

LEGAL MANAGEMENT

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WHAT NEW HIRES MAY LACK — AND HOW TO FIX IT

These in-demand skills may not be inherent; however, lawyers and support staff can learn them.





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“

ALA recognizes that our greatest opportunity and strength isn't with products, services or projects — it's with our members.”

The Unpredictable, Rewarding World of Legal Management

Hey ALA! Those of you who attended our Annual Conference & Expo in Grapevine, Texas, last month witnessed a full gamut of weather put on display by Mother Nature. Springtime in Texas definitely involves an element of erratic weather — sudden and strong thunderstorms, dramatic swings in temperature followed by warm sunshine and perfect blue skies. And that's all in the span of an afternoon!

In many ways, spring weather is like legal management — variable, wonderful, occasionally stormy, subject to change in an instant and never ordinary. I have come to think of what we do as legal management professionals as an adventure full of surprises. As unpredictable as our day-to-day professional lives can be, I am comforted knowing that membership in ALA means I have a dependable, responsive and relevant toolkit to go to in time of crisis or calm.

In this month's *Legal Management*, you will find plenty of what you need to prepare your legal organization for whatever the industry or an unforeseen force of nature may throw at it. Our cover story provides insights on the hard and soft skills that personnel throughout your organization need to remain competitive and provide outstanding client service. Communication, collaboration and empathy are the key attributes for everyone from the front desk to the corner office. These are some of the core skills of leadership. That's where our Association really shines by offering opportunities to further and continuously develop this skill in our members.

Another feature article describes six strategies that you can use to attract top talent in a tough hiring market. With unemployment at the lowest it's been in 50 years, getting the right people in the door is crucial. These strategies are also excellent for retaining your talented team once you've hired them, so you can keep them engaged and evolving — which is key for futureproofing your legal organization during this dynamic time.

Lastly, I hope you will check out the coverage from Annual Conference. This year's conference featured keynotes from three amazing women, along with stellar education, ample networking with members and business partners, and our first-ever "Ask Anything" town hall session with April Campbell and Executive Director Oliver Yandle — along with the usual fun that comes when you mix ALA members, a dance floor and music together! We also had a peek into the future of ALA (provided by yours truly) that included an open invitation to join the journey and be a part of creating the Association we want to be and see. It was an amazing week that was not dampened or deterred in the least by those unpredictable spring storms!

If you were not able to join us at Annual Conference, don't worry — you haven't missed the bus. Jump on board at the next station and be a part of what we are doing and the journey forward. I'm excited about the future and what it holds for us! This year we will begin development of our

next strategic plan, focus on enhancing the membership experience, and add more curated content and value for our members as the premier professional association connecting leaders and managers within the legal industry.

Leadership studies pioneer Warren Bennis wrote, "Becoming a leader is synonymous with becoming yourself." ALA recognizes that our greatest opportunity and strength isn't with products, services or projects — it's with our members. It's with empowering and enabling our members to lead the business of law. ■



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How Law Firms Can Train Employees to Protect Client Data

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Thirty-seven percent of law firms that experienced a breach reported a loss in billable hours, and 28 percent incurred hefty fees for correction.”

In 2017 alone, more than one in five law firms experienced a data breach, proving the need for heightened protection of customer data in law firms across the nation. Not only is protecting sensitive information essential in compliance, but it also impacts client loyalty. In fact, 83 percent of Americans say that security is a contributing factor when deciding which law firm to work with.

Outside of client loyalty, firms should be concerned with the impact a data breach will have on their bottom line — 37 percent of law firms that experienced a breach reported a loss in billable hours, and 28 percent incurred hefty fees for correction. Yet, most law firms do not have information security protocols or employee training in place to safeguard physical documents and electronic devices that contain clients’ confidential information. Namely, one in four law firms (26 percent) have never trained their staff on information security policies or do not have information security policies in place.

Law firms are going through a modernization to improve the client experience, but this comes along with new challenges and new threats to clients’ confidential information, as well as new processes for employees. As of 2017, 95 percent of law firms were not compliant with their data governance and cybersecurity policies. With sensitive information — as well as business on the line — there’s no question that law firms need to implement a strategy to step up their security policies, and this strategy includes a major training overhaul for employees. Let’s explore how law firms can train their employees to help protect client data.

TRAIN EARLY AND PROVIDE REINFORCEMENT

Waiting for a data breach to occur in your firm is the wrong strategy when it comes to teaching employees security protocols. If possible, incorporate a training process into your onboarding process

for new hires, and hold all-staff training sessions on a regular basis to update employees on new protocols and remind them of current policies. Using real-world examples and practical tips for information security is the key to keeping employees engaged in the training, as it provides context for the gravity of data breaches and helps employees retain the training information.

PROVIDE GUIDANCE ON NEGLIGENCE AND DOCUMENT DESTRUCTION

The more employees a law firm has, the higher the risk of employee negligence that may cause a data breach. Employee training for data security must include teaching employees how to identify negligent, unethical or malicious behavior, while also encouraging them to take action if client data is at risk.

In addition to training employees on negligence, firms must consider the everyday physical security risks that come from the large amount of personal information they store about witnesses in litigation. Providing policies and training that guides employees to conduct consistent clean-outs and destroy outdated documents, as well as hardware containing data, can be coupled with already occurring employee training. For documents to be properly disposed, they should be shredded rather than just recycled. For hardware, there is a frequent misconception that merely wiping the device is enough to destroy the information it held. However, the best way to train employees to securely dispose of hardware or hard drives is to have them destroyed by a professional.

DEVELOP A POLICY FOR REMOTE WORKERS

Eighty-six percent of C-suites and 60 percent of small business owners agree that the risk of a data breach is higher when employees work off-site than when they work at the office. Yet, more than half of lawyers at the top law firms in America

now work remotely at least some of the time, providing unique challenges for information security policies.

With remote work becoming a growing trend in the legal industry, law firms must develop and train employees on remote work policies in order to keep the risk of a security breach down, while keeping employees happy. Working with your IT team to develop a remote working infrastructure, such as a secure VPN to remotely access data, and ensuring the team will be available to support remote workers, are good first steps in creating a policy. Firms should also create a policy for physical documents when working remotely — for example, keeping sensitive documents in a locked briefcase while traveling. Training employees on these policies through a combination of guides, town halls, emails and in-person walkthroughs will help ensure all employees understand the plan.

There is no understating the damage that a breach can do to a law firm and its clientele, but the good news is that there are many processes that firms can put in place to prevent a breach from happening. The top of the list is to train employees on these policies and make them your first line of defense against a breach, rather than risk them being the reason it happens in the first place. ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ann Nickolas is Senior Vice President at Stericycle, provider of Shred-it solutions, where she oversees new business development and account management for customers in the commercial, health care and government verticals. Nickolas helps businesses secure their confidential information with products, services, policies and training that help protect them from the risks, fines, penalties and loss of revenue that come with an information breach.

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MICHELLE SILVERTHORN
Founder and CEO, Inclusion Nation

Find a Role Model, Get a Mentor — But You Won't Succeed Without a Sponsor

Sponsorship is on the diversity agenda. For women and minorities in the workplace, corporate America is finally recognizing that sponsors matter for workplace success. But as a diversity speaker, I often say this — recognizing it isn't enough.

“

The challenge for employees, and their employers, is to understand that many women and minority employees naturally gravitate toward role models and mentors. But sponsors are what those employees need to succeed.”

The challenge for employees, and their employers, is to understand that many women and minority employees naturally gravitate toward role models and mentors. But sponsors are what those employees need to succeed. What's the difference?

Meet Amaya. Amaya is a midlevel employee in a large corporation. And she's ready to move up to the next level. To get there, Amaya picked three people who she thinks could help her — Grace, Jake and Dave. Let's meet them. First up is Grace, a high-level leader whom Amaya looks up to. Amaya is impressed by Grace and what she does; she's stopped by Grace's office to talk, but Grace is never there — she constantly travels. And, if Amaya's being honest, what Grace does isn't really what Amaya wants to do.

And what about Grace? She doesn't necessarily have the time to invest in Amaya, even if she wanted to. There are many Amayas who come through her door, all looking for Grace to mentor them. Not only is Grace exhausted from the emotional labor, but she also has to keep hustling herself — there are so many of them and only one of her. All the burden falls on Grace. It's a demand that we put on women — especially women of color who might be the only minority woman in an executive position within the company.

Instead, Grace can be a role model for Amaya. Role models are crucial in the workplace. When you visualize who you want to be in the workplace, the role model is the one you look up to in order to see if there is space for you to be there. Amaya can admire Grace, but she'll need to cast her net wider than Grace to find the success she needs.

Next, meet Jake. Jake's a few years ahead of Amaya, working up the ladder himself. He and Amaya work well together. He's been in her shoes, so he gives her advice on what to do, where to go, what senior leaders to work with; he provides great feedback on her work, and introduces her to the right people who give her interesting assignments.

Jake has all the qualities of a great mentor. Mentors give because they like you — you remind them of them or they want to see you succeed. They advise you on where you go, what you need to do. Mentors will empathize with you. They will figure out what you want. They will teach you the unwritten rules of your workplace. They will help you navigate the organization. They will help you connect to the workplace, to bring you in, to make you feel less isolated.

But they're missing two things. First, they're not invested in you. If you falter, they'll give you advice on how to pick yourself up. But mentors have no skin in the game. Your failure — while disappointing — doesn't reflect badly on them. And second, mentors don't have the clout — and clout matters in a sponsoring relationship. Sponsors use their clout to advocate for and defend you. Mentors, on the other hand, are solely focused on your professional development. Their goal is to get you to that point where you are going to be sponsored. That's where someone else needs to step up — that's where a sponsor comes in.

FIND SUPPORT WITH A SPONSOR

This is Dave. Dave is a senior executive. He has access to the rooms that Amaya wants to be in. And crucially, Dave understands the challenges with building an inclusive workforce. Dave is willing to do that hard work, to step outside his comfort zone, and make the changes that he knows need to happen.

Dave is a sponsor. Why?

First, Dave has clout. He has a powerful voice at the table. And what he will do as a sponsor is use that voice to

champion Amaya and convince others that she deserves to get those stretch assignments, to meet those high-profile clients, and to be in the space her performance has shown she should be in.

Second, Dave believes in Amaya. He believes in what she can achieve. Because he believes in her, he is willing to put his own reputation on the line to support her. And if and when she stumbles, she knows that Dave will have her back.

Third, Dave invests in Amaya — not because he's a philanthropist, but because he expects return. Sponsorship is transactional. Dave wants to know what Amaya can give him for his own professional goals. What new skills is she bringing to the table that Dave doesn't have? Maybe Amaya has insight into a new product line that Dave doesn't understand. Maybe Amaya knows about a certain customer base that Dave does not. Maybe Amaya has a skill that Dave never acquired. Maybe Dave is seeking to increase his reputational capital in the company, or expand his internal network of support. Whatever it is, both Dave and Amaya have to identify it and work toward delivering it. Investment requires return. Sponsorship requires that, too.

So, look up to a role model. Get a mentor. But make sure you find a sponsor. Make sure you find someone invested in your success. That's how you enter the C-suite and stay there for good. ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michelle Silverthorn is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Inclusion Nation, a diversity consulting firm that partners with forward-thinking organizations to design authentic, inclusive workplaces built for success. A graduate of Princeton University and the University of Michigan Law School, she lives in Chicago with her husband and two daughters.

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Firm Without a Plan

How to avoid the perils of practicing without a succession plan.



DREW AMOROSO
Founder, DueCourse

Imagine this scenario: You are one of 7 partners at a thriving midsize law firm that employs 6 associates and 10 staff members. One of your partners, Maggie, is the firm's primary rainmaker and founded the firm 20 years ago. She's in her late 40s and in good overall health. She's a staple in the local legal community and is responsible for maintaining most of the firm's major client relationships. She has an incredible memory and has never been big on recordkeeping, electronic files or personal organization.

Early one morning you receive terrible news: Maggie has suffered a massive heart attack and died overnight. It's an incredible loss for her family, the firm and the community. But despite the loss, the firm still has dozens of active cases that are moving forward — many of them where Maggie was the lead attorney.

As one of the remaining partners, you're faced with a serious question: How do we pick up where Maggie left off? Not only was she the firm's main source of business development, she was also the holder of massive amounts of institutional, matter and client knowledge that has now, for the most part, been lost. Her lack of recordkeeping has left everyone in the dark about how to do everything from effectively managing her cases, to logging into her email, to sorting through the years of paper files she maintained in her office.

The legal field is riddled with stories like this — attorneys who unexpectedly die, become incapacitated, or retire from the firm without any contingency or succession plan in place, leaving colleagues, clients and family members unprotected.

AN ALL-TOO COMMON PROBLEM

The legal field is riddled with stories like this — attorneys who unexpectedly die, become incapacitated, or retire from the firm without any contingency or succession plan in place, leaving colleagues, clients and family members unprotected.

A succession plan is a key aspect of a firm's survival and long-term strategy, and allows a firm to plan for both the unexpected and the inevitable. On the one hand, well-crafted plans contemplate what will happen in the situation above: a key member of the firm unexpectedly is no longer there. They address issues like case transitioning, recordkeeping, processes and procedures, client management, and other day-to-day management priorities. They allow a firm to set a well-crafted plan into action and soften the challenges that come with absorbing another attorney's practice.

For example, the American Bar Association advises that effective transition plans include instructions and information regarding the disposition of closed client files, the storage of client information, contracts and leases, payment of current liabilities, computer and voicemail passwords, and successor compensation, among other things.

Similarly, succession plans help firms plan for the inevitable transitions that come with retirement, recruitment of new talent, and the rise of new leaders in the firm.

"Firm leaders should be thinking about what it will take for them to successfully transition out of the firm, and what it takes to bring in and develop talented associates," says Debbie Foster, a law firm consultant and nationally recognized thought leader on management, efficiency and innovation in legal organizations. Foster says that succession plans are important both for the health and wellness of the firm, but also for the personal and financial wellness of all the firm's individual attorneys and their families.

AVOIDING DOESN'T HELP

Despite the value in these types of plans, the majority of firms and their attorneys still do not take the time to create them. Which begs the question — if the lack of a succession

plan presents such a clear and present danger, then why don't more attorneys have them?

There are many reasons. "Most attorneys don't think these things will happen to them," says Foster, so taking the time and making the effort to create a plan — despite its utility — ends up being a low priority. Additionally, says Foster, no one likes talking about their own mortality, and when your identity is wrapped up in your profession it can be hard to consider what life will be like once you stop practicing. The prospect of making a plan can also seem daunting without a clear understanding of where to get started — particularly if you already find it challenging to manage the firm and its operations day-to-day.

For those attorneys who are looking for a starting point, Foster's number one suggestion is simply to start the conversation. "Having these difficult conversations openly with your partners is the best place to start. It doesn't mean that you have to put a definitive 'x' on the calendar for when you're going to retire, but it is critical to build succession and contingency plans into conversations so that everyone is thinking and planning for the future."

Speaking openly about succession around junior attorneys also allows for discussion regarding advancement at the firm and planning for the firm's next generation of leadership.

When it comes to topics of discussion, Foster suggests that lawyers think about at least the following aspects:

- Substantive expertise (who possesses it)
- Firm leadership (who's in charge of what at the firm)
- Business model (if one of our partners leaves, how are referrals still going to come in)
- Client relationships (who manages them and how)
- Community involvement (who is the face of the firm)
- Financial protection (e.g., business continuity insurance)
- Individual financial planning (make sure you are financially prepared and able to retire)

Despite the value in these types of plans, the majority of firms and their attorneys still do not take the time to create them. Which begs the question — if the lack of a succession plan presents such a clear and present danger, then why don't more attorneys have them?

Discussing these key aspects can be an effective starting point to help shape the framework for your — and your firm's — overall plan.

Here's the takeaway: despite the unlikelihood of sudden death or disability, and how uncomfortable it can be to talk about your own mortality, a succession plan is absolutely critical for firm partners and solo practitioners alike. Begin to weave succession and contingency plans into your conversations about short- and long-term strategy, and give yourself the peace of mind that comes with knowing you have an actionable plan in place.

As Foster says: "It's never too soon to start thinking about your individual future and making your firm a safe place for everyone to talk about it." ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Drew Amoroso is the Founder of the legal tech start-up DueCourse, a professional development platform that helps lawyers achieve their performance and productivity goals and develop practical skills through customized video courses and other technology-based learning methods. Prior to founding DueCourse, Amoroso was a Senior Associate at Reed Smith and was the owner of his own law firm where he practiced fitness law — representing innovators in the fitness and health and wellness industries.

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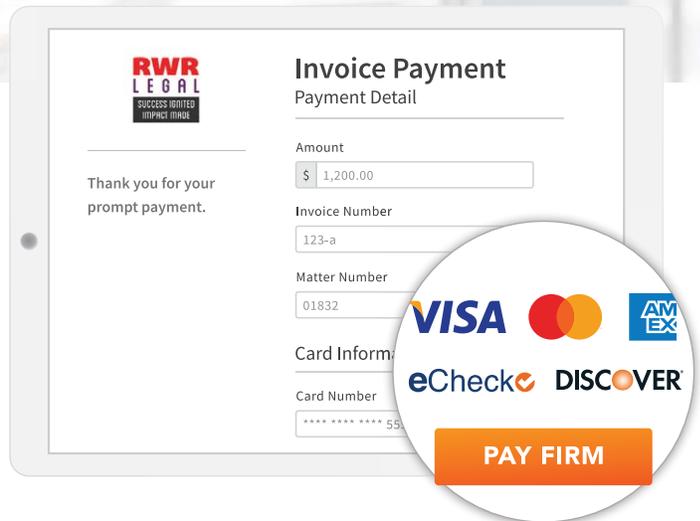
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What New Hires May Lack — and How to Fix It

These in-demand skills may not be inherent; however, lawyers and support staff can learn them.



ERIN BRERETON
Owner, Chicago Journalist Media

This month, a new crop of third-year students will begin graduating from law schools across the United States — but some may not feel at all ready to start working in a law firm or department.

A Gallup-Purdue Index study published last year found only 20 percent of law school graduates who received a degree between 2010 and 2015 think their educational experience prepared them well enough to enter the legal field.

A separate survey suggests other industry members agree: 95 percent of hiring partners and senior associates told LexisNexis they believe recent law school grads don't possess key practical skills when they're hired.

PIECING TOGETHER KEY PROFICIENCIES

The issue may stem, at least in part, from the fact that law schools tend to focus on technical skills. However, attorneys who participated in an Institute for Advancement of the American Legal

“A firm that has excellent training and mentoring will be able to better attract and retain attorneys; it’s a competitive advantage.”

System study identified professional competencies — such as listening attentively and responding promptly to requests — as far more important than being able to draft briefs or prepare a case for trial.

With technology changing the legal secretary role’s definition in the past 15 years, and Robert Half Legal research reporting blended/hybrid paralegal and legal secretary positions have become more prevalent in the last two, legal support staff members may also be finding expectations for their role have changed.

Luckily, employers are stepping up to provide additional hard- and soft-skill instruction that can help position new hires to succeed, according to Valerie Fontaine, a Partner with legal search firm Seltzer Fontaine Beckwith.

“If associates have a particular issue in an area, they may bring in outside coaches and consultants and have [a] special class on a subject,” Fontaine says. “It’s one of the things candidates ask about. A firm that has excellent training and mentoring will be able to better attract and retain attorneys; it’s a competitive advantage.”

Some firms are incorporating specialized skills into the onboarding process — and beyond. Consider integrating these into your procedures.

COMMUNICATION

“[Associates want] more soft-skills training and more networking training,” says Lauren Stone, Director of Lawyer Recruiting and Development at 200-plus attorney firm Morris, Manning & Martin LLP. “Especially in the past few years, that has come up.”

This spring, the firm plans to host a communications-centric training session for associates in their third year and above.

“We have someone coming in to talk about how to communicate with others and listen to connect,” Stone says. “Sometimes, with different communication styles, people don’t always get the right point across to others when they communicate.”

In today’s digital environment, communication skills are something to consider when hiring employees with significant experience — and ones who are newer to the workforce, according to Fennemore Craig, Chief Human Resources Officer Marlene Humbert.

The Mountain West law firm has tweaked some of its training, Humbert says, since starting to bring students from Arizona State University’s LSAT-oriented Critical Legal Preparation Program to do entry-level work about a year and a half ago.

“We get students who are very comfortable communicating via text or electronically, but we stress the importance of face-to-face time,” she says. “Part of the training we provide [involves saying], ‘if you’re going back and forth over email three to four times, you need to pick up the phone, because something is getting lost in transit.’”

“We get students who are very comfortable communicating via text or electronically, but we stress the importance of face-to-face time. Part of the training we provide [involves saying], ‘if you’re going back and forth over email three to four times, you need to pick up the phone, because something is getting lost in transit.’”

CLIENT RELATIONS

Internal communication is, of course, just one aspect of legal work; firms may also offer instruction to help associates interact effectively with clients.

For instance, one of the training videos attorneys watch during their first week at Knobbe Martens covers delivering exceptional client service — including adhering to individual client preferences, such as sending all communication via letter, says Jonathan Bachand, a Partner at the Orange County, California-headquartered firm, which employs nearly 275 lawyers and scientists.

“We try to make sure associates understand it’s not a one-size-fits-all situation,” Bachand says. “A lot of soft-skills training is

“Working efficiently and effectively is difficult for attorneys who are just starting out. You can be at the office from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., look at the clock at the end of the day and say, ‘I only billed four hours; that’s not up to my quota.’ You have to make sure they have the resources available to [manage their time].”

about being engaged with your team; if attorneys have a question about how to respond to [a] client, talk about it to a partner first — the kind of skills that some would argue are common sense but someone practicing law for the first time might not understand.”

In the annual weeklong group orientation that all associates underwent in September, Knobbe Martens offered additional relations-related insight in a presentation featuring seven tips to keep clients and partners happy.

“The idea was when you start out as an associate, in many respects, your clients are the partners you work with,” Bachand says. “You aren’t bringing in your own clients right away; your job is to keep the partners happy so they’re giving you work. Explaining that — and setting out specific ways of being responsible and expectations — they can see, ultimately, keeping clients happy is the same thing as keeping partners happy.”

Because staff members may have contact at times with clients before an attorney does, the firm also offers hands-on training — which can include shadowing an assistant who’s been with the firm for years — when they start that’s intended to illustrate positive client interactions and underscore the importance of confidentiality.

“They sit together, so everything that comes through, they’re working on with somebody who knows exactly what to do,” Bachand says. “The overall takeaway is to make sure people understand clients are the most important thing to the firm. We want staff to understand to be ultra-polite to everybody that person calls on the phone; it might be our most important client.”

LEGAL SPECIFICS

While much of the new hire instruction that’s offered skews toward soft skills, firms also sometimes educate attorneys about technical work.

Although new attorneys may have been exposed as summer associates to e-discovery, copyright work and

some of the transactional and litigation topics that Knobbe Martens covered during its September group training, the presentations, Bachand says, can serve as a refresher on how to perform specific tasks, such as claim drafting or assisting with legal research.

“Most people are doing patent prosecution. Some will be doing trademark prosecution, and some are going to focus on patent and trademark litigation,” he says. “Since Knobbe Martens focuses on intellectual property, it gives us an opportunity to preview a lot of different things they will be doing on a day-to-day basis. It just helps to provide that touchstone, where they can go back and look at the training materials.”

In the months following its annual group training, the firm also tends to plan follow-up lunches that cover specific additional topics — such as its international patent prosecution department’s role, the subject of one of its lunchtime training sessions last fall.

“That’s important to many clients seeking protection in foreign countries, and it is very nuanced, because each country has specific rules,” Bachand says. “In-house specialists help with a lot of that and coordinate filings with foreign counsels.”

TIME MANAGEMENT

Operating within a billable hours’ system can be a new experience for young associates.

“Working efficiently and effectively is difficult for attorneys who are just starting out,” Bachand says. “You can be at the office from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., look at the clock at the end of the day and say, ‘I only billed four hours; that’s not up to my quota.’ You have to make sure they have the resources available to [manage their time].”

To help associates maximize productivity, Bachand’s firm provides training to help them learn how to best work with staff and other attorneys — including determining what items they can hand off, and which they should hold on to.

“As they get more senior roles, often, delegating work becomes more important,” Bachand says. “They’re faced with the dilemma of, ‘Do I do this? I know I’ll be able to do it right the first time.’ But you have to train for the future, too. Yes, you can do it; that doesn’t mean you don’t need to explain it to a more junior attorney who could work with you on this and is striving to learn more things.”

COLLABORATION

In addition to presentation-based learning, a number of firms offer mentoring programs. According to Fontaine, these programs can provide useful information about firm practices, as well as insight into how to succeed within a firm member’s work environment.

“They teach new attorneys, whether they’re laterals or newbies, the unwritten rules,” she says. “Every firm has its own style — certain ways to communicate, hidden power structures; that’s something every new attorney needs [to know].”

Stone’s firm has found its 3 year-old mentoring program has helped integrate both lateral associates, who meet with a mentor on a monthly basis for their first year at the firm, and entry-level associates, who are paired with a mentor for their first two years.

The firm tries to match mentees with someone within their larger practice group that the mentee won’t be working with on a daily basis — for example, matching an associate who does merger and acquisitions work in the corporate group with a technology attorney from that group.

Participants get to know each other during periodic social events the firm plans during the year.

“The value in associates having a mentor outside of who they’re working with all the time is it gives them an opportunity to get to know someone else at the firm, so they don’t feel isolated in their own group,” Stone says. “We’ve found the more relationships they have with people, the more likely they are to stay. Our retention rate has improved — about 20 percent less associates leave. It’s also hopefully opening up potential cross-selling opportunities.”

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

With 82 percent of managing partners and chairs singling weak business development skills out as the top reason for

their firm’s chronic underperformance, according to Altman Weil’s 2017 Law Firms in Transition Survey, development efforts are clearly an area firms and attorneys are — or at least should be — focusing on.

Older, experienced attorneys aren’t the only ones being asked to contribute to business growth. Some of the small-to midsize firms Seltzer Fontaine Beckwith recruits for offer business development training programs geared toward junior associates, as well as higher levels, according to Fontaine.

“Business development has become an essential skill,” she says. “A lot of things go into being able to do it — leadership, public speaking. Some people are just natural-born marketers and have connections. But they need to start thinking that way if they’re not.”

In addition to the business development presentation Knobbe Martens included in the weeklong training it offered new associates, the firm also sponsored a business development-based lunch last fall with the partner who’s in charge of the effort internally.

The lunchtime session, according to Bachand, helped give its new hires an overview of what the firm considers to be business development best practices — which can be an unfamiliar, yet crucial, concept.

“Law school doesn’t prepare you to be a salesperson, and when you’re an attorney at a law firm, part of your role is you’re selling yourself and the firm’s capabilities,” he says. “When it gets down to it, there are a lot of highly skilled lawyers that clients can choose from — it does take a special skill to be able to convince people you are the person they should be spending their time and money on.” ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Erin Brereton is a freelance writer, editor and content strategist who has written about the legal industry, business, technology and other topics for 20 years.



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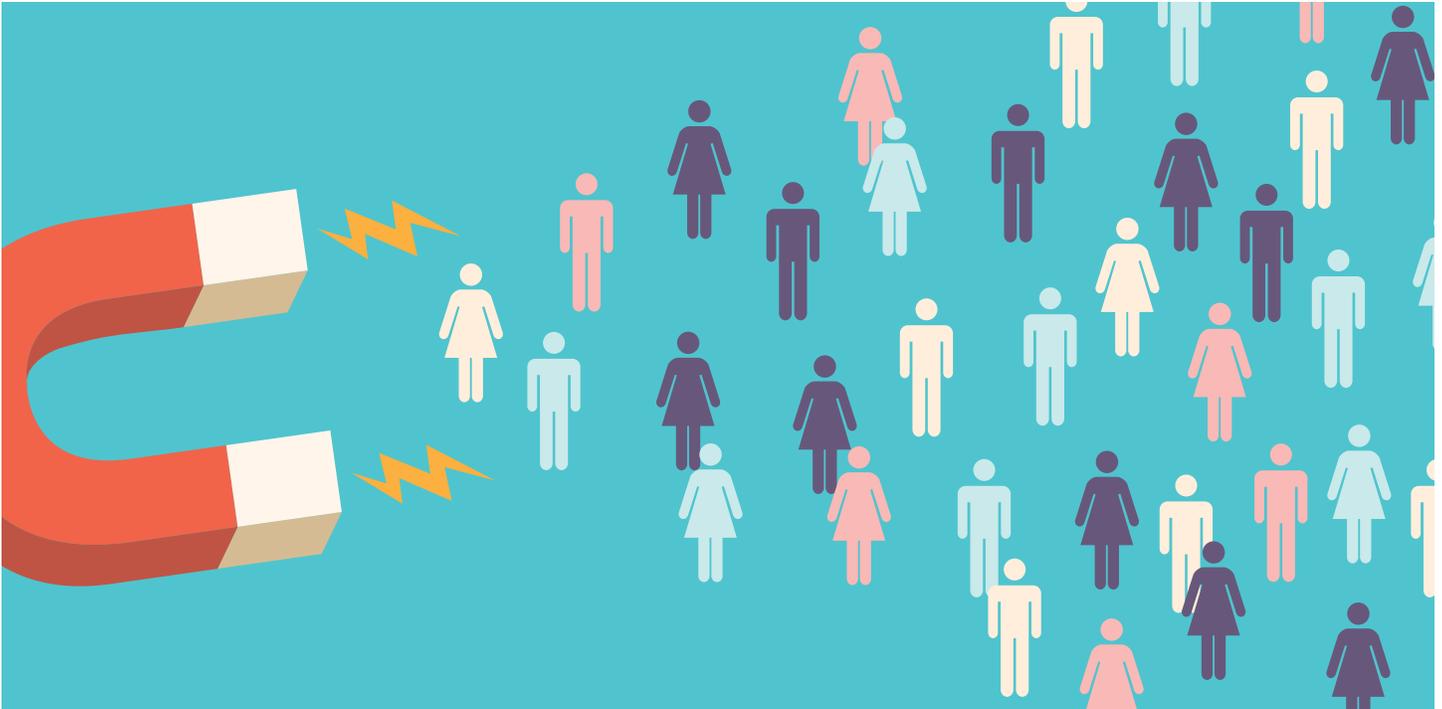
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6 Strategies for Attracting Top Talent in a Tough Market

These ideas can ensure you'll get quality candidates through your door.



KYLIE ORA LOBELL
Freelance Writer

Your employees, including your partners, attorneys and their support staff, are the backbone of your law firm. When you hire and retain excellent employees, you are ensuring your firm's success.

Though you know how important it is to hire the top talent in the legal field, the ultra-competitive job market makes it challenging. Unemployment is at 3.7 percent — the lowest rate in 50 years. While this is good news for workers, who have their choice of positions to pick from, it makes it harder for firms to snag qualified, top-performing candidates.

In this environment, law firms have to do what they can to ensure they are staying competitive and getting the right people in the door. "Inertia and self-selection are strong trends (culturally) in the legal community, so you may be surprised at just how small your actual, available talent pool is," says Michael A. Ellenhorn, Co-Founder and General Counsel at Decipher Global. "It takes a well-thought-out plan, the right intelligence and persistence."

And staying competitive is crucial to your law firm's survival. "The bottom line demands it. The rainmakers that can bring in new business are essential to the law firm's success," says

“Inertia and self-selection are strong trends (culturally) in the legal community, so you may be surprised at just how small your actual, available talent pool is.”

David Reischer, an Attorney and Chief Executive Officer of LegalAdvice.com.

Ellenhorn says it also communicates that your firm is “dynamic, forward-thinking and relevant. These market messages will resonate with laterals, clients and internal stakeholders, reinforcing the firm’s brand value, so that when a real gap/need emerges, the firm will already be relevant in the given market.”

To guarantee that you are competitive among other law firms, take the following advice into consideration.

CONDUCT REGULAR INTERVIEWS, EVEN IF YOU AREN'T HIRING

When you have an opening at your law firm, does panic ensue? Do you typically end up hiring the first candidate who seems good, instead of taking your time to find the exact right fit? This is not a best practice, and should be avoided by regularly interviewing strong candidates, says Matt Starosciak of Proven Law Marketing. “If you’re interviewing qualified candidates all the time, you’ll have a constant pipeline of potential hires,” he says. “It’s also a subtle reminder to existing employees that they must do good work to keep their position.”

CULTIVATE CULTURE AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Company culture is a big deal to the candidates applying today. A good company culture communicates that your law firm cherishes its workers and wants and expects them to flourish.

Jason Savage, Chief Operating Officer at the Law Office of Kenneth Berger, says his firm offers employees the opportunity to become the best at their job. “We require our staff to embrace professional development both internally and externally. They are evaluated on it. A commonality among our team members is the desire to become great and be the best in their positions.”

OFFER FAIR COMPENSATION, BENEFITS AND BONUSES

When you spend more on your employees, you’re going to see better results. Savage says he believes that compensation

is not where you should be cutting costs, because in the end, you pay more. “I would much rather have a high-revenue producer that is a bit more expensive than hire a less motivated or talented person and try to push them to create revenue and extraordinary outcomes.”

Savage also says that benefits should be incorporated into the compensation when your law firm can afford it. It’ll be attractive to prospective employees, but also strike a positive cord with your current staff — they’ll see the positive changes you’re making and want to stay. “Many companies just freeze at the prospect of increasing costs and adding benefits,” Savage says. “Adding them as you can will build a great package before you know it.”

“We require our staff to embrace professional development both internally and externally. They are evaluated on it. A commonality among our team members is the desire to become great and be the best in their positions.”

Along with compensation and benefits, you can provide performance incentives, especially for non-attorneys that do new client intake or human resources work, suggests Starosciak. “For many candidates, the opportunity to earn a bonus can move them from one prospective employer to another very quickly.”

UPGRADE YOUR OFFICE SPACE

When candidates walk into your law firm, you want them to be wowed. At the same time, you also hope your employees feel comfortable and productive in your office, where they spend so much of their time.

Luke Raimondo, who is Senior Managing Director at Savills, says good working environments have conferencing space outside of leased premises, are near restaurants and retail options, and have convenient parking spaces.

“Good news travels fast and bad news travels even faster. If an organization has a bad reputation for the way they treat employees, you can be sure that potential new hires will hear these bad things. Treat your employees like the valuable asset that they are.”

“A healthy building and well-designed space encourage people to spend more time at the office,” Raimondo says. Accessibility is also key — being in a location that is timely and convenient to commute to and from for employees.

UPGRADE YOUR TECHNOLOGY

Today’s employees use technology for personal tasks outside the office, so make their lives easier at work by upgrading your systems.

Peter Wallqvist, Vice President of Strategy at iManage, says law firms need to use technology that resembles what junior candidates are using in their personal lives. “The existence of tools to perform many of the aforementioned routine tasks should be embraced and seen as a tool to be used by the more technologically savvy junior lawyers, rather than them having to be the tool themselves.”

A BIT OF KINDNESS GOES A LONG WAY

Your employees should feel as if you care about and are invested in them. By putting money toward the proper office space and technology, providing fair compensation and benefits, offering career development opportunities,

interviewing on a continuous basis and cultivating culture, you can do just that.

“Make sure your existing employees have good things to say about your law firm,” says Reischer. “Good news travels fast and bad news travels even faster. If an organization has a bad reputation for the way they treat employees, you can be sure that potential new hires will hear these bad things. Treat your employees like the valuable asset that they are.” ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kylie Ora Lobell is a freelance writer living in Los Angeles. She covers legal issues, blogs about content marketing, and reports on Jewish topics. She’s been published in *Tablet Magazine*, *NewsCred*, *The Jewish Journal of Los Angeles* and *CMO.com*.



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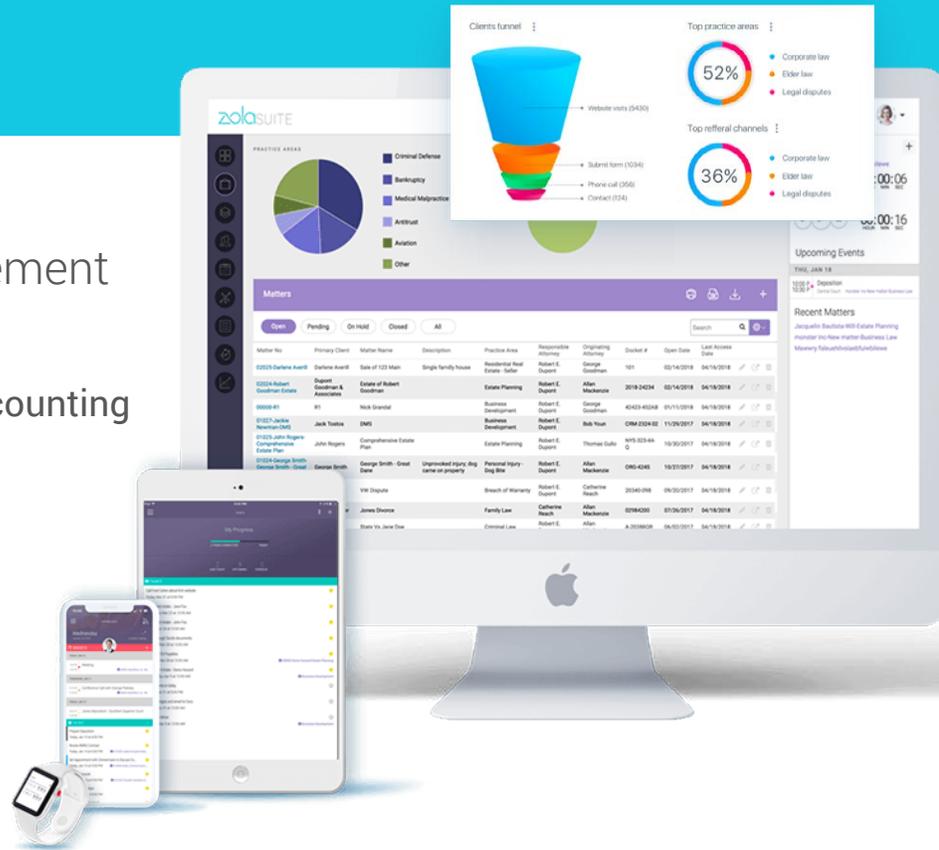


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BRIANNA LEUNG
Principal Consultant, GrowthPlay

5 Strategies for Selling Change to Attorneys

Legal management professionals are uniquely positioned to own the skillset of selling change inside their law firms. Simply having a good idea isn't enough. Good ideas die out early every day thanks to common law firm change busters like time, money and fear. Leaders must not only have the good idea, but also a solid plan for selling it to people at every stage of the change process.

“

When legal management professionals can create conditions for people to buy into the change, more than half of the work is done.”

Traditional change management theory tells us there are unique change stages that a person must traverse to be able to accept, embrace and implement change. The Prosci ADKAR® Model specifies that an individual must experience each of these five stages in this order:

1. **Awareness** for why the change is happening
2. **Desire** to participate in the change
3. **Knowledge** for how to change
4. **Ability** to make the change
5. **Reinforcement** to sustain the change

For the change leader, stages one through three are entirely about getting people's hearts and minds aligned with the change. When legal management professionals can create conditions for people to buy into the change, more than half of the work is done. Let us explore five “selling change” roles leaders can play to create conditions for attorneys and staff to buy into the change at each of the five change stages.

1. **Awareness** is created by **The Lead Generator** role. When it comes to building awareness around why the change is needed, the messenger should have charisma, confidence and influence when communicating to others about the change. And when those traits are combined with relationship-building strengths, you have the hallmarks of a Lead Generator.



As a *Lead Generator for Change*, your role is to create a positive buzz around the change, build a coalition of key influencers and maintain an active and visible presence while carrying the change banner.

2. Desire is built through **The Account Manager** role. Desire is created at an individual level. In order to gain someone’s desire to change, you must invest in getting to know them, understand what motivates them, and learn what is important to them both personally and professionally. Leaders with strengths in these areas tend to play the Account Manager role well. As an *Account Manager for Change*, your priority is to explain the WIIFM (what’s in it for me) in a way that demonstrates your understanding and empathy for the other person and appeals to their specific needs and goals.

3. Knowledge is imparted by **The Educator** role. Once people understand why the change is needed and they have the desire to do what is required for the change to happen, they will often require some education around where to start and how to keep it going. And because lack of know-how is often a reason for people to give up, the role of Educator becomes key to continuing to sell the change. As an *Educator of Change*, you are focused on removing barriers to success and being a source of valid, factual and unbiased information for those during the change process. You instill a sense of comfort and confidence in people, encouraging them that they can do what is being asked of them.

4. Ability is instituted by **The Architect** role. As the cliché says, “knowing is half the battle,” and the other half is doing. Until someone is “doing,” the change does not become effect. The *Architect for Change* helps people connect dots, find new ways of accomplishing things, and be successful by using the resources available to them.

5. Change is reinforced and sustained by **The Inventor** role. Finally, the change may be in place and people may be doing the right things, yet rarely does that mark the end of the process. It is too easy to slip back into old habits when work gets busier or the new way becomes too difficult. The *Inventor for Change* is always seeking ways to help people realize new benefits, improve their skills and experience improved outcomes.

With coaching and training, you can build skills in all five of the “selling change” roles. You may also wish to team and collaborate with other leaders who have complementary strengths to your own. The most important thing to know is that you are uniquely positioned as a leader in your firm to make change happen. Lean into your strengths to create buy-in and support for your good ideas. The firm can’t do it without you. ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Brianna Leung is a Principal Consultant with GrowthPlay, where she leverages talent analytics to help legal professionals drive innovation and change within their organizations.

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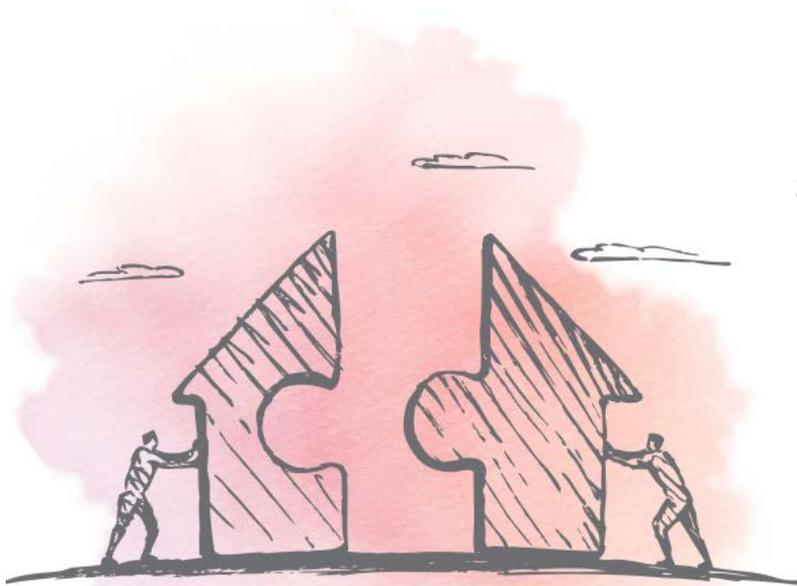
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Merger Matrimony: When Law Firms Say “I Do”

By Amber James, SPHR, SHRM-SCP



It's not always love at first sight. Months — and sometimes years — of weighing the risks, talks among shareholders, intense negotiations and secretive meetings will occur before two law firms become one. Sealing the deal will impact everyone in the firm, top to bottom, for better or for worse. Keeping your eyes on the future will help you navigate the uncertainty that looms amid the transition.

1. Listen to the rumors. Before any merger or acquisition is official, an announcement of some sort will be made. With any luck, you'll hear about it for the first time directly from leadership; however, there is a greater chance you will hear half-truths about it on the internet or from someone at work. Keep in mind that rumors are like the game of telephone. Even coming from a reliable source, the first mention of your firm as part of a potential merger

can send panic through an organization. Deals fall apart all the time. This is the time to simply take in what your colleagues are saying and what the industry publications are printing. You have work to do, and spreading rumors is not part of your job.

- 2. Pop the champagne!** The firms are gettin' hitched! Whether it's a quick wedding or the plans will be carried out over the course of several months, the announcement of a merger will put some uncertainties to rest and make way for others. As leaders from both firms weigh in on best practices, processes, technology, policies, benefits and branding, you may wonder how you can help or what you should be doing, saying and thinking during the engagement period. Here's an idea: Volunteer to co-organize (with someone from the other firm) a lunch-and-greet in or near the space where the newly combined firm will be located. If the opportunity arises, thank your firm's leaders for having the courage to grow and for the work they're doing to get the deal to the finish line, and share your excitement for the future. Enthusiasm is contagious, and there is no place in this stage of the deal for negativity.
- 3. It's the big day!** There will be speeches, toasts and media coverage; the highly anticipated new logo will be revealed on nametags and cocktail napkins. Soon, "they" will be moving into "your" space or vice versa. Now is the time to be kind and be helpful. You represent the new firm and, frankly, no one knows what the future holds. If a celebration is planned, introduce yourself to as many new colleagues as possible. You're all in this together now, and you have a lot more in common than you realize — not only do you work in the same industry, you've also been experiencing similar feelings since rumors of a merger began. Shareholders know that cultural alignment is vital to a successful blend.
- 4. New marriage, new traditions.** It's like the first Thanksgiving with your new in-laws! There's no substitute

As leaders from both firms weigh in on best practices, processes, technology, policies, benefits and branding, you may wonder how you can help or what you should be doing, saying and thinking during the engagement period.

for Grandma’s stuffing, but by fully embracing change, you may discover new traditions you enjoy. Decisions made during this stage of a merger can be tough to accept. Perhaps this is when you learn the document management system you helped select and roll out a decade ago will be replaced with a more sophisticated system. Take an opportunity like this to volunteer to pilot the new system. This will position you to be a training resource once it’s fully deployed.



During the busy weeks surrounding a merger, training and human resources teams are spread thin. You can leverage your understanding of a new system by offering to lead a peer-to-peer training session. Becoming a subject-matter expert may even allow you to travel as a trainer to new locations across the country or the globe, if the merger includes such offices. Any employee who can expand their role without compromising their primary responsibilities is a valuable asset. Adding value during a merger is vital, and such opportunities are numerous in this stage.

5. Settling in. It will take time and the integration of systems and spaces, but eventually things will settle down. Unfortunately, as they do, the firm’s workforce may be cut. There is no way to determine when the combined firm

will decide the time is right to let employees go. When a couple combines households, they must make tough decisions about what will be kept, what will be stored and what will be let go for good. If they have duplicate items, they might consider the brand, functionality and size before deciding which to keep — but all things being equal they’ll likely decide to retain the one that will serve them best in the long run.

Sometimes, it makes sense to keep both. Never give up hope that you will have a place within the combined firm, and resist the urge to retreat back to the comfort of obsolete practices and systems. Replace fear of the unknown with productive thoughts about how you can contribute in new and unique ways, using all the resources and tools now available to you.

The most common reasons for any merger are economic at their core, whether your firm is trying to expand its client base, gain a competitive advantage or simply survive. Don’t take the decision personally, avoid succumbing to fear of the unknown and recognize that opportunity abounds in a time of change. While the firms are doing due diligence, inventory your skills, stay agile and be open for ways to help outside of your usual role. You will add value and help set your firm on the path to happily ever after. ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Amber James, SPHR, SHRM-SCP, is a human resources professional who has spent her career in BigLaw. She is a longtime member of the Dallas Chapter and has served as its HR Section Chair. She specializes in creative problem-solving, building strong teams and helping legal professionals realize their full potential.

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Anniversaries, Awards and Appointments

Three ALA members were named 2019 Excellence in Law honorees by *The Daily Record* of Western New York. These members — all of whom belong to the Western and Central New York Chapter and work in Rochester — are now officially considered “Unsung Legal Heroes”:

- Patrick Michael Burke, Office Manager at Barclay Damon, LLP
- Clara E. Onderdonk, Office Manager at Ernstrom & Dreste, LLP
- Brenda Lee Rivera, Office Administrator at Legal Assistance of Western New York, Inc.

That particular category honors staff members who help lawyers achieve success. Congratulations! We'll let their chapter officers speak for us: “It’s nice to be recognized and you all deserve it!” says Chapter President Katrina Connelly. “This is big for the Rochester region,” says Bill Davis, the chapter’s Membership Officer.



SENDING OUR HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES

We’re saddened to pass along the news from her firm that ALA member Margaret “Marji” Cameron Loukas passed away in March. She worked for nearly 22 years at Steptoe & Johnson LLP in Washington, D.C. — her career culminated with the role of Senior Director of Human Resources. She was an 18-year member of the Association and belonged to the Capital Chapter. Our thoughts are with her family, friends and colleagues. Donations in her honor may be made to Helping Haitian Angels (www.helpinghaitianangels.org).

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Annual Conference Coverage

A big thank you to the nearly 900 attendees and the more than 160 exhibiting companies at the 2019 Annual Conference & Expo in Grapevine, Texas. We hope you walked away with plenty of inspiration, new connections and cutting-edge solutions that you can use to enhance your career and put into practice at your law office.

With the close of the conference, new volunteer members officially join ALA's standing committees and the new Chapter Resource Team (bit.ly/ala-crt). President James L. Cornell III and the 2019–2020 ALA Board of Directors (bit.ly/ala-board-directors) took office. We'd also like to give a special thanks to the 2019 Annual Conference Planning Committee for all the work they did to make Grapevine a huge success! See the entire conference photo collection at bit.ly/ac2019-photos.



The 2019–20 ALA Board of Directors

Front row, left to right: Lori A. Hughes, Director; April L. Campbell, JD, Immediate Past President; James L. Cornell III, President; Debra L. Elsbury, CLM, President-Elect; Candace K. Childress, SHRM-CP, Director; Oliver P. Yandle, JD, CAE, Executive Director; Jenna L. Carter, Director.

Second row, left to right: Jean D. Jewell, CLM, Director; Michael T. Bumgarner, CLM, CPA, CGMA, Director; Joseph A. Samarco, MBA, ALPP, Director; Geoffrey M. Williams, CLM, MBA, M.Div., Director; Sarah L. Evenson, JD, MBA, Director; Brian P. Gilman, CLM, Director.



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From left to right: Clara E. Onderdonk; Andrea L. Myers, CLM; Laura T. Sears, CLM; Becca Stutsman; Chair Travis C. Armstrong, CLM, CPA; Patricia L. Barbachem, CLM; Elizabeth Danforth, SHRM-CP; Lisa A. Waligorski, CLM; Robert Williams.



THE NEW YORK CITY CHAPTER GETS ITS 60 SECONDS OF FAME

Congratulations to the New York City Chapter! Their Broadway-inspired video received the highest ratings from the voters in the *60 Seconds of Fame!* contest. The minute-long video showcases the value of ALA membership while referencing at least 12 different musicals. Watch it and all the other entries at alanet.org/60-seconds.



Congrats to Our 2019 Award Recipients

On April 17, conference attendees came dressed in their best “denim and diamonds” to attend the closing festivities, which included the honoring of award recipients at the Association Awards Gala.

ELEVATE ALA AWARD

The Elevate ALA Award recognizes up to three chapters whose efforts in professional development, networking and visibility demonstrate advancement in the areas of educational content, member-to-member and member-to-business-partner relationships, and ALA’s prominence in the legal community.



Calgary Chapter, Elevate ALA Award



Houston Chapter, Elevate ALA Award

The first recipient was the **Calgary Chapter**. According to the chapter’s submission, the key to success is strategic planning and an enthusiastic and energetic board. In late 2017, the chapter invested in a facilitated planning session to reevaluate its values, mission and goals. Implementation in 2018 focused on member engagement and growth, professional development, networking and visibility — and clearly it has paid off. They have since opened subsections to all members, not just those specializing in a particular area; implemented the distribution of summary notes to all members; taken a new approach to business partner engagement; and began a new member mentorship program.

The next recipient was the **Houston Chapter**. The Houston Chapter is highly focused on its members’ professional development needs. It provides a high level of education that’s structured to ensure members can adequately prepare to take the CLM exam and also ensures members have access to all the credits they need for recertification within a three-year window. They even offer a biannual CLM workshop to cover the core competency areas. Additionally, the chapter’s Strategic Relations Committee participates in legal association round tables within the Houston Bar Association and recently sent representatives to the University of Houston Law Center’s “Alternative Legal Career” Fair. Local educational events were also published in the HBA monthly newsletter. And all at no cost to the chapter.

The final recipient was the **Mexico Chapter**. The dynamic of the legal community in Mexico is, as you might imagine, different from what we're accustomed to here in the States. The goal of the chapter's Board was to position the chapter as a highly reputable arm of a strong international association. They aim to provide local content to the community, content with a common theme among Mexican and International firms, to their target audience — partners and owners in charge of the administration of firms.

By way of example, in May of last year the chapter executed a forum consisting of three panels. The first involved the owners of the five most recognized and awarded firms in Mexico. This panel was focused on transforming the business model of the Mexican law firm and what might be necessary to remain competitive in an evolving market. The second panel included four senior general counsels and one CFO. Its focus? What companies are expecting from law firms. The third panel included deans from the top five universities in Mexico. They were asked to consider how to bridge the gap between the theory taught in universities and the "real world" their students would experience in law firms.

The Mexico Chapter was formed in 2016 and, in just three short years, has really had an impressive impact on the local legal community. Congratulations on a job well done!



Mexico Chapter, Elevate ALA Award

OUTSTANDING ASSOCIATION VOLUNTEER AWARD

Each year the Board of Directors identifies members who have made significant contributions to the Association. This year, they recognized five recipients:

The first award goes to **Julie S. Logan, SPHR, SHRM-SCP**, of Newmeyer & Dillion, LLP, in St. Louis, Missouri. Julie joined ALA in 1998 and by 1999, was already involved in planning her chapter's education. She went on to serve in various roles within a few chapters — she's moved around a bit over the years — including as Chapter President on three different occasions. At the international level, she has served on Regional Leadership Teams, many HR Conference Planning Committees, the Board of Directors, the Nominating Committee and, most recently, the Job Description Toolkit Task Force. Grapevine marked the beginning of her three-year term on the Membership Development Committee. Julie's contributions at both the local and international level span decades and are greatly appreciated.



Julie S. Logan, SPHR, SHRM-SCP,
Outstanding Association Volunteer Award



Katie J. Bryant, CLM,
Outstanding Association Volunteer Award



Teresa J. Walker,
Outstanding Association Volunteer Award

The next award went to someone whose passion for this organization is evident. She thrives on challenge, has mentored many new members and volunteers and is a strong advocate for the Certified Legal Manager (CLM)[®] program. She is a brave leader who creates a courageous culture. **Katie J. Bryant, CLM**, of Udall Shumway PLC in Mesa, Arizona, joined ALA in 2000 and began serving at the local level not long after. She's held countless chapter roles, including Chapter President (this year will make it twice!), and was instrumental in developing BizLaw in a Flash, a mobile flashcard app created by the Arizona Chapter through a grant from the Foundation of the Association of Legal Administrators. At the international level, Katie has served as a Regional Representative, on the Association Nominating Committee, on multiple conference committees, chaired the Regional Nominating Committee and served on the Board of Directors for four years. She is currently serving as Chair of the Business Partner Relations Project Team, which is thriving under her leadership.

The next award went to a longtime member who was one of the founding members of the Middle Tennessee Chapter and an active participant in ALA's Large Firm Administrators Group. **Teresa J. Walker** of Waller Lansden Dortch & Davis, LLP, in Nashville, Tennessee, has gone above and beyond for this organization. She was on the Board for many years, served as ALA President in 2015-2016, and is currently serving on the Professional Development Advisory Committee. In fact, she was recently appointed Vice Chair. Teresa is a mentor, model volunteer and, in her words, a blockchain enthusiast.

The next award went to a member who is laser-focused on promoting ALA's CLM program. **Mary Ann Rojas, CLM, SPHR, SHRM-S**, of Pugh Jones Johnson, PC, in Chicago, Illinois, was the driving force behind the Greater Chicago Chapter's study group, took the time to prepare practice tests for the chapter and has since developed a web-based study group to expand its benefits beyond the Windy City. Additionally, she was recently appointed to serve on the Certification Committee. (Not pictured.)

The final Outstanding Association Volunteer Award went to a recently retired member, **W. Scott Peterson**. For years prior to his retirement, Scott was a frequent contributor to our discussion forums, constantly providing document samples and guiding members toward resources and information. His contributions and insight were extremely valuable and greatly appreciated by many. (Not pictured.)

QUEST AWARD

The Quest Award recognizes a new member of ALA for their conviction, dedication and relentless pursuit of personal and professional excellence. There were more than 700 eligible candidates this year, 18 of whom were nominated by their chapters for this recognition.



Julie K. Barrett-Becker, MBA, accepting the Quest Award on behalf of recipient Parker Ramey

This year's recipient is **Parker M. Ramey** of Zupkus & Angell, PC, in Denver, Colorado. He engaged in chapter activities right away, as evidenced by his attendance at a Mile High Chapter retreat just a few months after joining in 2017. He began interacting with other members instantly and almost immediately volunteered to serve on a committee. Not long after, he was appointed to serve as co-chair of his chapter's communications committee. According to his fellow chapter members, his attitude was exemplary and his initiative was endless as he assisted in upgrading the chapter's website, escalating the chapter's social media presence and deploying the chapter's mobile app.

Parker has proven that he is a strategic thinker, a hard worker and a professional in tactical deployment of difficult and technical initiatives. The Mile High Chapter is thankful for his contributions, indicating that he has set the standard for new member engagement. And we couldn't agree more.

SPIRIT OF ALA AWARD

The Spirit of ALA Award recognizes members who personify leadership, commitment, tenacity and dedication. ALA's Board felt this award should be the Association's highest honor and given only to those whose leadership and contributions are extraordinary. In fact, the Spirit of ALA Award is not an annual event but rather an honor that is given on occasions as rare as the individuals who receive them. In 1998, David M. Brezina became the award's first-ever recipient. This year's recipient, **Judith A. Hissong, CLM**, has decades of volunteer experience with ALA at all levels of the organization — she was even the fill-in David M. Brezina Memorial Session speaker in 2018. She's currently serving as our new Membership Development Committee Chair.



Judith A. Hissong, CLM, Spirit of ALA Award

PRESIDENTS' AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

Named in honor of ALA's Past Presidents, the Presidents' Award of Excellence is a performance guideline used to encourage chapters to take effective and collaborative action in support of the Association's mission to promote and enhance the competence of legal management professionals; improve the quality of management in law firms and other legal service organizations; and represent professional legal management and managers to the legal community and to the community at large. ALA recognized 61 chapters that have achieved this honor thanks to their hard work throughout the past year. They and their chapter leaders deserve a tremendous amount of credit and respect.

CONGRATS TO THE FOLLOWING CHAPTERS:				
Alamo	Downeast	Independence	Mobile	Raleigh/Durham
Albany	East Bay	Indiana	New Jersey	Richmond
Arizona	First State	Jacksonville	New Mexico	San Diego
Arkansas	Fort Worth	Kentucky	New Orleans	Silicon Valley
Atlanta	Gateway	Knoxville	New York City	South Florida
Austin	Golden Gate	Las Vegas	Northern Virginia	Suncoast
Boston	Greater Chicago	Maryland	Nutmeg	Tulsa
Calgary	Greater Cincinnati	Metropolitan Detroit	Oklahoma City	Western and Central New York
Capital	Greater Kansas City	Mexico	Orange County	Wisconsin
Central Florida	Greater Los Angeles	Middle Tennessee	Oregon	
Columbus	Hampton Roads	Mile High	Philadelphia	
Cyber	Hawaii	Minnesota	Pittsburgh	
Dallas	Houston	Mississippi	Puget Sound	

IDEA AWARD

ALA's IDEA Awards program, now in its sixth year, seeks to recognize initiatives that model innovation, development, engagement and advancement in the legal community. Awards are presented to firms, business partners and other organizations (including ALA chapters, committees, regions and individual members) that create unique and innovative programs, services and events.



First Five Community moderators Suzy Klepac and Sarah A. Antonello (not pictured: Danita Jones), IDEA Award

This year's recipients are the **moderators of the ALA First Five Community**, an online resource and forum for legal management professionals in their first five-ish years of their career. It was first conceived by three early-career legal managers — **Suzy Klepac, Sarah A. Antonello** and **Danita Jones** — at the 2018 Annual Conference & Expo. The free community was developed with technical assistance from ALA headquarters, but the moderators were the driving force behind its format, original content and overall strategy. They designed a judgment-free zone that enables professionals who are new to the legal industry or new to managing to become seasoned, well-rounded leaders in this field. As of November 2018, the community had 80 subscribed members, and its most popular posts included the networking-themed "Introduce Yourself!", the how-to "E-Billing" and the "Law Firms 101" guide. The moderators hope to expand First Five's mentorship to the nearly 1,500 new members who have joined ALA in the past two years.

Complete details regarding ALA's awards program can be found at alanet.org/awards.

SILENT AUCTION RAISES NEARLY \$20,000 FOR THE FOUNDATION OF ALA

The Foundation of ALA continued its Silent Auction at the 2019 Annual Conference to benefit the programs it supports throughout the year. Because participants were so very generous with their donations, Silent Auction bids and raffle ticket purchases, the Foundation raised \$19,983 this year! These funds will be used to provide quality inspirational speakers at future David M. Brezina Memorial Sessions, the Susan L. French Emerging Leader Fellowship Program and a scholarship for students furthering their education in the legal field.

The winner of the Foundation's raffle was Donna Bustos, Firm Administrator at Greenberg Gross LLP in Costa Mesa, California. She's the lucky recipient of two round-trip tickets for anywhere in the continental United States and a two- or three-night stay at a Hilton hotel. Congrats!

To learn more about the Foundation, visit alanet.org/foundation.



The Foundation's Board of Trustees

Front row, left to right: Debra L. Elsbury, CLM; Wendy Rice-Isaacs, CLM (President); Grace C. Lopez.
Back row, left to right: Patricia L. Groff, CLM; Stephen G. Dempsey, CLM, CPA, MBA; James L. Cornell III (outgoing Trustee); Michelle D. Cohen; ALA Executive Director Oliver P. Yandle, JD, CAE; Timothy R. Blevins (outgoing Trustee); Kyle A. Weigand.

HEADING TO SALT LAKE CITY IN 2019!

The 2020 Annual Conference Planning Committee is already hard at work to ensure that next year's conference is a great success. Be sure to save date for the 2020 Annual Conference & Expo, happening Sunday, May 3, to Wednesday, May 6, at the Salt Palace Convention Center in Salt Lake City, Utah!



The 2020 Annual Conference Planning Committee

From left to right: Tina M. White; Lisa D. Matheson; Laura T. Sears, CLM; Elizabeth Danforth, SHRM-CP; Debra Burgos.