the work has value to ourselves and others; where people have pride in what they do; where we enjoy those we work with; and where we feel we belong and that what we are becoming through our work is what we want to be in our lives. When the workplace is truly extraordinary, the work follows suit, and those who interact and work in such a place become themselves positively different and exceptional.

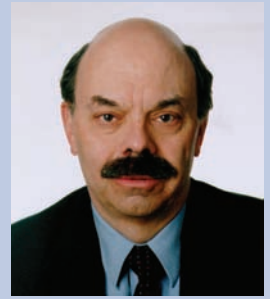
A bit over two years ago, ALA launched what has become a multifaceted Extraordinary Place to Work Initiative. That was based, then and now, on the simple premise that there can be no better way for ALA to improve members' returns on their investments in the Association, and the value they bring to their employing organizations, than to help them make those organizations great places to work for everyone who works there.

Each year we have added new pieces to that puzzle and that Initiative. Earlier this year, we debuted an unprecedented publication, *The Extraordinary Law Firm: Making Your Firm a Great Place to Work*. That 260-page book by Charles E. Stinnett provides case studies, sample policies, checklists, and other materials that offer real-world guidance for what it means to be an extraordinary law firm, and how ALA members can use those best practices to make their firms great and out-of-the-ordinary places to work. And, as I write this Publisher's message, we are deep into the planning of a totally new, seminal "Extraordinary Law Firm Conference" that will be the "centerpiece" of the overall Initiative in 2008. (See pages 12-13 in this issue for more information about the conference.)

Tying the Initiative together year-to-year is this annual theme issue of *Legal Management*. In the pages of this bonus issue, as in those in 2005 and 2006, you'll find tips on enlightened leadership; ways to encourage employees' personal development; best practices from well-run firms; insights on talent management and retention; the impact of space design on efficiency and performance; and many other ideas that can help you create new and stronger building blocks in making your firm a place that is far from ordinary.

We trust that you will find in these pages thoughts and ideas that you can use in your firm or organization, and an ongoing reference that will provide you food not just for thought but for action – extraordinary action – now and in the coming months.

John J. Michalik
Executive Director and Publisher



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