

Member-to-Member Non-Solicitation Policy

In order to ensure confidence, privacy and promote collaboration and an open exchange of information to be enjoyed by all members, the Association of Legal Administrators (ALA) maintains a policy of non-solicitation of fellow members. Overt solicitation, misuse of the Member Directory for business development or marketing, or sharing of member information with non-members without the prior approval of the association is strictly prohibited. Violations are subject to immediate cancellation of membership, without refund, and loss of all rights and privileges.

For these reasons, ALA has developed the following guidelines and examples for appropriate and inappropriate activities (in question/answer format) to make the difference between professional networking and solicitation clearer and easier to recognize:

1. Can I distribute business cards to one or more members at an ALA function?

As with any business event, it is highly appropriate to exchange business cards as part of a business conversation. It is not appropriate to pass out cards to everyone with whom you come in contact without making an individual connection, except when acting as an educator with the intent of allowing audience members to follow up. It is not appropriate to approach another member for the specific purpose of marketing or selling a service/product.

2. Is it acceptable to follow up the receipt of a business card with a telephone call, mailing, or email?

If the member requested the follow up, certainly do so. In an exchange of business cards, the following guidelines apply:

- A follow up telephone call may be appropriate if requested or permission offered.
- Unsolicited email for marketing or promotional purposes is inappropriate.
- A letter or email offering a product or service is okay if you had a conversation with this individual and they expressed interest in receiving additional information.
- Newsletters by mail or email are acceptable as long as procedures for opting out from future communications are clear and followed.
- Invitation to an educational event is acceptable by mail or email.

3. Is it OK to send cards or letters with your company name on it to all members listed in the directory?

This is acceptable as long as solicitation is not part of the card either directly or indirectly.

4. Can I use ALA member contact to build business?

Yes. Build relationships through professional support, collaboration, and networking. Act as a resource and reference, and lend your knowledge and expertise to projects and programs.

5. How can I use the membership directory?

You may use it to find the name and number of someone who you may have met at an event, or to contact a member to discuss a mutual business issue or question (see Question #7). You may not use it to market your business or solicit business.

6. Can I pass out literature about my business at ALA functions?

If you are an educator, or sponsor, you may distribute literature per the terms of that agreement. Members may not leave promotional materials on meeting tables or openly distribute such during association meetings.

7. Can I call upon members when I have a question and want ideas on how other people might handle a particular situation?

Yes, this is one of the values of belonging to our organization. It provides opportunities to learn from each other, both formally and informally. Contact via mail, email or telephone is appropriate. This contact should not be used to market or solicit business.

8. Can I send my newsletter or information about an educational session my organization is offering to all members listed in the Members Directory?

No. You can only send your newsletter and similar educational materials to members with whom you have established a direct relationship (see Question #2).

9. By utilizing ALA online member directories, member agrees to the following:

The information in this Directory is protected by copyright and is intended solely for the individual and private use of ALA members in connection with the ALA's mission and activities. The contents of this Directory may not, in whole or in part, be reproduced, copied, disseminated, or entered into a computer database and may not be used for any commercial or solicitation purpose of any kind. This Directory is available only to ALA Members. Members may not permit any information from this Directory to pass into the hands of any other person outside their employer organization, association, or company. Questions regarding acceptable usage may be directed to membership@alanet.org or call ALA membership staff at 847.267.1585.

Each member ultimately decides whether or not an activity by another member represents solicitation. Members are encouraged to be candid with each other and to respect another's point of view. Member policy violation complaints will be investigated fully to ensure that ALA's non-solicitation policy is adhered to.

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