

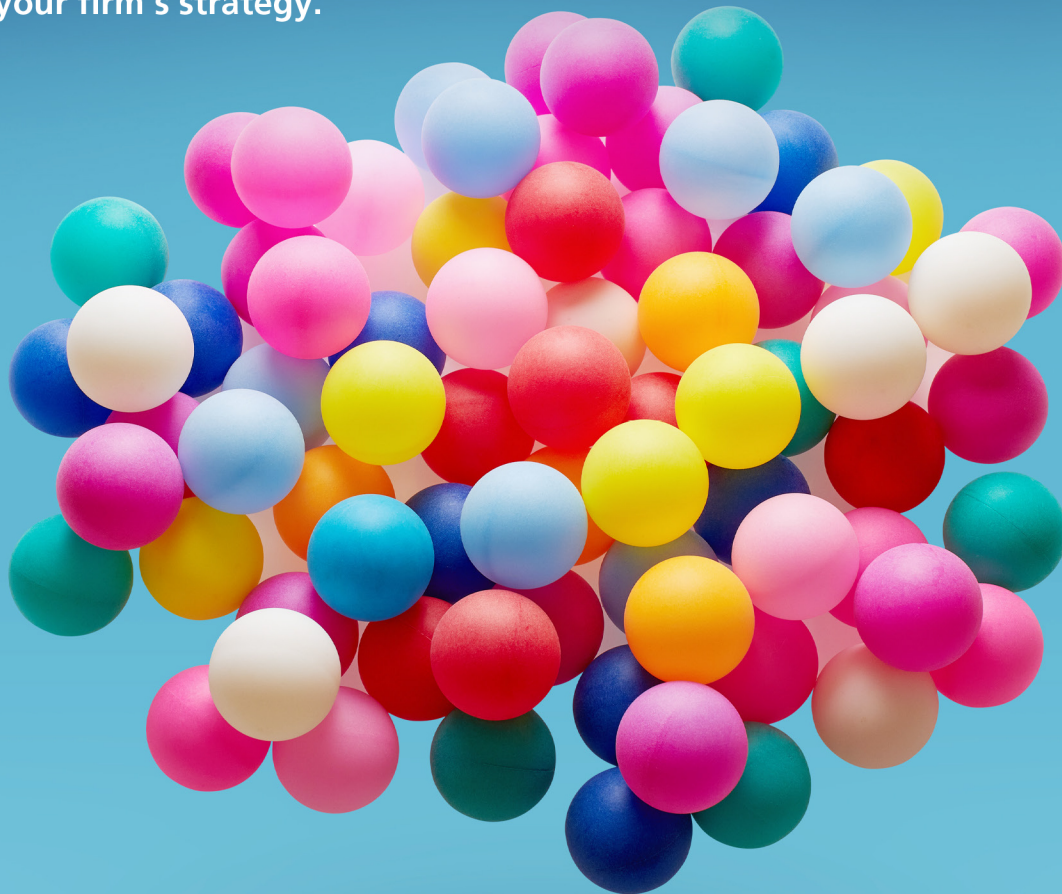
# LEGAL MANAGEMENT

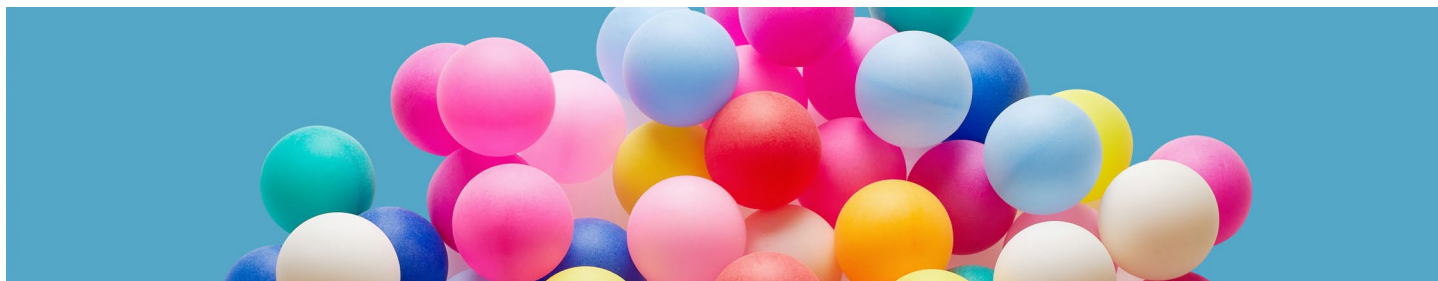
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THE MAGAZINE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF LEGAL ADMINISTRATORS

## Leadership, Inclusivity and Culture

Uplifting employees so they feel valued and included should be a critical part of your firm's strategy.





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“In a time when hybrid work has become the norm, it is crucial that we as leaders remain intentional about finding opportunities for employees to work together closely and constructively.”

## Building a Team That Thrives: Collaborative and Inclusive Leadership at ALA

Every few months, we add a topic to ALA's staff meeting agenda for the entire group to discuss. At one recent staff meeting, we examined the question, “What is the definition of a leader?” To help bring some context to the discussion we viewed Drew Dudley's 2012 TedTalk, “Everyday Leadership.” In his presentation, Dudley hypothesizes that we all can recognize and celebrate different forms of leadership that appear in the everyday acts each of us performs to improve each other's lives.

Regardless of anyone's position at ALA, we are all expected to contribute to creating and nurturing a work environment where everyone feels valued, heard and ready to bring their A-game. Here are some lessons I've learned that have helped me adapt the insights I've learned from my colleagues, peers and mentors to foster collaborative and inclusive leadership at ALA.

### 1. Open Communication Is Key

It is critical that our team feels comfortable sharing their ideas and concerns. Whether someone comes to me or someone else they trust, we strive to create an environment where there are open communication channels. By ensuring every voice is heard and considered, our employees feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas without fear of judgment. We provide as many outlets as possible for that to happen, whether it's project updates via our weekly Monday Message, feedback in regularly scheduled one-on-one meetings, or personal concerns that are appropriate to address with supervisors or human resources. Our standard is to make sure our communications are clear, consistent, and aligned with the organization's values and goals.

## 2. Expose Staff to Unique Perspectives

At ALA, we want a team that's buzzing with fresh ideas. To help accomplish this, we make it a priority to expose our team to people with diverse backgrounds and experiences to broaden and enrich our perspectives and help us serve our members and business partners. Likewise, we encourage staff to take advantage of participating in diverse groups outside of ALA. Embracing diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility (DEIA) sparks creativity and helps make us a stronger, more cohesive team.

Leadership is also demonstrated in trusting our team by giving them responsibilities, the autonomy to make decisions, and the confidence to make mistakes. These are opportunities for learning and growth, showing them that their professional development is a priority and that it may manifest in different ways. Empowering our team supports the desire to increase engagement and build attachment to ALA.

## 3. Collaboration Creates Inclusion

Strengthening team bonds enhances collaboration. This may sound easy, but it isn't. There's a lot of trial and error, and the results can be as varied as the people involved, all of whom have different needs and expectations. Using digital collaboration tools to keep everyone informed and on the

same page is certainly necessary, particularly since we work in a hybrid environment. Planning fun team-building activities and switching up who leads these efforts helps to keep things fresh, and we often discover a hidden talent or interest in someone that we never knew before.

Demonstrating inclusive behavior in our daily interactions is a big part of exhibiting and sharpening our leadership skills. One of our staff core values is holding ourselves and others accountable for maintaining and protecting a positive work environment. With a staff size of 25, there aren't many places to hide, especially when we're not living up to our values. When we embody and reinforce our values, others are more likely to follow suit.

In a time when hybrid work has become the norm, it is crucial that we as leaders remain intentional about finding opportunities for employees to work together closely and constructively. Inclusion doesn't happen on its own — it is the result of a concerted effort by all to ensure that every voice at the table is heard. With that culture in place, staffs large and small can work cohesively to accomplish their goals.



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CHRISTINA FLOYD AND  
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# Unlocking Potential: Financing the Modern Office

The power of a well-designed office shouldn't be underestimated. Modern workplaces are carefully curated — placing emphasis on flexibility, collaboration and employee well-being. From sleek, open floor plans to seamless technology integrations, strategic financing can help you invest in your office environment and your firm's long-term success.

## INTENTIONAL DESIGN FOR WORKPLACE SUCCESS

With 51% of companies prioritizing investments in cutting-edge office spaces, embracing modernization is crucial. This trend reflects a shift away from older offices toward spaces with superior technology and amenities. For law firms, this isn't just about staying current — it's also about meeting client expectations and staying competitive in a rapidly evolving legal industry.

Here are some key features defining today's dynamic law firm workplaces:

- » **Open Floor Plans:** Breaking down barriers encourages interaction while offering dedicated spaces for focused work, mentorship and group collaboration.
- » **State-of-the-Art Technology:** Seamless collaboration is powered by advanced tools like wireless charging stations, immersive smart boards and videoconferencing systems.
- » **Sustainability Initiatives:** Eco-friendly materials, energy-efficient lighting, robust recycling programs and green spaces integrated into office design demonstrate a commitment to environmental responsibility.
- » **Employee Wellness:** Modern offices prioritize physical and mental health with amenities like fitness centers, meditation rooms, rooftop terraces and even nap pods.

“In today's competitive landscape, savvy legal executives understand that strategic financing goes beyond cost management — it can help realize ROI faster and drive sustainable long-term growth.”

## MAXIMIZING VALUE THROUGH STRATEGIC FINANCING

In today's competitive landscape, savvy legal executives understand that strategic financing goes beyond cost management — it can help realize return on investment (ROI) faster and drive sustainable long-term growth. By leveraging tailored financing solutions, law firms can optimize their office design and functionality while unlocking a variety of benefits:

- » **Tax Optimization:** Firms can use financing to achieve tax and accounting benefits that boost their financial performance.
- » **Maximize Partner Distributions:** By spreading project costs over time, firms can alleviate financial strain and ensure that investments remain aligned for both current and future partners.
- » **Capital Preservation:** Saving cash enables firms to allocate resources toward long-term growth initiatives, fostering innovation and maintaining a competitive edge in the market.
- » **Financial Flexibility:** Custom financing options empower firms to adapt to changing circumstances without the burden of large, upfront expenditures.

Financing the modern office isn't just about securing funds — it's about strategically investing in the future of your firm.

By investing in intentional design choices with custom financing, law firms can elevate their workplace experience and create an environment for connection, collaboration and culture.

### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Christina Floyd, MBA**, is a Certified Lease and Finance Professional (CLFP) and has almost a decade of equipment leasing knowledge and dedicated experience working with the legal industry. Additionally, she has successfully completed the Legal Management Finance Specialist Certificate Program through ALA. In her tenure, Floyd has been instrumental in growing First American's legal business to more than 330 firms.

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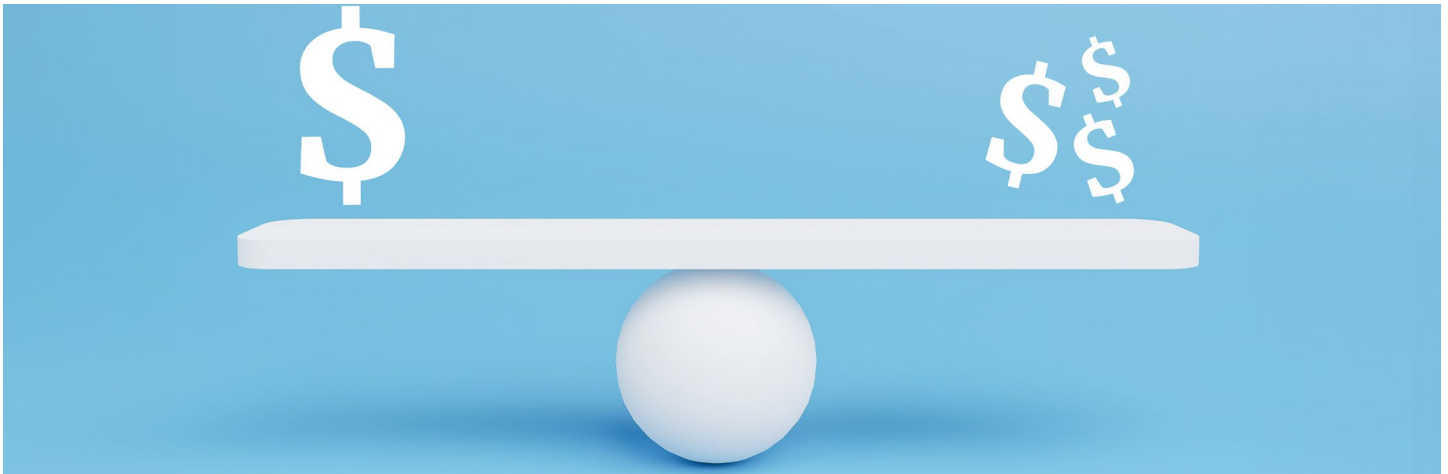


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## Balancing the Scales: Strategies for Addressing Pay Compression in Law Firms

**I had lunch recently with the Director of Administration of a major firm seeking a litigation paralegal. Hiring requirements included 5 to 10 years and trial experience along with a host of high-level assignments. The salary range was \$80,000–\$127,000. Let me add that this is a firm with low turnover and just a nice place to work.**

I received a call a week later: “We now want a two to five year paralegal who has gone to trial. Salary is \$65,000–\$80,000 per year.” Quite a twist! The firm did not want new employees to make a salary more, close to equal or equal to current employees.

For those who have not hired lately, let me clue you in: The unemployment rate is 3.7% across the country, the lowest in 30 years. Below 4% and it’s a candidate tight market. At this writing, the unemployment rate in the legal field is below 1% or, specifically, 0.06%. No number of Indeed ads are going to shake loose candidates unless you are offering the sun, the moon and partnership. Basically, most firms are posting and praying.

Part of the problem is salary compression: When the pay of an employee is close to the pay of more experienced employees in the same job or when employees in lower-level jobs are paid almost as much as those in higher levels. Pay inversion is when newer or less experienced employees make beyond those more experienced.

Let’s look at the Los Angeles paralegal market. Starting salaries are around \$60,000–\$67,000. A few years ago, it was around \$50,000. Given a standard 3% increase for that entry level paralegal to reach five years of employment at the same firm, their salary today would be \$59,653 or equal to the entry level paralegal at \$60,000-plus.

“Pay what employees are worth at least for significant and profitable roles. Consider the thousands of dollars spent on recruiting, agencies, morale dip, revenue and productivity loss while positions remain unfilled.”

For those saying, “I would never allow a five-year paralegal to be paid \$60,000.” OK, I buy that. However, what adjustments did you make along the way? \$10,000? \$20,000? \$25,000? Let’s say you went the full bola: \$25,000. That would bring that paralegal to \$85,000 or market bottom.

During the pandemic, many firms paid higher salaries that still remain. For those firms that got through the pandemic with little turnover, you are probably now in a pickle.

Let’s go back to my friend’s firm’s requirement, “trial experience.” Unless you were in a locked down courtroom with judges, bailiffs, attorneys and clients in hazmat suits, no one went to trial. Who was going to chance COVID? The two to five year paralegal with trial experience right now barely exists, yet more experienced paralegals with trial experience can earn less.

According to PayScale’s white paper: “How to manage pay compression with agile compensation,” employees are placing pressure on organizations, particularly when comparing themselves to peers in similar roles. Pay compression (known as wage or salary compression) often occurs gradually over time, rather than as deliberate strategies.

The following cause salary compression or inversion:

- » Market forces
- » Inconsistent pay practices over time
- » Unintentional biases
- » High demand for specific skills
- » Inability to raise salaries of current employees

Other factors include:

**Demand exceeds supply:** Employees get more dollars by changing employers than remaining loyal. In other words, pay compression happens when firms increase salaries to attract new hires and don’t give adjustments for current employees.

**No structured, too-broad pay grades:** Muddled compensation structures do not allow growth. In many firms (OK, most), paralegals are paralegals, legal assistants, legal assistants with no designated tiers — i.e., entry, midlevel, senior, etc. — and only one range, causing pay compression. If they feel their careers (and paychecks) have stagnated, employees look outside for advancement.

Unique pay ranges and promotions to the next tier for new expertise results in less turnover. Tiered programs work wonders.

**Rapid inflation:** Inflation can be temporary, making permanent hikes unnecessary. Offset inflation with food, gas or utilities stipends, separate from base pay — only if inflation remains.

**Job descriptions:** These can be unclear, outdated, ignored or nonexistent. If a new hire is earning more than an experienced employee, is it the same position? Or two different roles?

**Hourly workers may make more than salaried**

**contributors:** Hire hourly workers to cut overtime. Consider title changes, career coaching, additional PTO, professional development, larger bonuses, better benefits. Better titles are short-term morale boosters, but if employees are still not happy, titles are nice things to take when they leave.

## SOLVING THE PROBLEM

Ignoring salary compression has serious consequences, including:

- » Decreased morale and engagement
- » Search for more growth
- » Turnover
- » Inability to attract best candidates
- » Legal ramifications

Consultant David Wudyka clarified pay compression in his webinar, “How to Find and Fix the Pay Errors You Don’t Even Know You’re Making.” Here are some things to address the problem:

- » **Revisit/rebuild grade structures** responsible for “structural compression.” Pay compression rests with too narrow pay ranges.
- » **Make equity adjustments:** Identify performances and rates not in proper relationship — good causes for adjustments.
- » **Make ranges at market:** Adjust regularly, i.e., every year. If not, you are probably falling behind the market.
- » **Consider promotions:** Move top performers to another pay grade. If someone could contribute higher responsibility, you can solve the compression problem.
- » **Consider reassessing:** For underperformers, consider freezing compensation. You don’t want to take pay away, but you can freeze. Perhaps lower responsibilities are called for.
- » **Consider merit bonuses instead of raises.** Bonuses allow some rates to float up, and others to remain the same to disperse bunched pay rates without building increases into base pay. Bonus quarterly.

Pay what employees are worth at least for significant and profitable roles. Consider the thousands of dollars spent on recruiting, agencies, morale dip, revenue and productivity loss while positions remain unfilled.

You may get away with \$80,000 for two to three years' experience, but not \$65,000. Let's say salaries are brought up to \$87,000 — \$7,000 more per year. If paralegals bill at \$200 per hour, and the position remains unfilled for six months while digging in your heels, as much as \$30,000 loss per month can happen. Open six months, and you lose \$180,000 revenue, all for an extra \$7,000.

PayScale suggests: "Don't default to annual base pay increases of three percent or so applied indiscriminately across the workforce. Look at key positions and market worth, how minimum wage or inflation impacts locations, job descriptions and performance. Adjust compensation accordingly."

Firms taking proactive approaches to pay compression make it more likely to be where the best talent will land. You can't

afford to lose the best hires or have even minor turnover. Competitive pay is a huge selling point resulting in the most engaged, loyal and productive employees. Remember that old adage, "Do the right thing."

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Chere Estrin** is Chief Executive Officer of Estrin Legal Staffing along with her roles within the medical records and deposition summarizing divisions MediSums and DepoSums. Chere serves as President and co-founding member of the Organization of Legal Professionals (OLP), a legal technology training organization. She has held executive positions within AmLaw firms, litigation support companies and as Senior Vice President of the legal staffing division within a \$5 billion publicly held corporation. She is acknowledged as One of the Top 50 Women Leaders in Los Angeles and recipient of the Los Angeles/Century City Chamber of Commerce "Women of Achievement" award.

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**KELLY L. CAMPBELL**

*Leadership Coach, Speaker and Author*

“Embracing healthy conflict as a means of modeling open communication and problem-solving can lead to more positive outcomes for you, the partners and attorneys, and the firm at large.”

## To Enact Boundaries at Work, Look to the Past

**Historically, law firm culture requires managers to be tough, expeditious and available at a moment's notice without complaint. For some, the dynamic may be unconsciously reminiscent of a relationship with a caregiver or other person who took an authoritative role during childhood.**

Understanding the root of your people-pleasing tendencies can help you practice setting healthy boundaries within your firm. But how can you heal and handle the expectations of your role when so much of the job is about being in service to clients, partners, attorneys and others in positions of power?

### PEOPLE PLEASERS AND PEOPLE CONTROLLERS

To set some context, let's talk about the spectrum of trauma-based leadership styles — from people-pleasing leaders on one end to people-controllers on the other. (And, by the way, anyone can be both of these on any given day.)

People-pleasing professionals often struggle to say no, set limits or voice their needs. They tend to prioritize the demands of others over their own well-being, leading to anxiety, overwhelm, burnout, resentment and a feeling of being taken advantage of.

In contrast, people-controlling professionals may exert excessive authority, make unreasonable demands, and fail to consider the perspectives or boundaries of others. This can create a toxic work environment characterized by fear, stress and a lack of psychological safety.

Striking a balance between these two ends of the spectrum is crucial for maintaining healthy relationships and a productive work environment. Professionals who can assertively communicate their own needs are more likely to foster a culture of mutual understanding and respect.

## WHY BOUNDARIES CAN BE DIFFICULT

Voicing and enacting healthy boundaries can be hard for legal management professionals because there is risk in self-advocacy. You may fear negative consequences, such as being perceived as difficult or losing the approval of the firm's partners.

Additionally, setting boundaries can trigger feelings of guilt or shame, especially if you were taught from a young age that your needs were secondary to those of others.

Breaking free from these ingrained patterns can be a challenging and emotional process. It's important to remember that this survival strategy that you may have employed as a child provided you with a sense of safety. As an adult, though, it may now be the very thing that is holding you back from feeling free.

## WHAT DOES CONFLICT AVOIDANCE SIGNAL TO OTHERS?

Those who tend to avoid conflict often fear it could jeopardize their job or professional relationships. However, conflict avoidance can signal to those in authority that you are comfortable with the status quo, even if it is detrimental to your well-being. It can reinforce the idea that their treatment of employees, demands and expectations of perfection are reasonable, even when they are not.

Moreover, conflict avoidance can prevent you from addressing underlying issues that may be contributing to an unhealthy work environment. By suppressing your concerns, you may inadvertently enable maladaptive behaviors to continue, causing further harm to you and your colleagues.

Embracing healthy conflict as a means of modeling open communication and problem-solving can lead to more positive outcomes for you, the partners and attorneys, and the firm at large.

## MODELING HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS

Setting boundaries in a demanding legal environment can be daunting, but it is essential for your well-being and the overall health of the workplace. By understanding the roots of people-pleasing tendencies and recognizing the importance of assertive communication, you can begin to advocate for yourself in a respectful and effective manner.

Remember that establishing boundaries is not a one-time event but an ongoing, daily practice. It may require courage and posttraumatic growth, but the benefits of a more balanced and



fulfilling life are well worth the effort. Ultimately, by prioritizing your needs and fostering an environment of mutual respect, you can contribute to a more positive and productive legal culture that values the well-being of all professionals.

Seek support from trusted colleagues, mentors or trauma-informed professionals as you embark on this journey. With time and determination, you can release and reprogram unhealthy patterns and cultivate a work environment that empowers you to thrive.

Enacting boundaries is not just about self-preservation; it's about promoting a healthier work culture for everyone involved. When professionals prioritize their well-being, they can show up as their best selves, fostering an environment of mutual respect, open communication and increased productivity. By leading by example and advocating for change, law firm managers can light the way for a more sustainable and fulfilling legal landscape, benefiting both individuals and the profession as a whole. It's a courageous act of self-care that ripples outward, creating a positive impact on colleagues, clients and the broader legal community.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Kelly L. Campbell** writes about trauma, leadership and consciousness — “The New TLC” — on Substack, for Entrepreneur and formerly for Forbes. They are a Trauma-Informed Leadership Coach, keynote speaker and the author of *Heal to Lead: Revolutionizing Leadership through Trauma Healing*.

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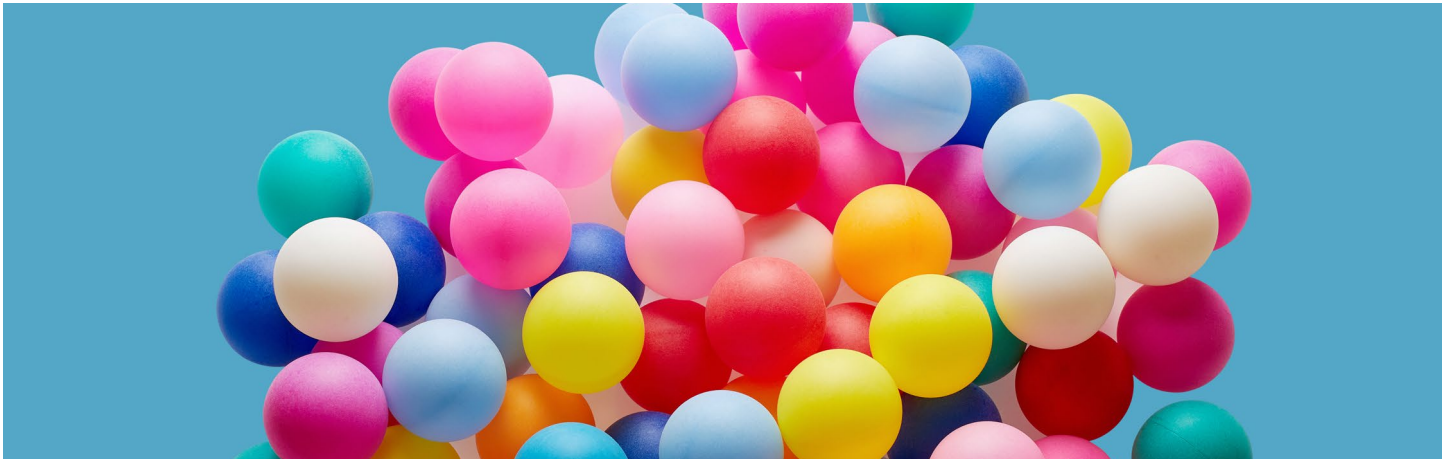


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**ERIN BRERETON**

Owner  
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“Inclusivity allows all the voices to be heard in the room, which allows us to build the very best per firm possible, instead of just the voices that are at the top. There’s not going to be innovation without psychological safety.”

## Leadership, Inclusivity and Culture

*Uplifting employees so they feel valued and included should be a critical part of your firm’s strategy.*

**The legal industry has made notable strides in increasing diversity in the past decade — between 2013 and 2023, the percentage of female lawyers increased, and the number of lawyers of color working at law firms nearly doubled.**

Twice as many lawyers who identify as LGBTQ+ worked at law firms in 2022, compared to a decade before; and the percentage of law firm associates who report having a disability more than doubled between 2020 and 2022, according to American Bar Association demographics.

Having a more diverse workforce, however, doesn’t guarantee everyone within a firm will feel welcome and involved.

“A lot ends up being focused on hiring and making sure we’ve got visual representation we can report to the client — which is not inclusion,” says Judy Hissong, CLM, PCC, President of strategic planning and leadership development service provider Nesso Strategies. “There are lots of very well-meaning, well-intended firms who are really just not [sure about] the best way to go about it.”

Finding out can be key, given the profound impact inclusivity can have on a firm’s culture — which can, in turn, influence retention, productivity and numerous other operational elements.

Culture, for instance, is the top factor law students consider when deciding where to interview and which offer to accept, outranking compensation, advancement opportunities and prestige, according to a report from the non-partisan Yale Law Women+ organization.



## ESTABLISHING AN INCLUSIVE STRUCTURE

While a 2023 survey from Above the Law and Major, Lindsey & Africa found the majority of lawyers agree a diverse and inclusive workforce should be a priority for firms, 71% of attorneys of color said they feel law firm culture is inherently biased against diverse attorneys — and nearly 84% of female firm members believe law firm culture is biased against women.

“Inclusivity creates all kinds of innovation and diverse approaches to thought,” Hissong says. “Inclusivity allows all the voices to be heard in the room, which allows us to build the very best firm possible, instead of just the voices that are at the top. There’s not going to be innovation without psychological safety.”

Leadership and committee composition can be a visible indication of whether a firm prioritizes inclusivity. Recent research, though, indicates that’s an area where the industry may be falling short.

White male lawyers comprise the highest percentage of associates and equity and nonequity partners in firms — and are the most likely firm members to serve on compensation and governance committees, according to ABA’s most recent Model Diversity Survey.

As a result, they may play a significant role in inclusivity efforts — whose success tends to depend on the support the initiatives receive from the firm’s highest levels, according to Mauricio Velásquez, MBA, Founder and President of Diversity Training Group.

“Leaders need to lead,” Velásquez says. “Lead by example. Don’t just write a check; hold people accountable. Put metrics in place.”

To foster leadership-based inclusivity within committees, practice and other groups, Hissong suggests thoroughly examining how the firm determines who’ll be in the room when decisions are made.

“Do I have voices from all the ranks, titles that allow different viewpoints to be heard?” she says. “If I’m in charge of a meeting, can I be sure everybody in the room has had opportunity to speak? Which may involve [asking], ‘Hey Judy, we haven’t heard from you yet; I know you’ve got great ideas. What are you thinking?’”

Seeing diverse employees advance can show the firm is committed to inclusion.

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**“Leaders need to lead. Lead by example. Don’t just write a check; hold people accountable. Put metrics in place.”**

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“My first partner just got appointed to the bench,” says Amanda DuBois, Founding Partner of DuBois Levias Law Group. “Some of our younger lawyers who are also South Asian aspire to move up in their career like that — and see that how supported [my first partner] Monica was when she was in our office.”

DuBois remembers feeling nervous when, as a relatively new lawyer working at a firm after law school, she’d need to ask a partner a question. The firm expected associates to primarily figure things out on their own; around 6:30 in the evening, its managing partner would roam the office to check who was working late.

“He jingled his keys — you could hear him jingling down the hall and [felt like you should] sit up straight and look busy,” DuBois says. “He would take notes on who was there — that was like leading by intimidation.”

She was determined to create a different type of culture when launching her family law firm. Brand new attorneys spend about a year working closely with a senior lawyer who provides daily guidance, which she feels helps the industry newcomers feel like part of the team.

“That helps build inclusivity because it’s not really very hierarchical,” she says. “Everybody flourishes and does their best work when they feel like they matter. The clients are going to be best served if their lawyers feel supported.”



**"Inclusion is all about making sure people feel at home and like they belong. We call ourselves a family; we encourage people to bring their full selves to work — and that gives us a better product because people can be real."**

In recent years, the firm has hired a number of formerly incarcerated individuals — unbelievably loyal employees with unique skills, DuBois says, whose needs can sometimes differ from other firm members.

"They've been living under a very oppressive regime," she says. "If they do something that looks like a mistake, they sort of have [a] trauma response like, 'I'm going get in really big trouble.'"

In those instances, the firm's leadership tries to be supportive and understanding — including, DuBois says, "educating the rest of the team that this person might need a little bit of grace."

"If somebody is late, rather than saying, 'Why weren't you here on time?' [we'd say] 'It happened; how can I support you?'" she says. "There might be an incident in their family — they're concerned they're going to lose their job if they have to leave work to go pick up their kid at school. It's giving people permission to realize that life happens," DuBois says.

## INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SUPPORT

Diversity, equity and inclusion has been a central tenet at Riley Safer Holmes & Cancila LLP since the national law firm's founding, according to Managing Partner Patricia Brown Holmes.

Staff members, not just the firm's litigators, trial and transactional attorneys are invited to social events; the firm's business casual dress code, Holmes says, allows employees to be authentic in the workplace.

"Inclusion is all about making sure people feel at home and like they belong," she says. "We call ourselves a family; we encourage people to bring their full selves to work — and that gives us a better product because people can be real."

The firm also reaches out to ask employees if they'd be willing to help guide its approach in certain instances.

"I actually talk to folks when they first get hired [and say] 'Hey, will you help us train people — help them understand Asian, [or] Black [or] gay issues?'" Holmes says. "We may ask one of

our LGBTQ+ folks, 'Can you take a look at this ad? What would you change?' — and they say, 'You may not realize this, but the Pride flag has more colors in it now as a way of highlighting inclusivity and diversity.' [Employees] don't have to hide and get to participate; we get to do it the right way."

RSHC also tries to work with minority-, veteran- and female-owned vendors who provide court reporting, purchasing and other services when possible. The firm has helped some obtain the city of Chicago's M/WBE certification, Holmes says, designating the business has more than 50% ownership that involves a minority group member or woman, which can allow the vendor to apply for local and other government contracts.

"We've offered several of our vendors pro bono legal services to get them minority-certified," she says. "It helps them get more work. We've had some who were not incorporated, and we helped them get set up as a legit business. It gives [firm members] a chance to see themselves [in the vendors we work with] — it also gives them a chance to know we're trying to help other people become successful."

## MAINTAINING INCLUSIVITY

Employees' sense of inclusion, like other aspects of a law firm's culture, can change over time; checking in periodically to see how firm members feel can help leadership gauge if alterations need to be made.

Employee surveys RSHC has distributed have provided valuable feedback, according to Holmes.

"People have had an opportunity to comment, and then we take into account what those comments might be and try to figure out do we need to do additional programming, or maybe even just do additional explanations?" she says. "Maybe we need some personnel changes. There are a variety of tweaks we make as a result."

The firm didn't directly ask how employees felt about diversity, she says.

"We addressed it as, 'How do you feel about the firm? What things can we do better? What don't you like?'" Holmes says. "The answers to those questions give you what you're looking

for. You understand whether somebody feels included if they say something like, 'I'm never asked to do X, Y and Z.' They may say something like, 'We need faster copiers.' If it really is all about the copy machine, and not about your daily life, then the inclusion part is working."

Conducting stay interviews — similar to the process some firms use when an employee has accepted a job with another employer but involving people who've worked at the firm for some time — is another option, Hissong says. She recommends trying to talk to at least 10% of the firm's population annually.

"Ask them what they notice, what they think makes this a great firm — and really listen to their answers because some may be exclusion, not inclusion," Hissong says. "Lots of organizations do exit interviews; the problem is that's too late."

Firms should aim to resolve any inclusivity issues that arise as quickly as possible, according to Velásquez.

"The best firms have a very clear culture," he says. "It's inclusive; it's welcoming — and if there are issues, they talk about them and put a plan of action in place. Festering long-term issues is what destroys culture and trust."

While employees may be pleased to hear their firm hopes to provide an inclusive environment, to ensure everyone feels truly welcome and respected, continuity is key.

"Culture, as a concept, is still fairly new in law firms," Hissong says. "'We value inclusivity' might be a stated value — but you need to be living it. The disconnect causes people to leave."

#### 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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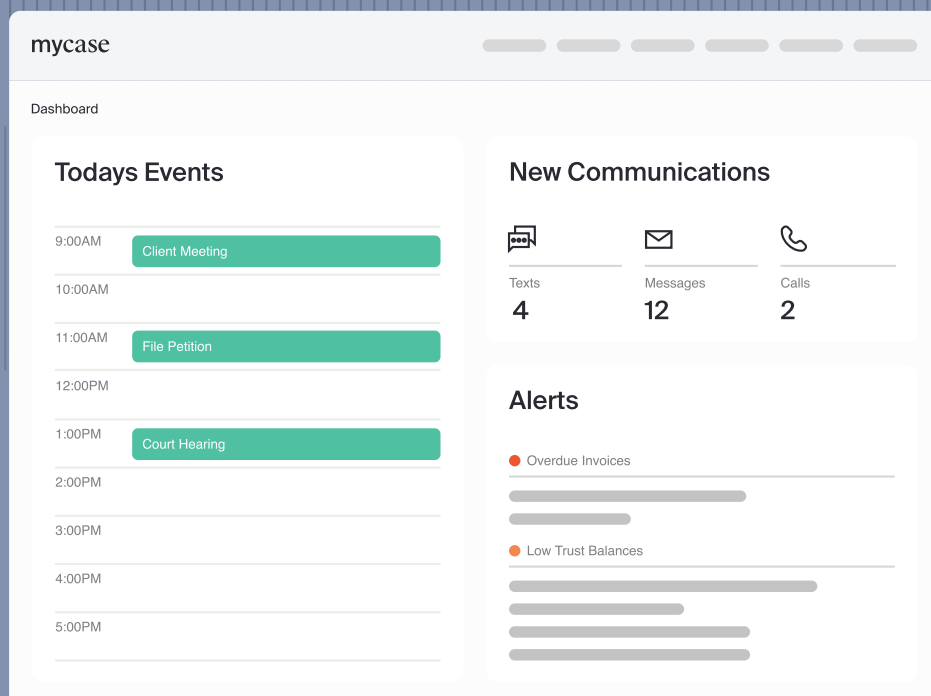
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“If a lawyer is impaired, firms don’t do themselves, their employees, or their clients any favors by ignoring it. It’s better to deal with it head on.”

## Confronting Substance Use in the Workplace

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“Employers responding to our surveys cite absenteeism as the number one negative result of substance misuse,” says Karen Pierce, Managing Director of Working Partners, a consulting firm. “The number two and three responses, in order of severity, are decreased productivity and workforce shortages.” Pilferage may also increase, and office morale may decline when clean employees must shoulder tasks neglected by their impaired colleagues.

With their fast pace and high stress levels, law firms all too often must confront these issues in the workplace.

“The legal community is waking up to the fact that well-being and substances [use] are real issues to be confronted and addressed,” says Stacey A. L. Best, Executive Director of Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers (LCL). “Many may come to the subject from a risk management standpoint, while others — and probably fewer — come at it from a well-being standpoint. But we all end up using the same language, with the understanding that if the topic goes unaddressed it can have a negative impact on the entire firm, its employees and its bottom line.”

A temptation to ignore the problem and hope it goes away — a common mentality everywhere — is prevalent in the legal industry for a special reason. “The legal profession has a lot of fear, especially about liability, so many lawyers don’t want to touch certain topics like workplace drug [use], fearing it could lead to malpractice claims,” says Best. “The instinct is maybe to ignore a topic or try to cast blame away from the firm.”

**"Avoid making the conversation about personal characteristics or character. For instance, the terms addict and alcoholic label the person rather than identifying the problematic conduct of say, abusing prescription drugs."**

That can backfire. "If a lawyer is impaired, firms don't do themselves, their employees, or their clients any favors by ignoring it," says Best. "It's better to deal with it head on."

It can be daunting for legal managers to tap into this reality. "Legal administrators are a bit like middle managers in a sense," says Best. "They are in a really tough position when trying to get leaders to pay attention to well-being strategies."

The secret is to find productive ways into conversations by thinking creatively about how to raise solutions from the perspective of the lawyers in charge of the firm. And that means emphasizing the connection between a clean workplace and the firm's bottom line.

"If a firm is thought to have ignored a drug [use] problem or covered it up or ushered it out the door without addressing it, that is not going to end in a positive outcome," says Best. "Liability will be reduced by addressing the problem and being able to show steps were taken to resolve it. The more promptly the firm can address it, the better."

Here are some things to consider if you are faced with this issue in your firm.

## STAY ALERT

The first step is to keep an open eye on any signs of possible impairment. That means knowing people well enough to spot potential problems.

"The firm needs to have strategies in place that allow for regular observation of personnel," says Best. "This can be a challenge in a hybrid environment where we can be less familiar with what people's personal lives look like. We need to create opportunities to obtain insight. That may call for a regular schedule of Zoom or Teams video sessions — something more than just audio phone calls. And the schedule should be varied so sessions are done at different times of the day. People tend to behave in habitual ways. If they know a Zoom call will always be at 10 a.m., for example, they may start drinking at 11 a.m."

As for what to watch for, the common denominator is a sudden change in behavior. "Several behaviors may be signs

of addiction," says Best. "People may overreact to what may be very straightforward or simple matters, such as feedback on assignments. There may be changes in physical appearance. Or there may be unusual schedule changes, such as arriving late, leaving early, or unplanned and unexplained absences."

A behavior change, of course, is no guarantee that an individual has an addiction problem. "While these may be signs of addiction, they may also be signs of other problems such as caring for elderly parents, or for very young children or personal health issues," notes Best. She also says that people may be unwilling to disclose personal challenges, potentially feeling like they are being unprofessional if they bring up their personal lives. As a result, it's up to legal managers to figure out how to get people to open up by bringing humanity to the conversations. "It's true that we need to get our work done and serve our clients. But clients are better served with healthy employees."

Given the myriad possible causes for behavior changes, it behooves legal managers to approach the employee carefully. "It's important to focus on actual conduct that you see and allow the person to explain what is going on," says Best. "Avoid making the conversation about personal characteristics or character. For instance, the terms addict and alcoholic label the person rather than identifying the problematic conduct of say, abusing prescription drugs."



Best suggests starting a conversation with a statement such as this: “You know, I’m noticing that over the last several weeks you seem more tired than usual. You also seem distracted.” This can be followed up with a statement that offers assistance: “Is everything okay? Is there something I can do?”

Note that the observations above concern behaviors that may not impact work. “Hopefully you’re able to make such observations before they start affecting work, because then you will have to have a conversation that focuses on performance matters,” says Best.

## BUILD TRUST

“One of the best foundations for productive conversations is a workplace environment characterized by psychological safety,” says Best. “That calls for good rapport, as well as for well-communicated expectations, policies, and strategies for feedback and promotion, and for anything else that impacts one’s employment or the workplace experience. When you don’t have those things in place, people will feel unsure and unstable, and more prone to hide and avoid risks.”

Regular feedback will reduce the chances that any one conversation doesn’t seem like such a perilous event, notes Best. “If I never come to your office, if I never talk to you about work, if I never have casual conversations, it will seem to be a high stakes situation when I suddenly show up at your door with an issue.”

It’s also wise to plan ahead by arranging for appropriate resources to be available when needed. Most jurisdictions have lawyer assistant programs, and many law firms have Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs). Ensure that all employees are aware of their existence.

“Make sure you clearly communicate the availability of resources so people struggling with wanting to come forward can access services without having to necessarily have a full-on conversation,” says Best.

Over the long haul, the law firms that maintain a genuine concern for the welfare of their staffs will be the ones that avoid the costly ramifications of impairment. “It’s difficult for leaders in the legal profession to disengage from their lawyer mind, and to engage instead with their leadership and well-being mind,” says Best. “But I do think that leaders who genuinely care for their people will choose strategies that are most helpful for their entire workforce. And that is a key starting point in improving well-being and resolving incidences of workplace addiction.”



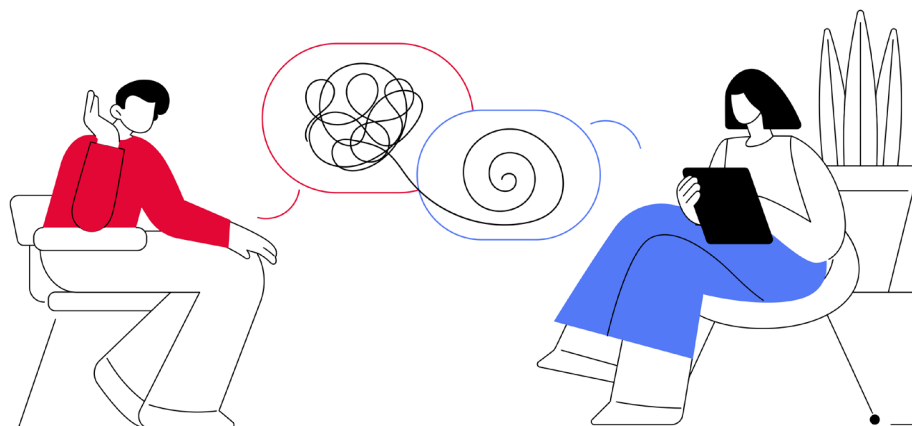
### LEARN MORE ABOUT THE EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL AND OTHER SUBSTANCES ON THE LEGAL INDUSTRY

Substance use expert Eric Webber appeared on *Legal Management Talk* to discuss the effects of alcohol and other substances on the legal industry and what administrators and employees can do to limit alcohol dependence at their firms. Don’t miss Webber’s tips for creating an effective strategy to help employees who may be struggling and how to plan events that don’t revolve around alcohol. Tune in today at [alanet.org/publications/podcast-player](http://alanet.org/publications/podcast-player).

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Phillip M. Perry** is an award-winning business journalist with over 20 years of experience under his belt. A three-time recipient of the American Bar Association’s Edge Award for editorial achievement, Perry freelances out of his New York City office. His byline has appeared over 3,000 times in the nation’s business press.

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**FRANK LONG**

Senior Manager, Content and Communications  
Rapid Legal

“A good legal analytics platform can likewise help evaluate client feedback as well, helping firms evaluate and improve their services based on client preferences, behaviors and satisfaction levels.”

## The Numbers Don't Lie: Legal Analytics Are Winning

**Legal analytics are the extensive data sets — facts and figures — software engines compile as insights. They are used for everything from helping to predict case outcomes and understand judicial behaviors, to identifying bottlenecks in a firm's legal operations.**

It's easy to understand why law firms value legal analytics, and why clients expect firms to use them. They enable law firms to make data-driven decisions that confer a competitive edge and enhance lawyer agility and operational efficiency.

But when you add up the numbers, where does legal analytics seem to be leading the legal profession?

The answer: Straight into the future.

### ALL ABOARD FOR ANALYTICS

Nearly every corner of legal practice in the 21st century will be affected by legal analytics. That trend is foreshadowed by statistics from ALM Intelligence that reveal more than 70% of law firms with 50 or more attorneys now use legal analytics in various capacities.

That figure suggests that short of a global throwback to typewriters and fax machines, an expansion is almost inevitable.

In fact, the expansion is happening right now, as in-house legal teams across the country use analytics to improve the efficiency of legal expenditures, mitigate risks and streamline processes. A data point from a Blickstein Group survey underscores the pace and scope of that expansion, showing 62% of in-house legal departments have already integrated legal analytics into their workflows.

And the ripple effect keeps going. According to a 2024 survey by Lex Machina, 65% of law firms that use legal analytics say they want to spread the use of legal analytics by integrating that data with other data in their firm.

As data-driven operations become the norm, they will change the way law firms work.

## SKILL SET MAKEOVER

For decades, it was enough to build a career on deep expertise in a single area. But times have changed. Now you must be a multidimensional generalist.

For legal professionals, that means having skills that go beyond administrative brilliance or litigation savvy. It means having the ability to manage and use legal analytics. But that skill increases the value of everyone who develops it.

Case in point: A busy legal administrator who has strong competency in legal analytics can provide the data attorneys request faster than ever, with a high level of efficiency. That person now adds new value to the team.

Legal professionals can likewise use legal analytics to strengthen a firm's business performance. Three statistics from Lex Machina's 2024 Survey, The Impact of Legal Analytics, explain why:

- » **67%** of law firms are using legal analytics to pitch or demonstrate their expertise to clients.
- » **57%** are using competitive intelligence to find new business.
- » **26%** are using legal analytics for litigation finance.

Lawyers, too, are developing skills related to legal analytics — such as data analysis and business acumen — along with soft skills like cross-collaboration and project management. By honing these skills, lawyers become better innovators and problem solvers, capable of handling both trial and business strategies.

## GUESSWORK IS SO LAST CENTURY

Underneath the umbrella of legal analytics is a data subtype known as predictive analytics. This analytical tool uses historical data and case precedents to forecast likely outcomes of legal disputes.

Predictive analytics are not a crystal ball, but they do help lawyers study patterns from past cases, enabling them to provide more accurate advice and develop effective litigation strategies.

They don't assure a win, but they help level the playing field.

Law firms can use predictive analytics to make crucial decisions, such as whether to litigate a case, the likelihood of a motion prevailing, or the appropriate legal fees to charge. Predictive analytics can also help manage client expectations, build trust and enhance the lawyer-client relationship.

Administratively, the power of predictive analytics can be used to look back at a matter's billing data and visualize inefficiencies. These insights can help law firms be more effective at aligning their resources and — if the numbers suggest — adjust the cost of a matter.

As a result, matters can be estimated based on what they should cost rather than what they did cost.

## FROM BAFFLING TO BRILLIANT

Clear communication is essential for law firms to be successful in the courtroom, at the office or with clients. Legal analytics can help law firms communicate more effectively with clients and reduce the time some clients may otherwise have to spend struggling with legalese.

They do it by simplifying complex mountains of numbers and arcane concepts into friendly, digestible formats. Among those easy-to-understand visuals are pie charts, trellis charts, histograms and more — all of which improve the way information is communicated to clients.

That's good news for law firms that want to improve customer satisfaction.



A good legal analytics platform can likewise help evaluate client feedback as well, helping firms evaluate and improve their services based on client preferences, behaviors and satisfaction levels.

## NEED EFFICIENCY? FOLLOW THE NUMBERS

Legal professionals work on tight schedules, performing work that has no margin for error. By nature, their work demands efficiency.

Data analytics can enhance that efficiency when law firms use the data insights to identify inefficiencies such as bottlenecks and duplicated efforts.

Firms can further reduce inefficiencies and ensure accountability with help from third-party vendors, whose data provides a clear window on the vendor's performance as well as the performance of the law firm's own staff.

For example, regular reporting on data metrics such as staff productivity, electronic court document filing and service of process success rates can identify areas where the firm may be losing money. These metrics can help decision-makers eliminate overspending.

Additionally, regular reporting from vendors provides a clear view of the services law firms pay for. These reports may cover factors such as case fees, invoice payments and service fees. This information, ideally available in various formats (PDF, HTML, CSV, Data Feed), cultivates greater accountability within a firm's teams and its vendors.


## FUTURE PERFECT

Legal analytics may not yet predict case outcomes with perfect accuracy, but it allows us to analyze the past and forecast probabilities with growing reliability. Those types of insights are profoundly advantageous for clients, legal professionals and law firms that want to win cases and attract new clients.

That's why the use of legal analytics is booming — and the numbers don't lie. If your law firm hasn't yet implemented legal analytics, it's a sure bet that the decision will be coming soon to a boardroom near you.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Frank Long, MS**, is a professional writer, editor and content creator. He is a graduate of the Brian Lamb School of Communication at Purdue University and is Senior Manager, Content & Communications, for Rapid Legal.

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**KARINA DE LA CRUZ**

*Founder and Chief Executive Officer  
Horizon Legal Solutions, Inc.*

“A nuanced understanding of clients’ cultural backgrounds enhances advocacy efforts, while direct scheduling of interpreters through reputable agencies ensures clarity and cost-efficiency, thereby mitigating the risk of miscommunication.”

## Best Practices When Hiring an Interpreter for Legal Proceedings

**When engaging the services of an interpreter for legal proceedings, there exist vital considerations that legal administrators must bear in mind. Recognizing the paramount importance of employing interpreters with the requisite qualifications and experience for legal proceedings is crucial.**

Administrators within law firms are tasked with the responsibility of prioritizing the acquisition of the interpreter’s credentials, particularly when dealing with high-profile cases. It’s insufficient for an interpreter to merely possess fluency in a given language; interpreters must also demonstrate proficiency and familiarity with the subject matter at hand, along with relevant experience in legal settings.

Providing comprehensive information to the interpreting agency regarding the nature of the case greatly facilitates the selection of the most suitable interpreter. For instance, in instances of medical malpractice cases, it’s imperative to secure the services of an interpreter possessing both medical expertise and state certifications. Conversely, an interpreter with a technological background might not be the ideal choice for cases involving intricate medical terminology. Similarly, in maritime law cases, an interpreter with a deep understanding of nautical terminology and practices would be most advantageous.

Interpreters are bound by judicial guidelines and ethical standards, obligating them to refrain from offering legal advice or injecting personal opinions during proceedings. A common fallacy prevalent among law firms is the assumption that all interpreters are certified, whereas the reality varies from state to state, with each jurisdiction having its own laws and classification systems for interpreters.

For instance, in Texas, the highest level of certification is designated as a Master Interpreter, whereas in other states, the equivalent may be referred to as a Certified



Interpreter. Depending on your jurisdiction, you should find out for which languages a certification exists. In Florida, for example, there are only seven language certifications available whereas in Pennsylvania there are 15.

Certified court interpreters hold the highest state-level accreditation, and it's incumbent upon agencies to prioritize engaging their services. When engaging interpreters, it's important to inquire about their courtroom experience, certifications and credentials through reputable agencies.

## WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN LOOKING FOR INTERPRETERS

Law firm administrators must grasp the pivotal role of interpreters in legal proceedings, ensuring the accuracy and confidentiality of interpretations to better serve their clients' interests. It's essential to acknowledge that certain phrases may lack direct equivalents in other languages, necessitating interpreters to employ contextual equivalents to convey the intended meaning accurately.

In instances of medical evaluations, the consideration of providing interpreters of the same gender can enhance client comfort and facilitate effective communication. Furthermore, understanding and respecting cultural and religious disparities is key. For instance, while Urdu is widely spoken in both Pakistan and India, religious differences may affect the comfort levels of witnesses, underscoring the importance of cultural sensitivity in interpreter selection.

Effective communication serves as the bedrock of fair and just legal proceedings. Thus, the recruitment of certified or professional interpreters is indispensable in empowering legal professionals to surmount language barriers with confidence.

Translation, on the other hand, entails the conversion of written texts from one language to another. Various documents, ranging from legal papers to personal certificates, undergo translation. The issuance of a Certificate of Accuracy attests to the fidelity and completeness of the translation process, providing assurance regarding its veracity and correctness.

Legal professionals must recognize that interpreters are tasked with delivering precise and comprehensive interpretations without altering, omitting or augmenting the original content. Interpreters must uphold the integrity of their credentials, refrain from dispensing legal advice or personal opinions, and safeguard the confidentiality of privileged information.

A nuanced understanding of clients' cultural backgrounds enhances advocacy efforts, while direct scheduling of interpreters through reputable agencies ensures clarity and cost-efficiency, thereby mitigating the risk of miscommunication.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Karina De La Cruz** is Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Horizon Legal Solutions, Inc., a firm dedicated to translation and interpretation services, especially in the legal and medical communities. She has an extensive background in the legal field and earned her associate's degree in paralegal studies, her bachelor's degree in business administration, and an MBA from Cooper Career College. She then worked almost 10 years as a legal assistant and as a paralegal. De La Cruz is bilingual and during her time in legal, recognized the demand for excellence in language services, thus founding Horizon Legal Solutions in 2006.

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NEAL TAPARIA

Co-Founder  
Solitired

“

A staggering 78.8% of workers in legal services report regularly feeling workweek anxiety, making legal the No. 1 industry where employees are most likely to experience the Sunday scaries.”

## How to Avoid the Sunday Scaries

**The Monday Blues. The Sunday Scaries. Workplace Anxiety. No matter what you call it, that pit of dread in your stomach as the weekend winds down is a familiar feeling for many.**

But according to a new Solitired survey, legal services professionals feel it more acutely than most. In fact, a staggering 78.8% of workers in legal services report regularly feeling workweek anxiety, making legal the No. 1 industry where employees are most likely to experience the Sunday scaries.

This statistic paints a concerning picture for law firm managers. A stressed and anxious workforce can lead to decreased productivity, higher absenteeism and ultimately, a negative impact on the firm's bottom line — not to mention employee morale. So, what can be done to kick the Sunday scaries?

### STRESS SURROUNDING WORK IS PREVALENT

This survey reveals that for most workers (68%), the Sunday scaries kick in between midday and early evening Sunday. This time frame suggests that the anxiety stems not just from work itself but also from the looming transition back to the workweek routine.

There's also a correlation between job satisfaction and Sunday scaries. People who are very unhappy at work are the most likely to experience them, while those who are very happy are the least likely.

However, it's important to note that nearly half of even very happy legal professionals still report Sunday night anxieties. This suggests that the fast-paced, high-pressure environment inherent to the legal industry contributes to stress, regardless of overall job satisfaction.

Younger workers are also more likely to experience Sunday scaries, with 82% of workers 18 to 27 years old reporting them compared to 59.6% of workers 44 and older. Factors like having less experience managing work-life balance and more financial dependence on their jobs could be driving this difference.

## CAN YOU AVOID THE SUNDAY SCARIES?

Most workers have ways to cope with their Sunday night anxiety — though not everyone chooses the healthiest habits:

- » **Passive activities:** A majority of U.S. workers (including legal professionals) use passive activities like watching television or movies, listening to music or browsing social media to soothe the Sunday scaries. While these activities may provide temporary distraction, they don't address the root cause of the anxiety.
- » **Productive activities:** More than one in three workers engage in productive activities like cleaning or planning their week to ease the Sunday scaries. This approach can be helpful, as it helps these professionals kick off their new week with a sense of control and accomplishment.
- » **Unhealthy coping mechanisms:** Unfortunately, the survey also identifies concerning coping mechanisms. Nearly one in five workers who experience Sunday scaries turn to alcohol or cannabis to quiet their anxieties. Among all the vices, overindulging in food is the most popular, with 30.5% of workers "gorging" as a way to deal with Sunday night stress. These habits can have a negative impact on both physical and mental health in the long run.
- » **Prescription drugs:** A small minority of workers resort to prescription or nonprescription drugs to cope with the Sunday scaries. While not necessarily unhealthy, provided they're under the care of a medical professional, this habit points to a pretty serious anxiety problem.

## COPING WITH THE STRESS

Workweek anxiety is a common struggle for many legal professionals, but that doesn't mean it can't be helped. These strategies can help law firm managers create a more supportive environment and combat the Sunday scaries within their teams:

- » **Develop a culture of wellness.** The survey also found that workers without a regular Sunday routine are 2.5 times as likely to experience the Sunday scaries. Encourage your team members to develop healthy weekend routines that promote relaxation and preparedness for the coming week, and, when needed, pursue professional help.
- » **Promote work-life balance.** The legal industry is known for being demanding, so fostering a culture of work-life balance is crucial. Encourage your team to disconnect from work emails and calls outside of work hours and offer flexible work arrangements when possible.
- » **Maintain open communication.** Create an environment where employees feel comfortable discussing stress and anxiety with their managers. Open communication allows for early intervention and support for those struggling with work-related stress.
- » **Lead by example.** Managers who model healthy work-life balance behaviors send a powerful message to their teams. Take your own breaks, disconnect after work hours and prioritize your well-being.

And if you're experiencing the Sunday scaries yourself, know that you're not alone. Remember, the weekend is your time. Try to do what will make you happiest, whether that's lounging around or getting stuff done. Though they may feel intense in the moment, the Sunday scaries are just a fleeting feeling — and whatever workplace issue you're stressing about will be behind you soon, too.

### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Neal Taparia** is one of the founders of Solitaired. He loves playing card games and is interested in understanding how games can help with brain training and skills building. In addition to card games, he also likes fishing and mountain biking.

 [solitaired.com/about/neal-taparia](https://solitaired.com/about/neal-taparia)

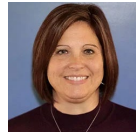


# Anniversaries, Awards and Appointments

## Members on the Move »



**Stacey M. Bales**, a member of the East Bay Chapter, is now Firm Administrator at Brothers Smith LLP in Walnut Creek, California.



**Jaime M. Farabee**, a member of the Kentucky Chapter, is now Firm Administrator at Tachau Meek, PLC, in Louisville, Kentucky.



**Joni L. Pardue**, a member of the Kentucky Chapter, is now Legal Administrator at Seiller Waterman, LLC, in Louisville, Kentucky.



**Scherri M. McGinn (not pictured)**, an Independent member, is now Office Administrator at Kilgore & Kilgore, PLLC, in Dallas, Texas.

## Congratulations Are in Order!

Kudos to ALA's newest CLMs! These individuals have demonstrated their detailed knowledge and dedication to the legal management profession by passing the Spring 2024 Certified Legal Manager Exam and have receiving their CLM designation.

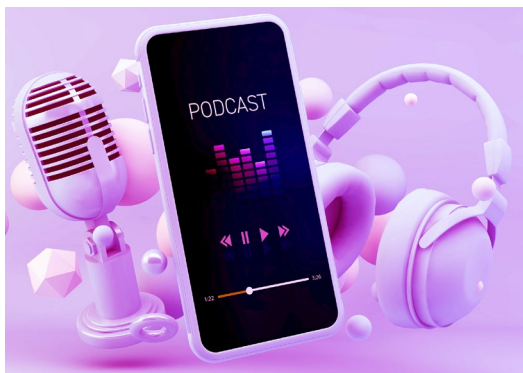
Thank you for all you're doing for the legal management community!



- ✓ **Danielle Cerny, CLM**
- ✓ **Summer S. Jurells, CLM, PHR, SHRM-CP**
- ✓ **Michelle Howe, CLM, PHR**
- ✓ **Laura Holler, CLM**
- ✓ **Thomas Nicholas Tyszka, CLM**
- ✓ **Ray Hanna, CLM**
- ✓ **Kathryn S. Walton, CLM**
- ✓ **Terah J. Drent, CLM**



# What's Happening at Headquarters



## Tune in for the Latest *Legal Management Talk* Podcasts

ALA's *Legal Management Talk* podcasts are your source for in-depth conversations about the hottest topics in the legal industry. The latest episodes cover change management strategies, succession planning, mentorship and digital marketing! Tune in by going to [alanet.org/podcast](https://alanet.org/podcast) or catch every episode by subscribing to ALA's YouTube channel or listening wherever you get your podcasts.

## The Foundation of ALA Announces Their 2024 Susan French Fellows and 2024 Student Scholarship Recipients




Congratulations to the 2024 Susan L. French Emerging Leader Fellows! For the first time ever, there are three members of the cohort: **John Beyer**, Operations Manager at Newmeyer & Dillion LLP in Newport Beach, California; **Carole J. Gander**, Firm Manager at Telios Law, PLLC, in Monument, Colorado; and **Ryan Hill**, Head of Finance and Accounting at BraunHagey & Borden LLP in San Francisco, California. These three will enjoy the chance to attend ALA's Chapter Leadership Institute, receive leadership classes from Judy Hissong, CLM, PCC, and take part in sessions about enhancing communication styles led by Debbie Foster of Affinity Consulting.



The Foundation of ALA is also excited to announce the 2024 recipients of its Student Legal Career Scholarship Program! The first recipient is **Claire Giffin**, who currently works as an Administrative Assistant at JVAM Law and is studying accounting at Colorado State University Global. The second is **Josette Garcia**, who is a Legal Support Clerk at Snell & Wilmer LLP and will be attending Arizona State University in the fall to receive her master's in human resources and employment law.

## Follow Us

Follow ALA on social media to keep up with the latest news in the legal industry! Make sure to tag #ALABuzz so we can interact with your post.

-  Association of Legal Administrators (ALA)
-  @AssociationLegalAdmin
-  @ala\_buzz



## Become a Mental Health First Aider

ALA is pleased to once again offer the Mental Health First Aid Certification Program this summer. Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is a public education program that introduces participants to risk factors and warning signs of mental health challenges, builds an understanding of their impact and provides an overview of appropriate supports. It teaches you how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illness and substance use disorders.





MHFA is an interactive training course comprised of 2 hours of self-paced content (to be completed online independently prior to the live session) and one 6.5-hour instructor-led session over Zoom. The program is being offered this summer only on August 16 and August 23. Due to the interactive nature of this course, there is a maximum of 30 participants per offering, so act now because spots are running out! If you took the Mental Health First Aid Certification Program in 2021, you'll need to register for a course this summer to keep your certification valid.

Learn more at [alanet.org/mhfa](https://alanet.org/mhfa).



## Discover Your Online Community

**ALA's new Online Community Platform offers a user-friendly social media interface with tons of special features:**

-  Video meeting capability within groups for presentations and discussions
-  Direct messaging to link up with a particular member, even if they're not currently active
-  Polling capability that groups can use to identify best practices, rate the popularity of ideas and collect other data
-  Content tags that help you follow certain topics and even receive alerts about new activity in your inbox



[ala.tradewing.com](https://ala.tradewing.com)