

ALA SPEAKER TIPS for INCLUSION

The Association of Legal Administrators (ALA) has a goal to increase awareness of, and sensitivity to, diversity within ALA and the legal management community. The ALA Diversity and Inclusion Committee is working to educate legal industry leaders about why diversity is important and how we can work to bring diversity and inclusion to the legal workplace. To be successful in an increasingly diverse world, leaders must be able to manage and leverage the differences that exist in their workforce, suppliers, and clients. With that in mind, we have developed this Speaker Tip Sheet to help assure our members that any ALA presentation they participate in is sensitive to the issues of diversity and inclusion.

As you prepare your presentation, keep in mind that diversity is about recognizing, respecting and valuing differences based on ethnicity, gender, color, age, race, religion, disability, national origin and sexual orientation. It also includes an infinite range of individual unique characteristics and experiences, such as communication style, career path, life experience, educational background, geographic location, income level, marital status, military experience, parental status and other variables that influence personal perspectives. These life experiences and personal perspectives make us react and think differently, approach challenges and solve problems differently, make suggestions and decisions differently, and see different opportunities. Diversity, then, is also about diversity of thought. And superior business performance requires tapping into these unique perspectives.

Please review your presentation and incorporate the suggestions we offer below. Assist us as we offer quality educational sessions and increase awareness of, and sensitivity to, diversity and inclusion within ALA.

1. Choose a topic that introduces a multicultural issue to the audience.
2. Choose language that your audience can relate to and that supports listeners of different backgrounds.
3. Use diverse individuals in handouts or visual aids.
4. Use diverse individuals in hypothetical stories or examples and avoid stereotyping.
 - a. Make a hypothetical nurse a male.
 - b. Make a hypothetical mechanic female.
 - c. Make a hypothetical couple LGBT.
5. Use “we” or “us” instead of “you” or “them.”

6. Avoid gender pronouns like he and she; use inclusive language such as they and their.
7. Avoid overgeneralized statements.
8. Avoid hate speech. “When in doubt, don’t.”
9. Use women and minorities in positions of authority in hypothetical stories or examples.
10. Include various ages in hypothetical stories and examples.
11. Avoid using stereotypical names in hypothetical stories or examples.

For more information on the ALA Committee on Diversity and Inclusion, including its work and resources, visit: www.alanet.org/about/diversity.