

LEGAL MANAGEMENT

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It's About Time

Time management strategies are crucial to ensuring your employees are productive, especially during hybrid work.





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“
Demonstrating a
commitment to employee
well-being and growth
contributes to their
motivation, engagement
and loyalty to the
Association.”

ALA's Got Talent

NBA Hall of Famer Michael Jordan once said, “Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence wins championships.” At first glance, there may not be many similarities between the world of basketball and the world of legal administration. But at ALA headquarters, this adage rings true in a significant way.

Amid what continues to be a robust hiring market, ALA is focused on recruiting and retaining top talent in order to best support our community of members and business partners. In a time when employee turnover is costing employers nearly \$700 billion a year, we are committed to fostering an environment where every employee feels supported and included in a way that allows them to do their best work.

There are several strategies we are using to create such an environment, and I hope these can also serve as inspiration for you to use at your firm.

1. Maintain Open Communication

We are working to foster a culture of open communication where employees feel comfortable expressing their concerns and encouraging them to provide feedback and suggestions on how to address issues within the organization.

2. Clearly Define Expectations

We are establishing clear guidelines and expectations regarding performance metrics and appropriate behavior in the workplace. ALA staff works hard to adhere to our Core Values, which include acting with integrity, being accountable, being creative, and embracing diversity and inclusion.

3. Provide Feedback and Coaching

We emphasize the importance of providing constructive feedback to employees in both formal and informal settings. Whether positive or negative, if specific behavioral and/or performance issues arise, our preferred approach is to address them promptly

and directly with those involved. The next step is offering guidance and coaching and asking employees for their input to help them understand the impact of their behavior and to work together to develop strategies for improvement.

4. Lead by Example

We try to promote the idea that everyone, regardless of their position, has the potential to be a leader. As leaders, we set the standard within the organization by modeling the desired attitudes and actions. When leaders exhibit professionalism, respect and effective communication, it creates a positive ripple effect throughout the organization.

5. Encourage Collaboration and Team Building

As a small organization, establishing cross-functional projects or initiatives that promote cooperation and positive interactions among employees is a must. When we feel connected and valued within a team, it helps address challenges and reduce conflicts. Collaboration is a regular topic of discussion among our staff, and a TED talk on the subject led to an enriching conversation at a recent staff meeting.

6. Offer Support and Resources

Highlighting and reminding employees of available resources such as counseling, coaching or mentoring programs helps them address personal or professional goals and challenges. Demonstrating a commitment to employee well-being and growth contributes to their motivation, engagement and loyalty to the Association.

7. Stay Responsive to Changing Needs

The pace of change in the workplace seems to be getting faster by the day. Therefore, keeping a finger on the pulse on the evolving needs and expectations of our employees is critically important. We are regularly seeking feedback through surveys, team discussions and one-on-one conversations to identify any emerging issues and address them proactively.

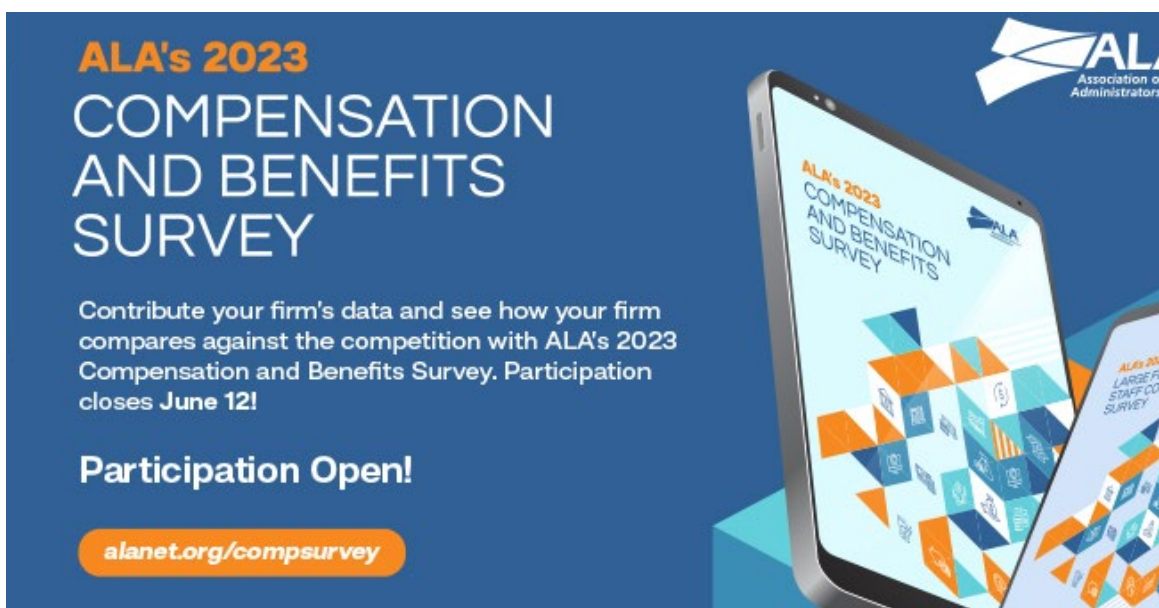
By gathering the best, most qualified talent (winning the game), we are working together to create the most valuable experience for our members (winning the championship). Whatever challenges you may be facing, ALA and its business partners are committed to providing the resources you need to win championships for your firms and organizations.

Be sure to visit alanet.org for information on future events and continuing education, along with helpful content from *Legal Management*, podcasts and so much more! Plus, check out our updated Legal Marketplace website, which allows you to easily search for the business partners and services you need most.

Another Michael Jordan quote I've found impactful is, "If you do the work, you get rewarded." I am proud to lead a team of talented professionals who are doing the work every day to be at the forefront of association management to help our members conduct the business of law. I look forward to seeing the rewards in the months and years to come.

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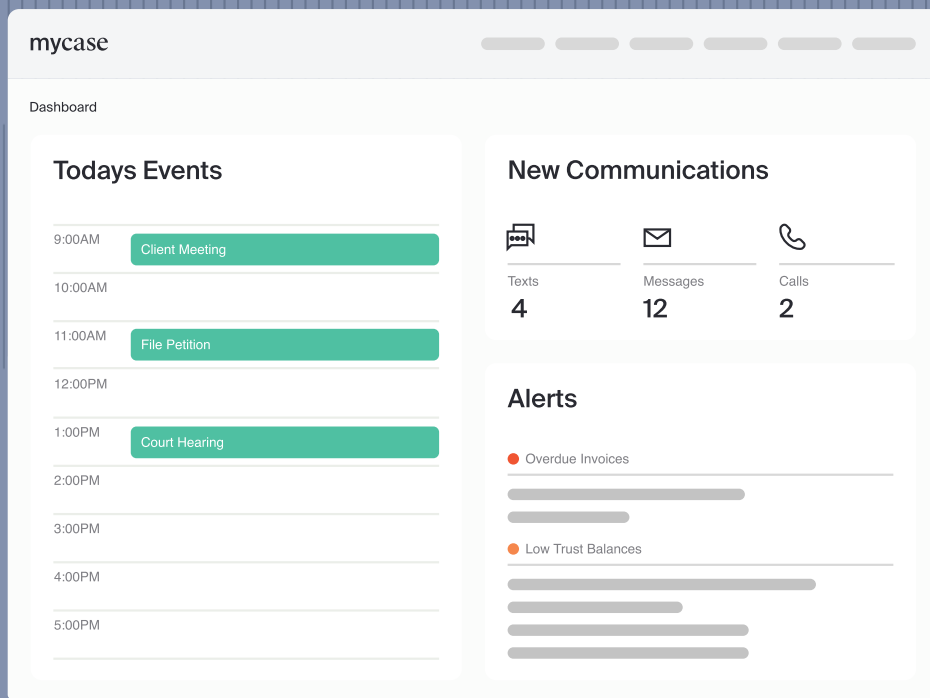
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“As a business owner, the impact it has had on clients paying on time is tremendous.”

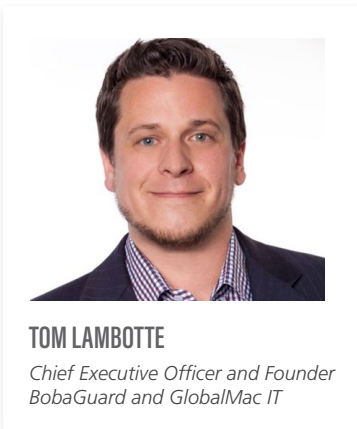
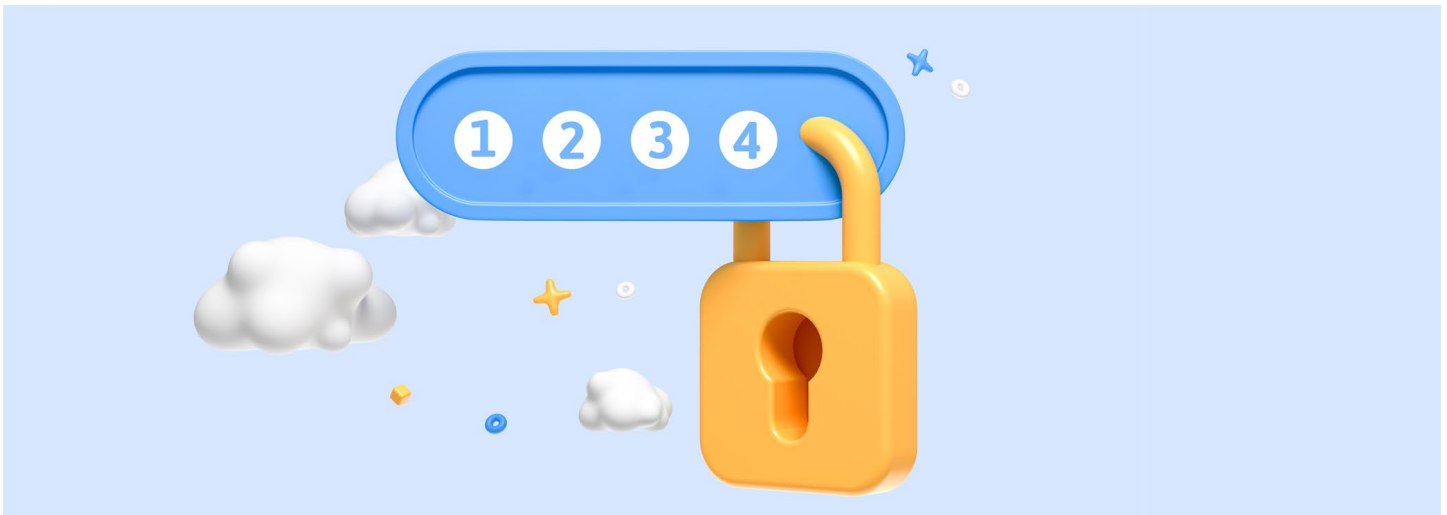
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How to Protect Your Firm from the 4 Most Dangerous Cybersecurity Threats

It was a tempting offer contained in that October 2021 email that looked like it had been sent from the law firm of Debevoise & Plimpton to clients with money to invest. All a recipient needed to do to learn more about the supposedly golden financial opportunity teased in that email was review, sign and send back the conveniently attached nondisclosure agreement (NDA) via return email.

“The more adept you are at spotting assault attempts, the less likely it is you’ll become a victim (or, more accurately, the less likely it is that you, your clients, your brand image, your firm’s financial health and your law license will become victims).”

However, the email in question did not come from Debevoise but from cybercriminals operating a convincing counterfeit of Debevoise’s website.

Anyone who made the mistake of downloading the NDA would have discovered too late that it was laced with programming code to force the host computer to belch out personal confidential information that could then be used to commit financial crimes.

Fortunately, Debevoise caught wind of the scam early on and moved with lightning speed to derail it. The more troubling aspect of this incident, though, is that the bad actors had email addresses of Debevoise clients in the first place. How was that even possible? Potentially, there were four significant ways.

WATCH OUT FOR THESE

The four most dangerous lines of attack cybercrooks use against law practices are as follows (but in no particular order): phishing, email fraud, ransomware and breaches.

Phishing is a ploy to get you or members of your team to divulge login credentials. With your username and password in hand, bad guys can effortlessly take control of your systems and access confidential information — potentially all of it.

Email fraud begins with a request landing in your inbox from what appears to be a person or organization you know and trust — but, in reality, it is from an impostor. The email asks you to download a document (that, unbeknownst to you, contains a virus) or to send money to an account that seems on the up-and-up but actually is controlled by the crooks.

Ransomware is a virus that stops you from opening any of your data files or, in the worst cases, operating your computers until you agree to pay a ransom.

Breaches are another way of saying cybercriminals have burrowed their way into your computer by identifying and then exploiting a systemic vulnerability. The prize here is the confidential data stored within.

HOW TO DEFANG THE ATTACKERS

There are several defensive moves you can initiate to counter a potential cyberattack.

Take stock of your cyberattack risk. For this, you'll need to examine your computer systems with a fine-tooth comb in search of vulnerabilities. You'll also need to look closely at the online work habits of yourself and your team to identify risky behaviors and unwise decision-making processes. The value of this exercise is that it can show you what's broken and suggest the best sequencing for addressing those cyberattack defense shortcomings.

Implement cybersecurity policies and procedures. These will spell out what you and your staff need to do daily to protect data, such as being continuously vigilant, using strong passwords and ensuring computer screens are locked every time users walk away from their desks. Policies and procedures will also set forth the appropriate steps to take in the event of a cyberattack to quickly regain control of the situation and minimize the potential for damage.

Make sure all software is up-to-date. Data breaches often happen after hackers smoke out a poorly written line of code in a widely used app or software product. However, almost as soon as the hackers punch a hole in the programming, the app maker or software developer becomes aware of it and rushes out an updated version that eliminates the vulnerability. (Makers and developers also become aware of vulnerabilities by employing hackers of their own to look for weaknesses.) Cybercrooks are counting on you being too lazy or distracted to download those updates; therefore, you should update as soon as new versions become available.




Train yourself and your team to recognize cybersecurity threats. The more adept you are at spotting assault attempts, the less likely it is you'll become a victim (or, more accurately, the less likely it is that you, your clients, your brand image, your firm's financial health and your law license will become victims). Everyone on your team (no one gets a pass) must complete cybersecurity training on an ongoing basis — as in, not a once-a-year-thing. We recommend moving away from the typically dull, monotonous (and overwhelming) two to three hour cyber trainings. Instead, look for an ongoing cybersecurity course that may take 10 to 15 minutes once a month.

These and other defensive measures can be implemented individually as time, resources and opportunity permit.

Still, cybersecurity threats are a matter to be taken seriously. Law firms — large and small, famous and obscure — are considered prime targets for attack due to the high value of the data entrusted to them. Consequently, you have an obligation (likely spelled out by your state bar with help from the American Bar Association's *Model Rules of Professional Conduct*) to take all reasonable steps to protect the confidential information in your custody.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tom Lambotte is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of BobaGuard, a provider of a turnkey data-and system-security solution for law firms. In addition, he is the Chief Executive Officer and Founder of GlobalMac IT, which supplies IT-managed services for small and midsized Mac-based law firms. Lambotte is a cybersecurity expert who has been in the tech support industry for over a decade. Lambotte is the author of *Hassle-Free Mac IT Support for Law Firms*, *Legal Boost: Big Profits Through an I.T. Transformation*, and *Macs in Law: The Definitive Guide for the Mac-Curious, Windows-Using Attorney*.

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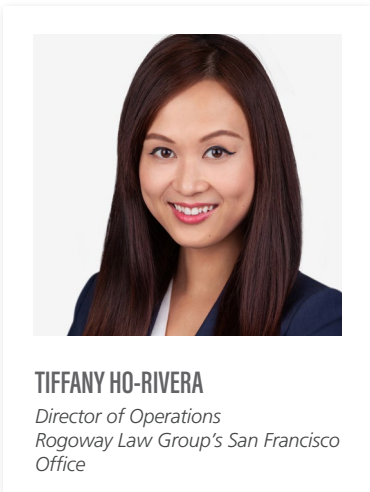
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TIFFANY HO-RIVERA
Director of Operations
Rogoway Law Group's San Francisco
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“If law firms were jars of peanut butter, going through various tests to be compared to the NIST Standard Reference Peanut Butter, how do you think your firm would score under the DEI category?”

Measuring Your Firm by DEI Standards

It's a typical Sunday afternoon. You stroll down the aisles at your local grocery store to stock up for the week. Walking down the bread aisle, the shelves are fully stocked with everything your heart desires to put on a piece of warm toast. My personal favorite is peanut butter: It reminds me of my childhood, and my first introduction to the American culture as an immigrant child.

Now decades later, my PB taste has changed as I opt for the jar of the vegan version. But it still brings that same delight. But did you know that peanut butter has to “earn” its label? Before a jar gets to label itself as PB, food manufacturers run series of tests against a Standard Reference Peanut Butter to ensure “they can [...] accurately label their products.” The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) “sells some 1,300 [food and beverage-related standard reference materials (SRMs)] that help a variety of industries make sure they are meeting regulations or industry standards that help ensure the safety and consistency of their products, among other characteristics.”

In the scientific world, a jar of peanut butter goes through standardized tests before it “earns” its label. So, for us in the legal industry, as we work to advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), what is the standard? How do we know if our DEI goals are too far-fetched or aiming too low? Are we underserving our fellow colleagues in historically disadvantaged groups?

In searching for answers, ALA's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) Committee created the Law Firm Diversity and Inclusion Benchmarking Guide. This questionnaire aims to assist law firms, legal organizations and legal management personnel in examining their firm/organization's diversity and inclusion programs. The questions included may also serve as a tool to strengthen a firm's commitment to diversity and inclusion efforts.

Despite the push of social movements in recent years, the American legal industry remains one of the least diverse professions. To be fair, the lack of diversity is a complex issue, which is rooted in historical discrimination, bias and stereotyping, barriers to entry, limited role models, and challenges in career advancement. Addressing these issues will require a concerted effort from all stakeholders in the legal industry.

With that in mind, the Law Firm Diversity and Inclusion Benchmarking Guide was designed to support firm administrators and legal management personnel in assessing the comprehensiveness of their current DEI programs. It is also divided into six categories: formal firm leadership, firm culture, firm policies and workplace inclusion, professional development, organizational diversity and inclusion competency, and community involvement. It's structured this way so improvements can be implemented in a steady, incremental and sustainable manner.

If law firms were jars of peanut butter, going through various tests to be compared to the NIST Standard Reference Peanut Butter, how do you think your firm would score under the DEI category? The self-assessing Law Firm Diversity and Inclusion Benchmarking Guide aims to provide insights for you and your firm in building more comprehensive DEI programs.

There is no competition here. To quote Martin Luther King Jr.: "If you can't fly, then run; if you can't run, then walk; if you can't walk, then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward." Whether you will be flying, running, walking or crawling, any step forward is a win in the fight for a more diverse and inclusive legal community.



Access ALA's Law Firm Diversity and Inclusion Benchmarking Guide

Even incremental steps make a difference. ALA's DEIA Committee put together the Law Firm Diversity and Inclusion Benchmarking Guide to help your firm do just that. This questionnaire aims to assist law firms, legal organizations and legal management personnel in examining your firm/organization's diversity and inclusion programs. Plus, the questions included may also serve as a tool to strengthen firm commitments to diversity and inclusion efforts. alanet.org/benchmarking-guide

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tiffany Ho-Rivera is Director of Operations at Rogoway Law Group's San Francisco office where she oversees the firm's HR, finance, administrative operations and marketing functionality. She works closely with the Managing Partner as a strategic partner on business planning and practice management. Ho-Rivera was the past Chair of ALA's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility Committee (2022–2023). Prior to working in the legal industry, she spent more than six years working with children and families with special needs. She remains a strong advocate to amplify voices that have been silenced and to empower those without power.

 alanet.org/resources/diversity





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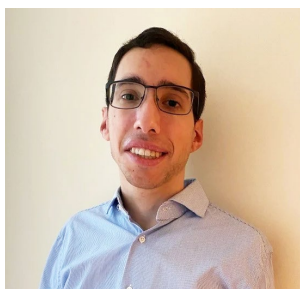
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JUSTIN ASKENAZY
Associate Editor
Association of Legal Administrators

“The most important aspect of the day-to-day is time management. [Legal is] a very competitive industry, so without time management skills by everyone in the firm, they will lose clients and employees.”

It's About Time

Time management strategies are crucial to ensuring your employees are productive, especially during hybrid work.

Admit it: You've checked your phone in the last 10 minutes. Or if not, you've been tempted to. Maybe a breaking news notification popped up, or a friend posted something on Instagram. Whatever the reason, in that instance, your phone became a distraction, taking you away from your work and limiting your productivity.

According to statistics collected by Donald E. Wetmore, JD, Founder of The Productivity Institute, the average person is interrupted once every eight minutes — 50 to 60 times per day. Over the course of an eight-hour workday, that means an entire hour could be spent texting or scrolling social media instead of focusing on your job.

The hybrid and remote work environments have only exacerbated the problem. With few or no people at the office every day, it's become infinitely more difficult to ensure all your employees are staying on task or meeting their goals. That's why time management is such a key skill for everyone at your firm — from managing partner to legal assistant.

“The most important aspect of the day-to-day is time management,” says Sarah Tetlow, Productivity Strategist and Founder of Firm Focus, and an Independent member. “[Legal is] a very competitive industry, so without time management skills by everyone in the firm, they will lose clients and employees.”

In the legal industry, where lawyers and staff have numerous projects happening at once, it can be hard to pinpoint the most effective ways to go about getting them done. Add in the work-from-home aspect with its myriad distractions, and you have a recipe for an inefficient and unproductive employee.

HYBRID WORK: PRODUCTIVITY OBSTACLE OR BOON?

It's no secret that the legal industry is slow to adapt to change, so when the pandemic hit, firms had to adjust in ways many are still getting used to. Much to the chagrin of some, gone are the days of stopping by a colleague's office to ask a question or making small talk in the breakroom.

Firms have also needed to revisit their reliance on paper and physical documents. "The industry is still very paper-heavy," says Tetlow. "Even firms that are 'paperless' are not 'paper-free.'" The shift toward working online caused many to struggle, particularly with recognizing and prioritizing the files they had to work on.

But not every firm found the transition to remote work to be a negative one. Suzette Welling, CLM, Chief Administrative Officer at Bartlett, Loeb, Hinds & Thompson, PLLC, President of Law Practice Edge, LLC, and member of the Suncoast Chapter, recalls how communication at her former firm actually increased at the onset of the pandemic.

"When you're at the office, everybody's head down, working," Welling says. "Once we got remote, we were more intentional about maintaining connection and relationships with everyone in the firm. I found that I actually had more face time with people when we all went remote."

Now as firms try to bring people back to the office, it can sometimes be a herculean effort to convince employees to give up their time at home. "The partners who pre-COVID never would have worked remotely now have discovered they like working remotely, and [I have to tell them,] 'Hey, people need to see your face once in a while,'" Welling says.

Commuting is also a huge factor in productivity and time management, Tetlow says. During remote work, "we all saved so much time not commuting into work, and we very quickly found something else to fill that time. Going back to the office is a struggle as people are losing something outside of their office life."

Tetlow encourages people to be productive during their commutes, whether that means reading through a brief on the train or listening to a podcast while driving. "Maximize that time with something that you would do otherwise sitting at your desk," she says.

SHARPEN YOUR TIME MANAGEMENT SKILLS

Whether your firm is hybrid, remote or fully back in the office, here are seven ways to ensure you, your attorneys and your staff are maximizing your time at work.

1. Communicate

A successful office environment often boils down to one thing: communication. With the now-ubiquitous use of programs such as Teams and Slack, reaching a colleague has never been easier. But those messages can (and should) be supplemented by regular meetings, whether one-on-one, as a team or with the whole staff. This way, managers can keep track of everyone's workloads without having to guess their status.

Tetlow also advocates instituting a "red, yellow, green" system, with red meaning the employee has a full plate and green meaning they're open to more work. At the start of each week, everyone on the staff announces which color they fall under that week, ensuring that no one gets overwhelmed or bored. Of course, Tetlow adds, each firm can adapt this system in a way that works best for them.

2. Prioritize

When every client needs something done (and now!), it can seem like every assignment should be priority number one. But it's incumbent upon the attorney, potentially with your help, to decide what needs immediate attention and what can wait on the back burner for a while. Make sure they communicate this to the client along with an expected deadline for the work to be done.

3. Eliminate Distractions

Distractions and interruptions are the ultimate enemy of productivity, especially when working from home. Phones, watches, TVs, children, that annoying neighbor upstairs and so much more can keep you from focusing on your work. Set aside time to turn the electronics off — yes, this means silencing email and Slack notifications, too — so that you're not tempted to look away or multitask. (There might not be much you can do about that neighbor, though.)

4. Get Rid of Perfectionism

While striving for perfection is admirable, that goal can often lead to procrastination and misplaced priorities. Make sure your employees know that while getting things right is necessary, perfection is not if it means taking undue time on a task that should have already been done.

"Sometimes, when attorneys are working on a brief, perfectionism can play into taking way too much time on something," Tetlow says. "Good and done is better than perfect and pending."

“Sometimes, when attorneys are working on a brief, perfectionism can play into taking way too much time on something. Good and done is better than perfect and pending.”

5. Employ a Document Management System (DMS)

A DMS can be an immensely helpful tool to keep track of the many files your firm works with every day. “Firms absolutely have to have a DMS that is organized, has globalization in the naming features, has search functions they can rely on and has processes in place that everything is getting saved immediately digitally,” says Tetlow.

Some firms use case management software to track assignments and deadlines, but Welling says she uses Microsoft OneNote for her short-term to-do list and a Trello board for bigger projects, such as the upcoming opening of a new office location at her firm.

6. Ensure Accountability

Because attorneys and paralegals bill for their time, you can tell pretty quickly if someone’s hours are down and they’re not getting their work done, Welling says. However, it may be harder to know when legal assistants and other staff are either overwhelmed or bored, especially if your firm doesn’t make them track their hours too. In that case, every staff member should feel empowered to speak up and inform their manager of their status.

7. Show Compassion

Just because legal is a demanding industry doesn’t mean there’s no room for grace and flexibility. Research shows that feeling valued is one of the top reasons employees are happy

and productive in their jobs. Hybrid work has only increased the opportunities for managers to show compassion toward moms with small children and employees taking care of aging parents, for example.

“I think the hybrid model really does give us as employers an opportunity to show our employees we care about them,” Welling says. “Give them a little flexibility. If we want them to act like professionals, we need to treat them like professionals.”


Again, communication is key — touch base regularly with your employees to determine what support they may need.

USE TOOLS PRODUCTIVELY

“Productive people are productive because they use tools to keep them on track,” Tetlow says. With those tools in place — whether it’s by using the “red, yellow, green” system, a DMS, time-tracking software for administrative staff or all the above — your employees can become examples of productive and effective time managers.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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“In fact, in some cases it allows [firms] to save some money because you can base your employer contribution amount on a lower-cost plan and have people buy up to the more expensive plans. Offering a choice is something the small and midsize employer market increasingly does to help present themselves as a viable employer.”

Maximize Your Health Insurance Plan ROI

With prior consideration and planning, law firms can guarantee both employees and the firm will get the most out of the coverage they offer.

The Affordable Care Act may not require law firms with fewer than 50 employees to provide health insurance; yet a number do — including the Pennsylvania-based Law Office of Ahn and Sinowitz.

Owner Min Hwan Ahn says the immigration law firm’s half-dozen staff members being able to access the associated plan benefits has had encouraging productivity and other effects.

“Offering health insurance has definitely helped in recruiting and retaining employees,” Ahn says. “It demonstrates that we value our team and their well-being, which has contributed to a positive work environment and higher employee satisfaction levels.”

In today’s tight talent market, offering comprehensive health insurance coverage can be a way to strengthen an employer’s brand.

A small- or midsize firm might, for instance, offer employees a choice of plans that includes a highly subsidized option — setting it apart from larger firms that take more out of employees’ paychecks for health insurance, according to Eric Gulko, JD, President of Innovo Benefits Group, an employee benefit consultant that works with legal and other professional service firms.

“It’s similar to nonprofit employers,” Gulko says. “They often can’t pay as much as a for-profit company, but nonprofits are known as having a focus on benefits and the employee experience. A firm can say, ‘We won’t require quite as many billable hours [as a large firm]; we won’t offer the same sort of cash compensation — but we’ll offer you pretty rich benefits.’”

“Employees simply do not want to worry about what may happen if they become ill and need to seek medical attention. To obtain the best talent, any business owner needs to offer paid — either full or partial — health insurance to its employees. It is a cost of doing business in 2023.”

CRAFTING THE IDEAL OFFERING

To ensure companies include benefits employees actually want and will use in their plan, Gulko says organizations sometimes issue online surveys and host roundtable-style focus groups.

“The benefit of those [methods is] you’re getting buy-in from your employee base before you’re making decisions,” he says. “The one risk you run is you’ve got to be prepared to respond to the results. If you hear or see feedback that is not positive, you need to receive it, and if you can, do something about it.”

He recommends law firms also try to gauge what type of coverage employees have at other local firms of about the same size.

“You want to talk to your benefits broker,” Gulko says. “If they have access to data about other law firms, evaluate all your benefits compared to [that] benchmark — so you have not only a qualitative understanding of what you should be offering from employee surveys and focus groups, but also a quantitative analysis of what other firms are offering.”

After Ahn’s firm researched employee health insurance best practices in preparation for its 2015 launch, it reached out to a health insurance consultant that specializes in legal industry plans for assistance designing and implementing its coverage.

“Working with a consultant was extremely helpful,” Ahn says. “They provided valuable insights into the various plans [that were] available, helped us understand the legal requirements and guided us in selecting the most suitable plan.”

The firm currently offers medical, dental, vision, prescription drug and mental health service coverage. It opted not to include some potential provisions, Ahn says, such as coverage for cosmetic surgery and chiropractic care, because those items weren’t deemed to be essential for employees’ well-being.

“We continuously monitor and evaluate the plan to ensure it remains effective and relevant to our employees’ needs,” he says. “We have made some minor adjustments since implementing it, such as adding telemedicine services to better serve our employees during the COVID-19 pandemic.”

METERING EVERYONE’S OUTLAY

Health insurance costs can be a concern for both firms and employees.

Employer-sponsored insurance plan premiums across a variety of industries have increased at a faster rate than inflation and wage growth during the past decade, according to a 2022 report from the Center for American Progress — and it isn’t because employees have been using more services.

Approximately two-thirds of per-person medical and pharmacy claim-related spending from 2015 to 2019 was due to rising health care prices. Employees pay a fair amount, too, for coverage — roughly 20% of single and 32% of family premiums.

Health benefit costs for legal industry employers, on average, are \$433 for employees’ individual coverage and \$1,032 for family coverage premiums, which is generally in line with other sectors, according to data from insurance broker search platform Mployer Advisor.

Smaller firms aren’t always aware they can offer multiple plans, as a number of larger firms do, at no additional cost, Gulko says. That can give employees more control over the monthly premium they pay.



“In today’s tight talent market, offering comprehensive health insurance coverage can be a way to strengthen an employer’s brand.”

“In fact, in some cases it allows [firms] to save some money because you can base your employer contribution amount on a lower-cost plan and have people buy up to the more expensive plans,” he says. “Offering a choice is something the small and midsize employer market increasingly does to help present themselves as a viable employer.”

Some might include a health savings account choice among their plan options — which allow participants to reserve money on a pre-tax basis to use on certain medically related payments, such as coinsurance.

In addition to various age demographics within a firm, health savings accounts (HSA) may appeal to equity partners who might not be eligible for some health reimbursement arrangements, Gulko says, but can generally take an above-the-line deduction for HSA contributions.

“The young and healthy look at HSA-compatible plans as a way to spend less out of their paycheck for a benefit they might not value as much [if] they just go for checkups,” he says. “The mid- and later-career people like being able to put aside money pre-tax. It’s not just an opportunity for an employee; an employer can also contribute [to employee HSA accounts] — it’s a tax break for a law firm.”

While firms with fewer than 100 employees generally don’t have access to their claims data, Gulko suggest ones that do review the information to see if a partially self-funded health coverage option like a level-funded plan, where the insurance carrier examines employee claims and the underlying administrative expense, might be an advantageous option.

“At the end of the year, if the claims run well, the firm can get some money back,” he says. “It’s sharing the risk a little bit more. If you have an overall demographic where you feel like your claims would probably be somewhat under control, it might be worth [it].”

ADDITIONAL COVERAGE STRATEGIES

Another employee cost-control technique for firms with a reasonable enough cash flow to be comfortable with inconsistent monthly bills is to raise plan deductibles, Gulko says. They can then offset the expense by having a third-

party administrator draw from a bank account the firm establishes to reimburse employees for deductible-related items.

Gulko says that type of program can potentially be as low as \$5 per employee a month, on average, to run because data sharing and assessment occurs electronically, without much need for manual intervention.

“The third-party administrator sees employee X had a claim,” he says. “The administrator will cut a check to the employee, [who] then uses that money to pay their bill. That’s a common method for smaller employers, including law firms, to bring down the cost of the insurance.”

Other firms factor health insurance premium costs directly into employees’ pay.

When Hunter Garnett opened Garnett Patterson about a year and a half ago, he quickly discovered health care for himself, his wife and one employee would be his largest expense, other than payroll.

As the firm expanded, Garnett structured the growth to meter insurance-related costs. He utilizes offshore providers for tasks like paperwork — making an annual \$1,000-per-person payment to fund health insurance and other payroll-type costs for independent contractors he works with in the Philippines — and hires part-time employees when possible.

Two who currently work for him came on board with fairly inexpensive coverage they’d obtained through a cooperative-type plan; he’s since bumped up their hourly rate slightly to balance out what they pay.

“My office manager [works] 30 hours a week, so we didn’t even talk about benefits [when she was hired], because she’s not full-time,” Garnett says. “But when it came time for her first raise, she said basically, ‘Here’s how much my health insurance costs, and that’s what I want for a raise.’”

Personal injury firm Nadrich & Cohen has taken another approach to offset insurance costs. Since its 1990 start, the firm has paid 100% of its employees’ health insurance premiums.

While that may not be an option for all employers, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic highlighting the uncertainty that sudden sickness can present, firm Co-Founder Jeffrey Nadrich says job candidates — at law firms and other organizations — today generally expect a firm will at least offer some type of health coverage.

“It is the standard, as far as benefits packages are concerned in our industry,” Nadrich says. “Employees simply do not want to worry about what may happen if they become ill and need to seek medical attention. To obtain the best talent, any business owner needs to offer paid — either full or partial — health insurance to its employees. It is a cost of doing business in 2023.”

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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The banner features a purple and orange color scheme. At the top left is the ALA logo (Association of Legal Administrators). In the center, there is a circular graphic with a bar chart and an upward arrow, next to the text "Elevate Your Life, Leadership & Career" and "CERTIFICATE PROGRAM" in an orange box. Below this, the dates and times "June 20-21 | 10:15 a.m.-2:15 p.m. Central" are listed. A circular portrait of Whitnie Wiley is on the left, with text to her right: "Join ALA as we host **Whitnie Wiley** for a virtual deep dive into leadership and coaching." At the bottom right, an orange box contains the URL alanet.org/virtual-coaching. The background includes a paper airplane and a staircase graphic.

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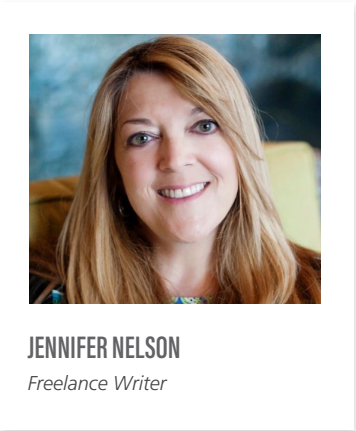


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“Out of sight is out of mind, and if lawyers are sitting alone [at home] firms are much more at risk of losing them to another job.”

Struggling to Build In-Office Culture? Look to Intrinsic Motivations

There is value to being in the office. Here’s how to convince resistant employees.

If your law firm has struggled with getting attorneys back in the office after the pandemic — enticing them with complimentary lunch or mandating that everyone must be back by X date, you’re in good company. Reducing attrition, neutralizing habituation and retaining and recruiting top talent — despite employee behavior or resistance — is top of mind for many firms nationwide.

Last year, news stories reported that some companies, mainly in the banking sector, told employees that they must return to the office, and companies immediately received pushback and poor publicity. Employees said, “Oh yeah? Then I quit.”

This was at a time when demand far exceeded talent and things like the Great Resignation, quiet quitting and quiet firing proceeded to rock companies’ status quo. Employees may have spent pandemic downtime reassessing their jobs and realizing they weren’t really happy.

At the same time, employees exercised all their reserved energy from being at home, having had work put on hold, and generally doing less.

“That pent-up energy produced great demand for products and services, so the economy started firing up,” says Larry Richard, PhD, Founder and Principal Consultant at LawyerBrain, which tailors advice and interventions to large multijurisdictional law firms based on lawyer personality research. Richard also wrote a white paper “How to Hold Onto Your Lawyers.”

“If they don’t, or they turn their nose up on intrinsic rewards as touchy-[feely], silly or trivial, it’s obvious they don’t know the science because the science says that’s the single most important factor in overall well-being and life satisfaction.”

“It’s not a great combination when you have a pent-up economy and a decline in the workforce,” he says. “This is a multifaceted problem that cuts across different genders, ages, races and experience levels.”

In addition, the robust economy increased the workload for law firms. “Much of the work these days compared to 20 years ago is more complex and can’t be done by one lawyer sitting home alone; it requires collaboration,” says Richard.

Suppose a client comes to a firm saying it wants to acquire another company. In that case, suddenly, you have to bring in corporate tax people, M&A lawyers and insurance coverage lawyers, real estate and land use lawyers, and employment lawyers. It’s an endless list that must collaborate and is more challenging to do over Zoom than in person.

THE FAILURE OF EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION

Not only is in-office work driven by collaboration needs but also by leaders, who rightly assumed that to maintain their corporate culture — especially at firms with multiple locations — they needed to get their people back.

“Out of sight is out of mind, and if lawyers are sitting alone [at home,] firms are much more at risk of losing them to another job,” says Richard.

For example, if you’re a leader and mandate that attorneys must be back in the office Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday or every day by a specific date, you get built-up resentment. Richard says lawyers have among the highest need for autonomy as any group measured. So, they’ll either thumb their nose up and quit or show up and give you the minimum work necessary to keep from being fired.

On the other hand, if you don’t mandate their return, leaders are left feeling ineffective and wondering why they can’t get their attorneys back to the office. And the only two tools available to address the behavior are either: 1) a coercive mandate — “Do this or else”; or, 2) dangle a carrot: “Come to the office, and we’ll have free pizza every Tuesday or free massages on Fridays.”

But Richard notes that these extrinsic incentives — offering “carrots” or imposing threats — are not an effective long-term motivational tool.

THE POWER OF INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

Instead, intrinsic rewards by their very definition are internal feelings, needs and values that employees have and that get fulfilled by treating them in a certain way. Intrinsic needs include:

- » The need for autonomy: *I get input into things that affect my future.*
- » The need for meaning: *I feel like what I do matters and as my supervisor, you can help me.*
- » The need for connection and belonging: *I feel like I’m part of a team, an organization, and I feel connected to the real human beings there. People aren’t just superficial, we’re building relationships.*
- » The need for mastering competence: *I’m building a valuable and essential skillset.*

A Gallup poll noted that employee engagement was down since the pandemic and also found that there are two delivery channels for activating intrinsic rewards that will produce high levels of engagement:

- » The supervisory relationship (the relationship between a supervising partner or senior associate and their junior associate).
- » The firm’s culture.

First, a supervisor must understand these intrinsic needs and know how to activate them. They can include giving the associate a degree of autonomy, helping the associate see the meaning attached to the work they’re doing, helping the associate feel like they belong, and letting them know that their supervisor and the firm is interested in them mastering the skills of a high-quality lawyer.

Secondly, the firm’s culture must show that senior lawyers (executive committee, practice chairs and supervisors) role model autonomy, find meaning in their work, and provide a sense of connection, belonging and mastery.

“If they don’t, or they turn their nose up on intrinsic rewards as touchy-[feely], silly or trivial, it’s obvious they don’t know the science because the science says that’s the single most important factor in overall well-being and life satisfaction,” says Richard.

Your corporate culture also includes what you say in messaging to clients, on your walls and in the subtle ways you communicate. These are also important in luring, attracting and retaining talent.

If you can create a day-to-day work experience that makes employees feel like “Wow, I feel so good when I go to the office; I feel like I can make important decisions, and I’m connected to people that are my friends. I feel part of something meaningful, and I’m proud to be part of this organization because they see who I am and they’re interested in my development,” you’ll likely see less resistance to coming back to the office, attrition and disgruntled attitude and more buy-in. Plus, not to mention healthier, happier employees.

If that’s how they feel when they go to the office, they’ll get up tomorrow morning and each day thereafter thinking, “I can’t wait to get to the office.” That’s what you want as opposed to “Ugh, unfortunately, I have to drag myself to the office again today,” Richard notes.

And if you’re looking to lure in top talent, talk about these intrinsic values. Tell candidates how they’ll be prized and celebrated for their individuality, that someone will seek out their strengths daily, and their work will have a deep purpose. Instead of a sanitized conference room interview, walk employees around the office and introduce them to staff. If they’re far into the interview process, invite them to lunch or a firm event. Show them the culture.

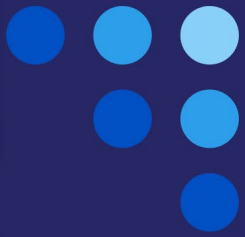
They’ll want to know that the pay scale is competitive, the clients are interesting, and their practice area is valued. Also talk up these psychological factors like their relationship with their supervisor and the intrinsic culture that will provide autonomy, meaning, connection and mastery.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jennifer Nelson is a Florida-based writer who covers business, finance and legal content. Her work appears in Findlaw, Legal Zoom, NextAvenue.org, AARP and many other publications.

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RAY MEIRING
 Chief Executive Officer and
 Co-Founder
 QorusDocs

“Automation and AI tools can save firms time, reduce costs and help them remain competitive in a challenging market, enabling them to accelerate workflows and balance staff workloads.”

Automation Revolution: How Law Firms Can Use AI Tools to Drive Profits

The legal industry is seeing a shift in tech adoption as artificial intelligence (AI)-powered platforms such as ChatGPT continue to show numerous benefits for streamlining operations and automating processes.

For many, leveraging AI and automated technologies can help increase business opportunities, reduce operational costs and foster essential cross-team collaboration to conserve manual hours. In fact, AI and automation can reduce up to 23% of a lawyer’s everyday tasks, showing just how impactful these advanced digital tools can be.

However, the legal industry isn’t known for being an early adopter of new technology. In 2022, just 41% of small law firms adopted new technologies. In addition, only 29% of legal departments expressed interest in adopting robust workflow automation tools, showing how many legal professionals prefer to use software they’re already familiar with.

Why the resistance? According to new research, almost half of law departments and firms cited a lack of technology knowledge as the leading reason for resisting broader technology adoption. However, the industry is starting to see a change. Recent research now predicts that AI legal tools will become mainstream in the next five years as automation and AI tools can save firms time, reduce costs and help them remain competitive in a challenging market.

LEVERAGING AI TO SECURE NEW BUSINESS

AI-powered tools enable lawyers and legal staff to quickly analyze large data volumes, streamline time-consuming tasks and save time. For example, AI-powered proposal software helps create more efficient pitch response workflows to win new business. AI and natural language programming are both accelerating the pitch process for firms and creating competitive, tailored responses that lead to new business.

When creating pitches, firms must use the most engaging and informative content to convince prospects to choose their services. During this process, AI and machine learning technology perform the legwork by recommending the best information for a specific pitch that will resonate most with prospects, leading to more new business wins.

Similar to OpenAI’s ChatGPT, proposal software uses AI to craft accurate first drafts with the most relevant, business-winning information at the click of a button. This tool significantly simplifies the pitch process, enabling teams to spend less time developing pitches and more time on other important tasks.

AI-powered proposal management software is also equipped to answer common questions that regularly appear in pitches, eliminating the need to run time-consuming content searches to track down accurate responses. This helps firms save time, effort and resources while ensuring consistency in documents and messaging. Since it’s AI-driven, the system will improve over time, streamlining the process further with every proposal. This capability allows firms to complete more pitches per year and win new client business.

Finally, AI-driven proposal software offers access to real-time analytics, which show how prospects engage with pitches. This data helps pitch teams and firms tailor smarter follow-up conversations with prospective clients, leading to higher win rates.

IMPROVE CROSS-TEAM COLLABORATION AND PRODUCTIVITY

Only 23% of lawyers work exclusively from the office, making collaboration within firms essential for keeping operations moving. AI-driven tools like proposal automation software easily integrate with existing technology and everyday applications, simplifying collaboration on important documents.

With this software, staff members can access important documents from anywhere, allowing them to locate and edit the documents in real-time. This is essential, considering many lawyers and staff members continue to work remotely post-pandemic. Easy access to vital documents and pitches supports the productivity stream and mitigates any bottlenecks that may arise with locating and sharing documents with co-workers.

Pitch teams can receive expert and stakeholder feedback in real-time, eliminating the time-consuming tasks of tracking down subject matter experts. The teams can thus ensure that pitches are accurate, complete and up to date — elements critical to all successful pitches.

TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION FOR 2023 AND BEYOND

AI and automation tools are becoming essential for the legal industry. In fact, according to new research, 64% of corporate legal and law firm specialists are ready to invest in legal technology adoption.

With AI and automation, law firms can increase business wins, reduce operational costs and improve productivity and collaboration. Although the industry hasn’t always been the first to adopt new technology, the mainstream success of AI-powered tools like ChatGPT is piquing the interest of many legal professionals, causing them to turn to their own digital transformation strategies and look at tools such as proposal management software to streamline operations and keep business moving forward.



Still Curious About ChatGPT and Other Automation Tools?

Check out the first episode of A Peek Around the Corner with PDAC, our new *Legal Management Talk* podcast series, where Matthew Sullivan — Chief Operating Officer at Sullivan Law & Associates, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of consulting firm Unravel Legal and a member of ALA’s Professional Development Advisory Committee (PDAC) — discusses how ChatGPT and other forms of generative AI can improve efficiencies at firms as well as ways legal administrators can use this tech now. Give it a watch on our YouTube channel or download the audio version wherever you listen to your podcasts. alanet.org/podcasts

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ray Meiring is Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder of QorusDocs, leads a team that helps sales, marketing and bid teams craft visually compelling, accurate, and secure proposals and request for proposals more efficiently. With more than 20 years of industry experience, Meiring is a frequent speaker, author and webinar host on a wide variety of topics, including leadership, market strategy, automation and the application of AI, and proposal automation for professional sales and bid teams.

 qorusdocs.com



CHRISTINE MCCULLUGH

President
LTC Solutions, Inc.

The Facts on Long-Term Care

These are the facts: The need for long-term care is real, and most individuals aren't aware of their risk or what pieces of their insurance, retirement and wealth arsenal can be deployed to pay for it.

So, let's start right there — where legislators are starting and where we each need to begin when considering our long-term care solutions:

- » 70% of us will require long-term care in our lifetimes ... while only 10% of us have long-term care insurance to pay for it.
- » Long-term care knows no age; in fact, of those who receive care, 44% are age 65 and younger.
- » The average lifetime cost of care as of 2022 ranged from \$166,860 to \$267,976.
- » Health insurance, Medicare and disability insurance will not pay for long-term care.
- » Medicaid can help cover long-term care costs after an individual has depleted or "spent down" their assets to the poverty level.

There are several options for paying for long-term care expenses, such as:

- » **Public long-term care plans:** As these roll-out, there's likely to be a gap in coverage between the average amounts needed and the state plan maximum coverage numbers. Long-term care insurance is a good option to close that gap.
- » **Self-Fund:** Knowing the likelihood of needing care — and its cost — planning to self-fund by saving adequately is an option.
- » **Long-term care insurance:** An affordable and effective option to cover costs.
- » **Retirement funds:** Individuals may need their retirement wealth to pay for long-term care.
- » **Medicaid:** After spending-down assets to the poverty level, individuals may qualify for assistance through state Medicaid programs.
- » **Relying on family:** For generations, family members have cared for each other and shared expenses for long-term care needs.

WHY OFFER A GROUP LONG-TERM CARE BENEFIT TO YOUR EMPLOYEES?

Employer group plans may offer options that individuals cannot obtain on their own:

- » One-time guaranteed issue at initial enrollment
- » Portable benefit
- » Issue age rates — remains the same as you age

LONG-TERM CARE LEGISLATION

In 2019, Washington state established the Washington Cares Fund, the nation's first publicly funded long-term care benefit, to address the long-term care crisis posed by an aging population. The program is funded by an employee payroll tax of 0.58% on W2 workers.

This sparked a national conversation about the need for long-term care planning as state Medicaid systems struggle to cover the **70% of Americans** that will need long-term care in their lifetimes — **only 10%** of whom have insurance that will pay for it. About 20 other states have followed suit and are in various stages of evaluating public long-term care programs of their own.

Washington state allowed a six-month opt-out window in which individuals were able to obtain qualifying long-term care insurance plans of their own.


The Latest on Long-Term Care Legislation


Join ALA VIP Business Partner LTC Solutions as they discuss the latest on long-term care legislation. There are two sessions available: June 13 at 9 a.m. Pacific and June 21 at 11 a.m. Pacific. Register now at shorturl.at/fsxz5.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Christine McCullugh is President of LTC Solutions, Inc., in Redmond, Washington. McCullugh is a speaker and consultant helping shape the future of long-term care insurance. She's been actively involved with the Washington State Trust Act providing industry and employer insight. In March 2021, she testified at the Washington Senate Health and Long-Term Care Committee HB 1323 supporting an amendment to extend the opt out to 12/31/21. This provided more time for the committee to study opportunities for greater coordination between the private market and the trust program. In 2023, LTC Solutions celebrates 27 years in business with the certification of Women-Owned and WBENC (Women's Business Enterprise).

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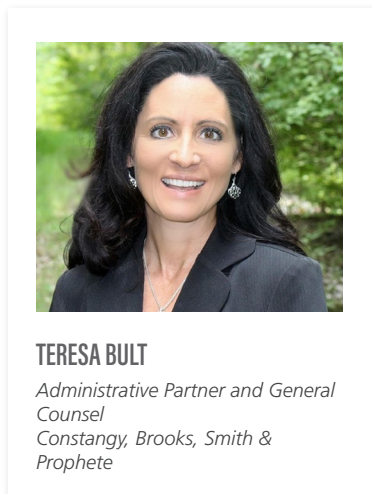
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TERESA BULT
*Administrative Partner and General Counsel
Constangy, Brooks, Smith & Prophete*

From Remote Work to Remote Firm: Are We Going to Keep Doing This Forever?

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, we all assumed temporary, remote measures were short-term. Remember when we all thought this would only be for six weeks?

Three years later, the pandemic is (mostly) behind us, but the way we work — and the way our people expect to work — has undergone a fundamental shift. Hybrid and remote work arrangements have become the norm, and few seem willing to return to the world of five-day office weeks.

In an informal survey, Law.com recently polled attorneys on their firms' hybrid work policies and how they felt about them. Most of the more than 350 respondents indicated they would not work at law firms mandating more than three days of in-office attendance. Roughly half said three required days of attendance would negatively impact their decision to stay at a firm.

A September 2022 survey by the American Bar Association (ABA) found that 44% of younger lawyers (those practicing for fewer than 10 years) said they would leave their current jobs for ones that offered greater remote work opportunities. Similar surveys of law firm professional staff indicate a strong preference for hybrid or remote work.

So yes, in many ways, it does seem as though we are going to be doing this forever. As we settle into this new normal, law firms both large and small are now looking to formalize the emergency arrangements created over the past three years and devise workable structures for the future. But as temporary tax and regulatory measures created during the pandemic expire, here are a few pros and cons for the future of remote and hybrid work.

“
With women comprising the majority of law firm graduates every year since 2014, offering options for remote work will be a key component in recruiting and retaining talent.”

THREE REASONS WHY REMOTE WORK IS GREAT FOR LAW FIRMS

1. Expanding the talent pool in a competitive market.

Even with all the talk of a downturn and layoffs here and there, competition is still strong for experienced attorneys. Embracing remote work lets you look outside of the commuting range of a traditional brick-and-mortar office.

For midsize firms that serve national clients and compete with BigLaw firms for both business and talent, it can be a real bonus to consider talented attorneys living in smaller markets where the competitive salary range can be lower than in the top-tier markets. Expanding recruiting efforts to new markets can also be extremely helpful in recruiting diverse candidates, who remain in high demand as firms look to expand their rosters of attorneys from traditionally underrepresented groups.

2. Meeting the expectations of work-life balance.

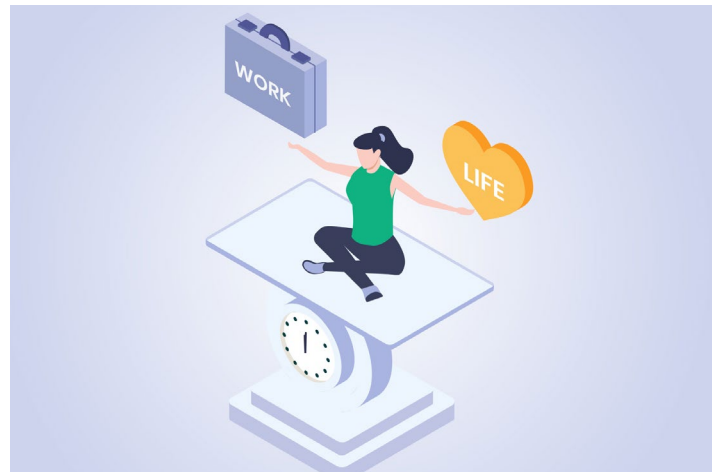
Working from home saves Americans 60 million hours of commute time each day, according to an analysis by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. Even before the pandemic, it was clear that Millennial attorneys and Gen Zs just entering their careers placed a strong value on work-life balance. As well, the added stressors of the pandemic increased attention on mental health and burnout across all generations.

In the most recent ABA survey on women in the legal profession, caretaking commitments were noted as the No. 1 reason (58%) why experienced female attorneys leave law firms. As a law firm leader and a mother of four teenagers, I speak from firsthand experience in saying that the flexibility my firm has offered me in helping to meet the combined demands of work and family has been critical to my success.

But I know that other firms aren't as accommodating. With women comprising the majority of law school graduates every year since 2014, offering options for remote work will be a key component in recruiting and retaining talent.

3. Reducing overhead costs.

Clients and courts alike have embraced virtual meetings, saving costs on travel, and law firm conference rooms all over the country are quietly gathering dust. Most larger law firms are downsizing office space or abandoning it altogether for remote work and contracts with shared co-working facilities when needed.



After an initial scramble to provide additional technology support, most firms settled quickly into remote work and were able to function seamlessly. The pandemic taught us that instead of pricey real estate, investing in technology that helps attorneys and staff work efficiently from any location is likely the better investment moving forward.

It can also make it easier to facilitate the movement of groups of attorneys. Our firm recently brought on more than 40 attorneys and staff who are working remotely across 15 states — many in areas where we did not already have a presence. The fact that we didn't need to put time and resources into building physical office spaces made the decision to move forward much easier and greatly simplified the onboarding process.

THREE REASONS WHY IT'S GOING TO BE HARDER THAN WE THINK

1. Negotiating salaries and pay transparency.

Should you pay a San Francisco salary for someone who will be considered part of your San Francisco office but is working remotely from a less expensive market? For firms that have rigid salary bands, this can be a difficult and sensitive question. And with pay transparency laws popping up in places such as California, Colorado and New York City, this is where remote work can create potential legal hiccups as well.

If you are recruiting an attorney who would work mostly on California-based matters but might be working remotely from another state, are you required to post the salary range during the recruiting process? The laws are tricky here and have not yet been fully tested in the courts, so even law firms may wish to seek outside counsel on this issue.

2. Navigating tax and legal complications.

Hiring remote workers in states where you don't have a physical presence can be complicated from a tax and legal perspective. What creates a physical nexus for an employer and which tax rules will apply can vary by state and city. Many states (and some cities) created temporary safe havens during the pandemic, but these provisions are rapidly expiring, and businesses are struggling to keep up with addressing a wide range of tax issues and business licensing requirements. Remote work can also create challenges in complying with various state and local employment statutes relating to issues such as overtime and workers' compensation.

3. Managing relationships and measuring performance and productivity.

For three years, there was a sense that we were all pitching in together to do what needed to be done during a really strange time. Moving forward, law firms that continue with hybrid or remote work need to think carefully about how to manage for optimal productivity, client service and professional development. Setting clear goals and expectations, providing the tools to meet those goals and measuring progress against them is critical across areas including client service, associate development and staff performance evaluations.

The key is to be open and transparent, provide opportunities for feedback and really listen to what your attorneys and

staff are saying. Culture is the key. People working from home may feel isolated, and new employees may struggle to connect. Smart firms understand that relationships among colleagues are equally as important as relationships with clients — and are actively creating robust opportunities for interaction and collaboration.

In many ways, the pandemic pushed us in a direction that many of us were heading already. It's been a bumpy ride, and it's certainly not over yet. But the past few years have also shown us that when we lead with careful planning, transparency, trust and thoughtful communication, we can innovate and adapt to create firms that will thrive in any environment.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Teresa Bult is an Administrative Partner and General Counsel to Constangy, Brooks, Smith & Prophete. She is both a mediator and a relationship partner for her corporate clients in the employment defense space and in both roles, a very practical problem solver. She is constantly trying to figure out how to connect clients to resources that can make their jobs easier and help them navigate through tricky employment litigation and HR issues. In her 25-plus years of practice as a defense-side employment litigation attorney, she has litigated cases and counseled clients on almost every conceivable employment-related issue.

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BILL & PHIL

*William Ramsey, Partner,
Neal & Harwell*

*Phil Hampton, Consulting President,
LogicForce*

Say Goodbye to Heavy Laptop Bags

As Bill keeps getting “longer in the tooth,” he longs for lightweight tech to carry with him to court or when traveling to many exotic places (Tennessee is exotic, right?). Phil is also tired of the “sagging shoulder syndrome” caused by a heavy gear-laden shoulder strap. Fortunately, Bill found a solution to this problem: an LG Gram computer and a Dell 14-inch portable monitor.

We know that two devices are heavier than one, but these two companions are lighter than most “ultrabook” computers. Plus, we just cannot give up the decadence of using two monitors for our computer work.

“The screen is vivid and bright and easy to see from all angles. The battery life is in a class all its own. The 17-inch model will last 18 hours unplugged, which may have sold Phil. His pet peeve is a short battery life for a laptop computer.”

THE LG GRAM ULTRAPORTABLE COMPUTERS

When Bill saw this year’s models of LG Gram ultraportable notebooks, he fell in love and purchased one as soon as he could.

The notebooks come in various sizes and are the lightest on the market in their respective sizes. The smallest size (a 13-inch model) comes in at 2.1 pounds, but that size is just too small for our aging eyes, and the 14-inch LG Gram Style weighs only 2.2 pounds. These models are unbelievably light — so light you cannot believe a computer is in your briefcase. Bill went for a slightly larger (and therefore heavier) model, the 16-inch LG Gram style (weighing 2.7 pounds, but still amazingly light). Phil is coveting the 17-inch model so he can have a keyboard with a built-in keypad. It weighs 2.9 pounds (or 3.2 pounds with an extra high-powered graphics card).

And all the models are amazingly thin — 0.6 inches for the 16-inch and 0.7 inches for the 17. In fact, both are so thin, they feel a bit flimsy, so if you are rough on your laptops, you may want to pick some another brand. However, independent testing has shown the LG Gram models to be quite durable.

They are also loaded with the new paradigm in computer ports — two USB4 Thunderbolt ports (USB-C compatible), two USB-A ports, a microSD slot, an audio jack and an HDMI monitor port. They have facial recognition for logins, a 1080p camera, a nice microphone and two brightness levels for the backlit keyboard. The speakers in the computer aren't so great, but we always carry nice Bluetooth speakers and Bluetooth is included on these models.

The screen is vivid and bright and easy to see from all angles. The battery life is in a class all its own. The 17-inch model will last 18 hours unplugged, which may have sold Phil. His pet peeve is the short battery life for a laptop computer.

THE DELL C1422H PORTABLE MONITOR

The LG Gram ultraportable is great, but of course, we want our second monitors while still traveling light. The Dell C1422H fixes that problem. It's sturdy, weighs about half a pound and comes with its own case.

This portable also comes with its own frame and sturdy kickstand that allows you to adjust the tilt angle of the screen. It connects to the LG Gram via a USB-C port, and there is a second USB-C for pass-through power if needed. (Remember, the computer for the input source must have a USB-C or Thunderbolt port. Otherwise, you will not get an image.)

You can use the C1422H for a second monitor for your laptop, or as a screen to share with others. It makes the perfect lightweight companion for an LG Gram ultraportable.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

William Ramsey, Partner at Neal & Harwell, and **Phil Hampton**, Consulting President of LogicForce, are best known for *The Bill and Phil Show*.

 twitter.com/BillandPhil

Start Making Your Plans to Join Us!

Schedule and Speakers Now Available



Chapter Leadership Institute 2023

July 20–22
JW Marriott,
New Orleans, Louisiana

REGISTRATION OPEN
Use Code: B00-690-693AX10 at checkout



EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

September 28–30
Hilton San Diego Gaslamp Quarter, San Diego

REGISTRATION OPEN
Use Code: B00-690-691AX10 at checkout



Scan or visit
alanet.org/events/save-the-date
for more information.

Anniversaries, Awards and Appointments

Members on the Move »



Denise Abadie, a member of the New Orleans Chapter, is now Chief Operating Officer and Legal Administrator at Flanagan Partners LLP in New Orleans, Louisiana.



Scott Rubino, a member of the Big Sky Chapter, is now Office Administrator at Front Range Law, PLLC, in Great Falls, Montana.



Michelle Woodward, a member of the Atlanta Chapter, is now Office Administrator at Fisher Phillips in Atlanta, Georgia.



Kudos to the Spring 2023 CLM Recipients!

Congratulations are in order for the two administrators who passed this spring's CLM exam and are now Certified Legal Managers:

- » Michael D. Hill, CLM, Controller at Gould & Ratner LLP in Chicago, Illinois
- » Christian L. Robbins, CLM, Accounting Manager at Wood + Lamping, LLP, in Cincinnati, Ohio

Obtaining CLM certification shows great initiative and dedication to the profession and demonstrates the mastery of a highly proficient legal management professional. Visit alanet.org/education/credentialing to learn more about pursuing your own CLM certification or join the Online Community to connect and ask current CLMs questions about the next exam.



LEGAL MANAGEMENT TALK

Listen to Learn

ALA's Legal Management Talk podcast features exclusive interviews with industry thought leaders, conference speakers and Association members who are doing great things.

ALA'S LATEST PODCAST LINEUP

- » **Supporting the LGBTQ+ Community in June — and Beyond** with Laurence Winters
- » **So You Call Yourself an Ally?** with David Sarnoff, Esq., ACC, and Joy Stephens, MBA
- » **Tackling Difficult Conversations** with Julie Holunga, MBA, PCC, and Margee Fawley
- » **A Peek Around the Corner** with PDAC: ChatGPT Meets Legal

Each episode is **free** and usually **fewer than 25 minutes long!** alanet.org/podcast



What's Happening at Headquarters

ALA's 2023 Annual Conference & Expo brings industry leaders to the Emerald City

A **BIG** thank you to the more than 900 attendees and the nearly 140 exhibiting companies at the 2023 Annual Conference & Expo in Seattle, Washington! We hope you walked away with plenty of inspiration, new connections and cutting-edge solutions to enhance your career and put into practice at your law office.

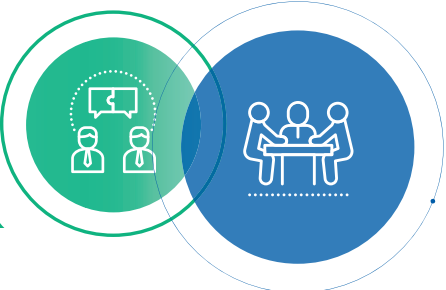
With the close of the conference, new volunteer members officially join ALA's standing committees, the new Chapter Resource Team (bit.ly/ala-crt) and the Board of Directors. President Geoffrey M. Williams, CLM, MBA, MDiv, and the 2023–2024 ALA Board (bit.ly/ala-board-directors) took office. We'd also like to give a special thanks to the 2023 Annual Conference Planning Committee for all the work they did to make Seattle a huge success!



The 2023–2024 ALA Board of Directors

From left to right: Eryn Carter, CAE, ALA Executive Director; Travis C. Armstrong, CLM, CPA, Director; Elyssa A. Goldstein, CLM, PHR, SHRM-CP, Director; Holly K. Pulido, Director; Amanda R. Koplos, CLM, CPA, President-Elect; Geoffrey M. Williams, CLM, MBA, MDiv, President; Terri D. Moore-Natal, SPHR, Director; Angelina Angelov, CLM, Director; Sarah L. Evenson, JD, MBA, Immediate Past President; Judith A. Hissong, CLM, PCC, Director; Jessica L. VanTroost, Director; Jerry G. McPeake, MSLA, Director. **Not pictured:** Clara E. Onderdonk, CLM, Director.

2023 Annual Conference Planning Committee: Katie J. Bryant, CLM, Chair; Daniel P. Atcheson; Lisa V. Fox; Shirley Laboy; Stacey J. Ransleben, CLM; Stephanie Rose Ransom, CLM; Vicki Scott; Teresa J. Walker, CLM.



Congratulations to ALA's 2023 Award Recipients

On May 8, conference attendees gathered to honor ALA's award recipients at the Association Awards Gala. On behalf of the entire ALA Board of Directors and everyone with ALA, we congratulate you all on these achievements.



Jacksonville Chapter, Elevate ALA Award

ELEVATE ALA AWARD

The Elevate ALA Award recognizes up to three recipients 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.

The first recipient was the **Jacksonville Chapter**. Over the past five years, JaxALA has been on a mission of technological advancement using social media platforms, rebranding, improved website design and cohesive messaging, which increased their recognition and overall visibility; heightened and improved their professional development; increased their networking efforts; and continued to expand their diversity and inclusion efforts. Their efforts are paying dividends: over the past three years, Jacksonville has seen a 17% increase in membership, a 42% increase in Business Partner revenue and a 640% increase in LinkedIn engagement.

The next recipient was three VIP business partners: **Alan Wilson**, National Program Director of GLJ Benefit Consultants; **Debbie Foster**, Managing Partner of Affinity Consulting, and **Rich Wilson**, Founder of VIBE Media. In 2020, Alan, Debbie and Rich hosted a live 6-hour program called "Lemonade for Legal", which was filmed in Arizona and broadcast via Zoom. The goal was to "spread some sunshine during a dark time" by educating, inspiring and entertaining business professionals in the legal industry. The event was such a hit that they have continued to host annual "Lemonade for Legal" events, with over 300 attendees each year since.



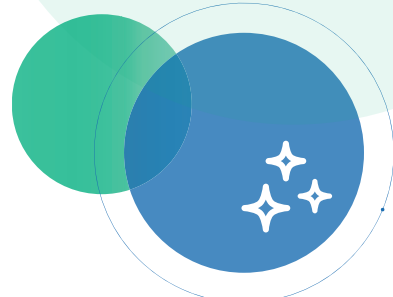
Alan Wilson, Rich Wilson and Karen Scher, accepting on behalf of Debbie Foster, Elevate ALA Award



The final recipient was the **Chicago Chapter**. This year, ALA Chicago members were encouraged to share in the President's vision of "revitalize, reconnect and recharge." With a keen focus on exceptional educational offerings, they partnered with Loeb Leadership to increase topic variety and diversity of speakers in educational offerings and with Blue University to provide an educational series on personal safety and self-defense, both in the workplace and at home.



Chicago Chapter, Elevate ALA Award and Chapter Award



CHAPTER AWARD

ALA's new Chapter Awards are designed to recognize chapters that have created innovative initiatives and experienced success in various areas: in member value; in diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility (DEIA); and in business partner relations.



This year's first recipient was the **Boston Chapter**, in the area of member value. You've heard of Carpool Karaoke — in Boston, they have Carpool ALA! During 2022, two board members started carpooling to work together, and they decided to dedicate their commute time each day to go back to basics and connect with members one-on-one. They made many calls and set up meetings with new, existing and prospective members to discuss the benefits of membership, engage with members, encourage them to renew their memberships and attend upcoming events.



Boston Chapter, Chapter Award



New York City Chapter, Chapter Awards

Another two awards went to the **New York City Chapter**, in the areas of DEIA and member value. ALANYC wowed the judges with two initiatives, the ALANYC Career Day and the Future Leaders Group. In the area of DEIA, Career Day was established to introduce young people in underrepresented communities to the legal industry in a positive way. The chapter collaborated with business partners and the Archdiocese of New York to include over 12 schools from underserved communities throughout New York City.

In the area of member value, The Future Leaders Group was designed to identify, embrace and mentor Chapter members who exhibit the potential to provide future Chapter leadership. They identified 17 recommended participants and invited them to social events designed to create a safe, comfortable space with solid idea exchanges. Five members of the Group agreed to be on their nominating slate for the 2023-2024 Chapter year, and all five have been elected by their member peers.





Houston Chapter, Chapter Awards



The **Houston Chapter** also received two awards, in the areas of DEIA and business partner relations. In the area of DEIA, last summer, Houston ALA (HALA) created the HALA Scholar Diverse Business of Law Internship program to introduce diverse undergraduate students to the business of law. The aim was to solve two issues that the business of law community is currently facing: lack of diversity in the profession and recruiting a new generation of talent into business of law careers. HALA Scholars worked as paid interns at participating sponsor law firms for eight weeks in various administrative departments and took part in educational sessions, networking opportunities with business partners and chapter presentations on different law firm departments. In business partner relations, the HALA hosted a variety of unique and eclectic events to engage their business partners, from hybrid bingo with business partner logos to a “Taste of HALA” food and wine pairing event, a game night at an arcade and a poker run.



The last recipient was the **Chicago Chapter**, in the area of business partner relations. ALA Chicago became the first chapter to partner with a professional sports team when they signed the Chicago White Sox on as a Diamond-level business partner. The events they hosted in the ballpark were part of a larger strategy to return to in-person events sponsored by business partners that were held in a variety of locations and provided much-appreciated networking and social opportunities for members.

OUTSTANDING ASSOCIATION VOLUNTEER AWARD

Each year the Board of Directors identifies members who have made significant contributions to the Association. This year, the Outstanding Association Volunteer award went to **Melissa Hirst, MSLA**. As the Chair of this past year’s Membership Development Committee, Missy proposed an ambitious Plan of Work comprised of 15 initiatives. Volunteers who worked with her on this committee call her a champion for and motivator of people, someone who brings a creative and strategic mindset to every meeting and project and promotes ways to serve the greater good. She is always up for connecting with new members, presenting and volunteering wherever needed.



Melissa Hirst, MSLA, Outstanding Association Volunteer Award



NEXTGEN LEADER AWARD

The NextGen Leader Award recognizes individuals who demonstrate conviction, dedication, and the relentless pursuit of personal and professional excellence through their engagement, advancement and influence in early interactions with ALA.



Christopher Holmes, CLM, accepting the NextGen Leader Award on behalf of Amanda Aucoin.



The first recipient was **Amanda Aucoin**. Amanda joined the Boston Chapter in 2021 and has already made an amazing impact. As part of the Member Relations Committee, Amanda has shown that she possesses the attributes of a truly committed member and leader. Amanda's contributions have helped the chapter add nearly 30 new members in 2022, and she has been elected to the chapter's Nominating Committee for 2023.

The second award winner was **Mallory Beverly, CLM**. Mallory joined the Raleigh-Durham Chapter in 2019 when she accepted her first legal administrator position and has been a part of the business partner team since 2020. In 2021, she sat on the planning committee for the business education conference, and single-handedly planned that year's business partner expo. This past year, she was elected to the Board of Directors as treasurer and has volunteered to help plan the Chapter's 40th anniversary celebration.



Mallory Beverly, CLM, NextGen Leader Award.



The third award went to **Asgie Hernandez**. Hernandez joined the Austin Chapter less than a year ago and immediately offered to assist in any way she could. She joined the Education Committee and went above and beyond in her role as Vice Chair, helping to find a diverse mix of speakers who had never presented before as well as new ALA leaders to serve on panels. This provided moving and personal content to members. She recently held a committee meeting and now has all of the education planned for the entire year of 2023.



Eden Minucci, CLM, SHRM-CP, accepting the NextGen Leader award on behalf of Asgie Hernandez.



SPIRIT OF ALA AWARD



Laura J. Broomell, CLM, Spirit of ALA Award

While many ALA members contribute tremendous amounts of time and effort to the growth of the legal management profession and the success of ALA, recipients of the Spirit of ALA award are individuals who have in their careers demonstrated all of the following in extraordinary, consistent and significant measure: an unwavering commitment to professionalism; exceptional dedication to the advancement of law firm administration; a record of service to ALA that far exceeds normal expectations and also provides a model and inspiration for participation and involvement of others. This year's recipient is **Laura J. Broomell, CLM**. Broomell has held numerous leadership positions with ALA at the national and local levels. But beyond her ALA commitment, Laura has served as an Attorney Ethics Investigator for the Hennepin County District Ethics Committee, currently sits on the Leadership Advisory Board of The Successful Firm Project and in 2020, the *Minneapolis St. Paul Business Journal* named her a Women in Business Honoree. Perhaps most importantly, Laura shows up, connects people and makes membership meaningful for them. Balanced, fair-minded and open to others' ideas, she listens and acts on the principles of equality and inclusiveness for the betterment of the Association, her firm and the profession.

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 41 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.

- | | | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Alamo | Dallas | Las Vegas | Pittsburgh |
| Arizona | East Bay | Middle Tennessee | Puget Sound |
| Atlanta | First State | Mile High | Raleigh/Durham |
| Austin | Gateway | Minnesota | Richmond |
| Boston | Golden Gate | New Jersey | San Diego |
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| Capital | Greater Los Angeles | New York City | South Florida |
| Central Florida | Houston | Oklahoma City | Wisconsin |
| Chicago | Independence | Orange County | |
| Columbus | Jacksonville | Oregon | |
| Cyber | Knoxville | Philadelphia | |



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

The Foundation of ALA continued its Silent Auction at the 2023 Annual Conference to benefit the programs it supports throughout the year. Because participants were so very generous with their donations and Silent Auction bids, the Foundation raised \$20,393 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.







From left to right: Brian P. Gilman, CLM, President; Amanda R. Koplos, CLM, CPA, ALA President-Elect; Monique N. Mahler, CLM, MSLA, SHRM-CP, Secretary; Kristie Lynn Manning, CLM, Vice President; Kira L. Hansen, Treasurer; Robert B. Zamen, MBA. **Not Pictured:** Karen Michelle Beasley

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

Discover Your Online Community

The member-exclusive Online Community allows you to connect with legal management professionals from around the world. You can also source opinions and solutions from members who have dealt with the same challenges, including within special shared interest groups.

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

