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How to Magnetize Your Firm for Business Leaders

In a competitive job market, the battle for legal talent extends beyond attorney recruitment.





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The Benefits of In-Person Networking

In her book *The Art of Gathering: How We Meet and Why It Matters*, author Priya Parker says, “The way we gather matters. Gatherings consume our days and help determine the kind of world we live in, in both our intimate and public realms. Gathering, the conscious bringing together people for a reason, shapes the way we think feel and make sense of our world.”

In today’s digital age, it’s easy to rely on online communication and social media to connect with others. However, there’s still immense value in in-person networking. While it may require more effort, time and resources, the benefits of in-person networking often outweigh the potential drawbacks.

One of the main advantages is the ability to establish a connection with others. When we meet someone in person, we can engage in face-to-face conversations, read body language and establish a personal rapport. These interactions help us strengthen relationships that can lead to future opportunities and collaborations.

Despite the potential drawbacks of in-person networking being time-consuming, costly or simply uncomfortable for those who are introverts like me, the benefits of in-person networking are clear — particularly when the members of our ALA community share common interests.

In addition to building stronger relationships, in-person networking can also help us expand our professional network — which is why in-person events remain a critical element of ALA’s membership benefits. By attending these events in-person, members and business partners have the chance to meet new people and forge new partnerships. These connections can help us achieve our career and business goals and expose us to new ideas, perspectives and industry trends to advance our careers and business opportunities.

“In addition to building stronger relationships, in-person networking can also help us expand our professional network — which is why in-person events remain a critical element of ALA’s membership benefits.”

While there's no denying the anecdotal evidence of the benefits of in-person networking, there's also scientific research that supports it. For example, a study published in the *Journal of Business and Psychology* found that individuals who networked in-person had a higher likelihood of receiving job offers than those who networked through online channels. The researchers attributed this to the fact that in-person interactions allow individuals to establish a deeper connection and build a sense of trust with potential employers.

Another study, published in the *Journal of Applied Psychology*, found that individuals who participated in more in-person networking activities had higher job satisfaction and were more committed to their organizations. This contributes to members' overall satisfaction in their affiliation with ALA and increased engagement.

Furthermore, research has shown that in-person networking can also have positive effects on mental health. A study published in the journal *Social Science & Medicine* found that individuals who participated in more social activities — including in-person networking — reported lower levels of depression and anxiety. This suggests that in-person networking can not only benefit individuals professionally, but also have a positive impact on their overall well-being.

Of course, we recognize that in-person networking isn't a one-size-fits-all solution. We will likely invest our resources into gatherings that add the most value to our lives. So, as we

are mapping out our schedule of gatherings we will be joining this year, I hope you will look to ALA as the organization that honors the art of gathering.

Turning back to Priya Parker: "Gatherings crackle and flourish when real thought goes into them." Just like any other art form, ALA's in-person events are molded and shaped into masterpieces that create deep meaning and deeper connections in service to our bold, sharp purpose as an organization.

I look forward to gathering with you soon.



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ANTHONY DAVIES

Chief Revenue Officer
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“The office must now provide benefits or an experience the lawyers and staff cannot get at home, including the redesign of the workspace to foster intentional connection and collaboration with colleagues and transforming the office into a destination or ‘workplace experience’ that is better than working from home.”

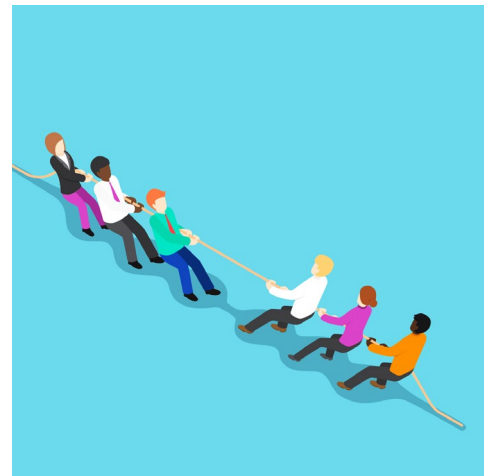
Winning the Top Talent Tug of War

The first step to winning the tug of war for top talent is admitting this very basic fact: Talent has the upper hand.

Case in point: Most law firms are now operating on a hybrid model. What was unthinkable a little over three years ago has today become the industry norm. Further proof of this resounding victory is highlighted in the battle for the return-to-office (RTO) and which tactics firms are using (or not using) to accomplish this.

According to a survey of the Am Law 100 this year, about 34% of firms are mandating three days a week in the office; 33% of firms are encouraging three days in the office — and 30% couldn’t answer the question. When it comes to mandates, Thomson Reuters’ 2022 State of the Legal Market report found — even at one day per week — firms that had them experienced double the turnover rate of firms that did not.

Here’s the problem with *encouraging* attendance: While talent leads the work-from-home battle, most firms believe the remote environment damages personal relationships at work, dilutes the “stickiness” of individual attorneys to the firm and to their peers, and may be a contributor to the ease with which lawyers are moving firms. So it’s a bit of a tightrope act for firm leadership to somehow get their professionals in the office with some kind of regularity — but without the perils of a misstep that may lead to increased attorney attrition.



WHAT MAKES RETURNING TO THE OFFICE SUCCESSFUL?

In a study cited by Thomson Reuters' 2023 State of the Legal Market report, Microsoft surveyed 20,000 people and analyzed trillions of Microsoft 365 productivity signals to determine what factors are most important in getting employees to return to their offices. The survey disclosed, perhaps not surprisingly, that the real value of the office is not the place, but the people.

When asked what would motivate them to come into the office, the surveyed employees had a resounding answer — time with coworkers:

- » 85% of employees would be motivated to go into the office to rebuild team bonds.
- » 84% of employees would be motivated to go into the office if they could socialize with co-workers.
- » 74% of employees would go to the office more frequently if they knew their "work friends" were there.
- » 73% of employees would go to the office more frequently if they knew their direct team members would be there.

This research strongly suggests that firms should design strategies that entice professionals into the office to connect rather than enact mandates or other punitive measures. Some law firms have started to tie in-office attendance to job security and bonuses, a trend that could expand given the excess capacity that many firms currently have. However, the data suggests this may not be the best way to attract lawyers back.

ENTICING STAFF BACK TO THE OFFICE

The office must now provide benefits or an experience the lawyers and staff cannot get at home, including the redesign of the workspace to foster intentional connection and collaboration with colleagues and transforming the office into a destination or "workplace experience" that is better than working from home.

To achieve this, some firms are taking their amenities and benefits to another level by adding a layer of five-star hospitality services — literally creating concierge roles and staffing them with people who have background experience working in five-star hotels like the Ritz Carlton or Mandarin Oriental.

Here are a few more ways law firms are transforming the office to realign to what attorneys now want from their office experience.

Real Estate: While some firms have elected to reduce space, many have repurposed space, or even relocated their space to make it more attractive and accessible for its people. Floorplans have been redesigned to reflect the need for more connection and collaboration space. Many firms plan to relocate to locations better served by public transport, and some are even quitting leases early to do this.

Hoteling/Hot Desking: Paying for real estate that is not used is a waste but asking employees to come back to half-empty offices is arguably worse when the objective of office time is to be with people. Hot desk floors — also referred to as hoteling — are starting to appear in law firms, and a common theme is to make these the most desirable floors in the building. Added amenities, refreshments and events make these floors most attractive, and there is now a growing group of volunteers electing to give up their permanent desk.

Technology: When we speak of the intentionality of attorneys' in-office time, this is something that is going to require technology. Coordinating reservable and shared space, locating colleagues, pre-ordering refreshments and reporting on office utilization lean heavily on the right technology. Room booking systems existed before COVID, but these technologies have evolved fast, giving employees increased control over their whole workplace experience.

Incentive Programs: It started with free meals and snacks, but incentive programs have now become much more sophisticated. There are examples of firms rewarding in-person work with benefits, including better parking spaces, leisure vouchers or even increased bonus payments. Attending social and networking events is an especially important part of creating firm culture.

Outsourcing: Implementing many of these initiatives requires expertise and resources that are not core to law firm activities. Accessing these resources through a flexible outsourcing provider with expertise in talent, hospitality and technology has enabled many firms to drive their hybrid schedule forward much faster. Outsourcing also gives the added benefit of "try before you buy" with certain initiatives.

The changes that attorneys are now driving to the industry are, quite frankly, for the better. Listening to what attorneys and legal professionals want is paramount to making hybrid successful. The modern workplace continues to play a crucially important role in collaborating and building culture and loyalty, and many firms have now found the right balance and experience to do this without driving employees away.



WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OFFICE DESIGN AND HYBRID WORK?

Check out the *Legal Management Talk* episode, “Office Design and Employee Wellness,” to see how one firm is making its employees feel comfortable returning to in-person work. (Listen at alanet.org/podcasts.) Plus, read the September 2022 *Legal Management* cover story, “Destination: Office,” to learn more about the incentives firms are offering to bring employees back to the office.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Anthony Davies serves as the Chief Revenue Officer (CRO) for Forrest Solutions and is also one of the partners for the organization. As CRO, he leads sales and marketing for on-site outsourcing and staffing with a team of experienced sales executives who work with some of the world’s largest law firm, advisory and corporate entities.

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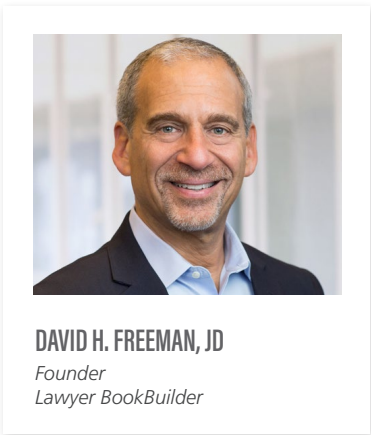
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DAVID H. FREEMAN, JD
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It's Time to Get 'Cross' with Your Lawyers

Your lawyers are leaving tons of money on the table, and you're mad as hell and not going to take it anymore.

OK — maybe you're not that upset, but it is time to get cross with them. It's time to get them more engaged in cross-selling other services of the firm. It's time to get your point across that cross-selling is good for the firm, good for individual lawyers and good for clients. It's time to scratch out the word "selling" and replace it with "serving" to change the vibe from pushy sales to helpful service. It's time to mark "someday we'll increase the number of practices our clients use" off your to-do list.

As a firm leader, it's your job to get your lawyers to move from "maybe" to "definitely." One way to drive desired behavior is by establishing the right measures. And when it comes to cross-serving, while there are dozens of factors underlying the process, we can boil it down to three main measures:

1. More meetings between firm lawyers to discuss cross-opportunities
2. More meetings with clients to introduce cross-serving opportunities
3. Times you keep the newly introduced practices top-of-mind with those clients

Let's dive in to explore these three areas further.

MORE MEETINGS BETWEEN FIRM LAWYERS TO DISCUSS CROSS-OPPORTUNITIES

If we're looking for a first domino, it's getting your lawyers together to begin exploring what cross-opportunities exist, and how they can finesse getting those opportunities in front of firm clients. As a leader, you can do several things to facilitate this process:

“If we're looking for a first domino, it's getting your lawyers together to begin exploring what cross-opportunities exist, and how they can finesse getting those opportunities in front of firm clients.”

- » Develop a spreadsheet listing clients that may have other work your firm can do. The first column contains the name of the client, and the following columns list the firm’s practice areas. In each row, list your targeted clients, and fill in practices where you already do work, (e.g., use a color code like green). For areas you want to pursue, fill that cell with another color (e.g., gold), and if you absolutely know there is no opportunity in other areas, perhaps fill that cell in black.
- » Send this chart to the relationship partners to get their input; however, do not rely solely on their opinion because they may lack insights into ways other practices can serve that client.
- » Circulate it among lawyers in other practices to get a fuller sense of the possible.
- » Once you’ve identified new practices, bring the relationship lawyers together with the right lawyers in the other practices to brainstorm how to make the approach.
- » Measure how many times your lawyers get together for these types of internal meetings.

MORE MEETINGS WITH CLIENTS TO INTRODUCE CROSS-SERVING OPPORTUNITIES

Once the strategy is set for how to approach the client, play the role of “watcher” by reminding lawyers to schedule meetings with their clients. Ask them to report back to you on when they schedule those meetings and when they conduct them. This step is where the rubber meets the road.

Also help your lawyers by giving them a template/worksheet for how to get and conduct those meetings. Some elements of a good meeting include coming up with reasons why the client would agree to the meeting, developing rapport and asking probing questions to learn about their needs. Lawyers can then go deeper into the pain points they identify, share success stories and suggest next steps.

As with internal meetings, measure how many meetings are scheduled and how many occur.

STAYING TOP-OF-MIND

Lawyers are often seduced by the phrase of “we’ll keep you in mind,” when in fact — especially for a new area — they are often forgotten shortly after the meeting. Lawyers with a rainmaker’s mindset understand it’s not the client’s job to remember them — rather, it’s the lawyer’s job to stay remembered.

It’s up to the lawyer offering the new service to be proactive and follow up in ways that will be welcomed by the client. There are several elements to consider when coaching your lawyers to stay top-of-mind:

- » Your lawyers should ask themselves if they were hired to watch for and notify the client of things they need to know, what would they communicate?
- » To simplify the process, think of two types of outreach — mass and personalized. The mass version is putting the client on lists to receive emails, alerts, invitations, etc., in areas they care about. To set this up, during the meeting with the client, the lawyer seeking work in a new area might say something like, “From time to time, we create alerts and put on webinars on (insert subject here), would you like us to include you on those lists?”
- » A personalized, one-to-one approach could be to reach out to targeted clients and offer to conduct an in-house presentation, invite them to webinars or interview them for an article or podcast.

We all know the maxim: What gets measured gets managed and what gets managed gets done. By finding the right measures to drive desired behaviors, and managing your lawyers to achieve those measures, you can be cross in ways that your lawyers and clients will welcome and appreciate.



TAKE A DEEPER DIVE INTO BIZ DEV

Don’t miss David Freeman’s appearance on *Legal Management Talk*, where he discusses cross-serving and other important aspects of business development. Watch it on YouTube or download it wherever you get your podcasts: alanet.org/podcasts.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David H. Freeman, JD, is a member of the *National Law Journal* Hall of Fame for being voted the top law firm business development coach and consultant in the United States for several consecutive years. He is a two-time best-selling author who has written and co-authored 14 books on law firm leadership and business development and has trained and coached over 10,000 lawyers and leaders in hundreds of firms worldwide. Additionally, he is the creator of Lawyer BookBuilder®, an online, self-study program that shows lawyers how to transform themselves into major rainmakers.

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KYLIE ORA LOBELL
Freelance Writer

Want to Create a Better Firm Culture? Fine-Tune Those EQ Skills

Developing your interpersonal skills can help increase engagement overall.

Think back to the challenging job experiences you’ve had. There’s a high chance your dissatisfaction came from a manager or leader who lacked, shall we say, finesse in their interactions. Perhaps it was a lack of empathy when a personal emergency came up. Maybe it was the way they delivered feedback or criticism. Whatever the case, over time, it chips away at your morale, leaving you uninspired and looking for the exit door.

“Ask yourself why you feel or react the way you do in certain situations. Being aware of our emotional states can help us better manage them.”

To be successful in legal, there are crucial technical skills one needs: software knowledge, managing a budget, strategic planning. You might even argue those are easier to find in a candidate than the more intangible, interpersonal skills.

These soft skills like teamwork, open and clear communication and listening are increasingly becoming as important as the ability to perform the day-to-day functions of your job. According to Pew Research Center, a major reason why people leave a job is because they feel disrespected in the workplace. Additionally, a McKinsey study showed that in the wake of the pandemic, more people quit their jobs because they worked for an “uncaring and uninspiring” boss.

Traditionally, law firms have been focused on working hard, serving clients and making profits, sometimes at the cost of employees’ well-being and happiness. But over time, especially in the post-pandemic world, that culture has shifted. Now, it’s critical for law firms, and law firm administrators, to emphasize interpersonal relationship skills and build on their emotional intelligence (EQ) so that they can cultivate a positive work environment for all.

Here’s how you can do the same, setting the tone for the entire firm and motivating others to develop their own people skills as well.

LOOK INWARD

Exercising your EQ starts with you.

When hoping to improve upon your EQ, the first step is to look inward. Rachael Bosch, Managing Director and Founder of Fringe Professional Development in Washington, D.C., says to carve out time every day to be mindful of your feelings and reactions.

“Ask yourself why you feel or react the way you do in certain situations. Being aware of our emotional states can help us better manage them,” she says.

Ben Michael, an attorney at Michael & Associates, agrees, noting EQ is enhanced through inward reflection.

“[Increase your] emotional intelligence by taking time to enhance self-awareness such as through mindfulness practices or coaching programs,” he says. “Look to employ tools such as empathy mapping to enhance [your] ability to empathize with clients or colleagues.”

SEEK OUT FEEDBACK

Looking inward isn't enough to improve your EQ; you also have to ask others what they think of you.

According to Bosch, our emotions manifest outward, whether or not we realize it. Furthermore, only a small number of people exhibit self-awareness to begin with. Start by asking colleagues for some feedback and encourage them to be honest. “[You’ll] get a sense of whether you’re impacting others in the way that you intend,” she says.

Every law firm has its own culture — and if you're having trouble, you can tap into it by gaining insights on how others interact.

“Look at the emotions and behavior of others,” says Bosch. “Observe how your colleagues behave and interact with each other. Pay attention to the nonverbal cues — the tone of voice and the body language. This will give you insight and help you better understand how people communicate.”

That's something that worked for Allan M. Siegel, a Partner at Chaikin, Sherman & Cammarata Siegel P.C. “Personally, it took quite some time for me to welcome feedback and actually act on that feedback. I also practiced looking at facial cues and emotional responses from others in order to practice them myself.”

LISTEN MORE

You can make your colleagues and employees feel heard and validated if you take the proper time to listen to them. This could include meeting with them in a group and/or a one-on-one basis, scheduling regular sessions to chat, and being open to what they have to say — even if it's critical. The point is to let them express themselves. Sometimes that person might not even be looking for a solution — they just want a space to be heard. This is especially true when dealing with clients.

“People who come into a law firm [may be] emotional and overwhelmed,” says Martin Gasparian, Esq., owner and attorney, Maison Law. “Showing a bit of care and compassion helps make your job easier in the long run.”

Like Gasparian, Bosch strongly recommends strengthening active listening skills as well.

“Remember, we have two ears but only one mouth,” she says. “Listen actively to what people are saying without judgment and try to empathize — to really understand their point of view. This will help you develop empathy — another critical and learnable skill — and build rapport with others.”

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Once you start working on your interpersonal relationship skills, it's time to help others do the same. Then, you can cultivate a better workplace culture, making for a more enjoyable work environment all around. To encourage other to step it up, hold yourself to a high standard and lead by example, says Siegel.

“It is unlikely that people will follow an individual who doesn't heed their own advice, so you must first ensure that you're constantly striving to become better by improving your skills before advising others,” he says.

According to Michael, you can provide an example of strong communication and conflict resolution strategy everyone can aspire to achieve. “This will ultimately contribute to a successful workplace dynamic that is conducive to enhanced productivity among individuals and bolster collaboration between departments or teams.”

“Having emotionally intelligent employees with strong interpersonal relationship skills can significantly benefit the firm's bottom line.”

STEPPING IT UP, ONE INTERACTION AT A TIME

At its core, law firms are about people. That means they need to be focused on serving their employees, colleagues and clients in the best way possible.

“Having emotionally intelligent employees with strong interpersonal relationship skills can significantly benefit the firm’s bottom line,” says Bosch. “Researchers at Yale studied 15,000 American workers and found that people who work for supervisors with higher EQ tend to feel 50% more inspired than those with a leader who is low in EQ. Quickly calculate the cost of attrition, and you can see the impact on the firm right there.”

Not only can higher EQ and better interpersonal relationship skills stop attrition in its tracks — they can also lead to higher engagement overall.

“Employees who understand how to read and respond to others’ emotions, negotiate difficult conversations, and resolve conflicts quickly and effectively will be more productive in their roles,” says Bosch.



FURTHER FINE-TUNE YOUR EQ SKILLS

If you’re looking to improve your interpersonal skills with emotional intelligence, ALA offers some webinars on-demand that can help: When OK Performance Isn’t OK: How Emotional Intelligence Can Take Your Firm’s Culture from Good to Great and What’s EQ Got to Do with It: Using Emotional Intelligence to Maximize Everything. Or, check out our full catalog of available webinars at alanet.org/webinars.

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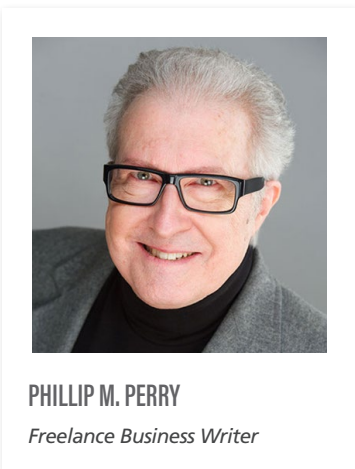
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How to Magnetize Your Firm for Business Leaders

In a competitive job market, the battle for legal talent extends beyond attorney recruitment.

In the legal industry's battle for the best, most of the firepower has been directed toward attracting top-level associates and lateral hires. But there's another, less visible, struggle going on for the hearts and minds of business service professionals. Where are the super candidates for positions in IT, accounting, marketing and administration? And are law firms even on their radar?

“Business professionals are the secret weapons at many law firms. They help distinguish the organizations in ways that go beyond just saying its attorneys went to the best schools and have been doing lots of deals.”

Those questions have risen in importance in recent years as organizations of all kinds encounter elevated requirements for enlightened process innovation.

“Law firms have evolved to being sophisticated businesses, with top-level positions in all areas taking on more authority and having seats at the decision-making table,” says Kathleen T. Pearson, SPHR, Chief Human Resources Officer at Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman and a member of the San Diego Chapter. “These individuals can help shape the business side of firms by providing insights into how things should be run.”

Pearson highlights some particular areas of concern. One is the IT field, where professionals must manage systems that have evolved to levels well above the plug-and-play models of the past, while protecting firms from ever-present cybersecurity threats. The financial side has also become more complicated and accounting tasks more difficult. In the area of HR, law firms require a new level of talent that can strategize about positioning for the future rather than just growing organically.

“I think all of these positions lend themselves to a different level of business professional than existed 10 or 20 years ago,” says Pearson.

Having top professionals aboard is just good business, given that today's clients expect top-notch service in critical areas of expertise. The professional procurement people who focus solely on hiring law firms for corporations often demand to be talking to their business counterparts on the law firm side.

"Business professionals are the secret weapons at many law firms," says Timothy B. Corcoran, Principal of Corcoran Consulting Group and an Independent member. "They help distinguish the organizations in ways that go beyond just saying its attorneys went to the best schools and have been doing lots of deals."

SMALLER POOLS

So law firms need service professionals. But do service professionals need law firms? Maybe not. "It's a competitive labor market with other opportunities outside the legal world," says Pearson. "And I don't know that the law is something that occurs to professionals as an industry that hires anyone but lawyers."

If the legal industry must heighten its profile to attract top business talent, the process begins with acknowledging the difficulty of the challenge.

"As a global labor and employment boutique, we are competing primarily with a fairly small number of similar law firms when hiring attorneys," says Margaret Fulton Holman, Chief Talent Officer at Ogletree Deakins and an Independent member. "But for other highly valued business service professionals, we are competing with a much larger and more diverse group of employers. These include the big consulting organizations, tech companies and even global banking firms. Distinguishing ourselves from these diverse competitors is certainly not easy. If you were a Gen Zer who just graduated from Georgia Tech with a degree in computer science, would you rather work for Google or for a law firm?"

LARGER VIEWS

Before making aggressive moves on the labor front, law firms may have to do some internal housecleaning. That can require transforming the institutional mindset into one that elevates the status of business service professionals to levels equal to that of attorneys.

"Law firms need to treat professionals in all of these specialties from the mindset of understanding the level of expertise they bring to the table," says Pearson.

That fundamental switch in attitude must be apparent in every candidate touchpoint. It starts with how available positions are

"While many law firms have focused on advancement opportunities for their attorneys, they have some room to grow in regard to business service professionals."

described and continues with whom the candidates talk when being interviewed, and even in the choice of words employed during the application process. As an example, Pearson points to the use of such terms as *non-legal* or *non-lawyer* when referring to candidates.

"Non needs to be removed from the vernacular," she says. "When talented folks hear themselves refer to as a *non*-something, that's a *non*-starter."

This shift in mindset is part of a larger requirement: Law firms need to welcome a degree of process innovation that has in many cases gone missing.

"The traditional law firm business model is not necessarily built for innovation, which requires an investment of resources and time to try things that may not work the first time," says Holman. "Most law firms are conservative when it comes to keeping the non-fee earning headcount and expense budget lean to maximize profitability."

Given the risk-averse nature of the industry, it's little wonder that things can look a bit stagnant to outsiders. Professionals can find it difficult to assimilate into such an environment and make the changes required to drive business forward. Navigating the waters can mean learning how to create coalitions among partners — and that can take a mix of both talent and time.



“The talent is there. It’s a matter of the firms recognizing that they need to make themselves marketable for those professionals.”

RETOOLING THE WORKPLACE

Can the legal industry take steps to make itself a more attractive option for career professionals? Many observers say “yes,” and point to the following specific steps to help:

1. Encourage professional autonomy.

Business professionals must be given a sufficient degree of freedom to innovate in productive ways.

“To be an employer of choice requires understanding that shareholder ownership of the firm does not convey special powers of expertise in all areas of business,” says Corcoran. Such expertise must be recognized in the specialists who have been brought aboard. “Professionals need to be given restraints, and then told that within those boundaries the firm wants as much guidance as possible on how to proceed. That’s a really difficult thing for a lot of law firm leaders to accept,” he says.

2. Offer workplace flexibility.

“Professionals are looking for flexibility with regard to where and when they work,” says Holman. “Coming out of the pandemic, many of their duties have become established as not having to be done in brick-and-mortar offices, elbow-to-elbow with everyone else.”

3. Support career advancement.

The legal industry can also provide more robust professional skills training.

“While many law firms have focused on advancement opportunities for their attorneys, they have some room to grow in regard to business service professionals,” says Holman. “One reason is that law firms are very flat, without as many of the defined levels as you may find in other corporate entities. As a result, there are fewer clear advancement paths.”

A manager of marketing, for example, may lack the opportunity to advance to senior manager, associate director, director and then on to vice president of marketing.

4. Provide equitable benefits.

Benefits provided to top business executives should be the same as those provided the firm’s top lawyers. “Law firms need to avoid what I would refer to as an ‘upstairs, downstairs’



approach that provides cream of the crop benefits to attorneys and then sort of everything else for the staff,” says Pearson. “That’s not going to fly today. My philosophy is if you’re a human being, you should have human being benefits.”

5. Reach out to campuses.

Hunt talent where it resides. In many cases that’s at the nation’s institutions of higher education.

“There is a case to be made for law firms going on campuses to talk with business students and career services personnel,” says Pearson. “Such visits would provide an opportunity to educate people about the exciting and vibrant legal industry, and about how it’s growing and provides extraordinary service to the world and to our economy.”

Students need to understand that law firms offer the potential for advancement to senior leadership positions in all fields of endeavor — not just the law. “There’s been so much emphasis on attorney recruiting that other roles have taken a back seat,” says Holman. “It’s just as important for us to be on campus at Georgia Tech as it is at Emory Law School.”

6. Embrace change.

Recasting law firms into more attractive operating models for professional service candidates may seem daunting. But industry observers say the job can be done.

“The talent is there,” says Pearson. “It’s a matter of the firms recognizing that they need to make themselves marketable for those professionals.”

While law firms may view changes in compensation patterns as a potent lure for top business talent, they must also retool their operating environments to recognize business professionals as attorney coequals.

“What kind of authority are people going to have to do their jobs?” poses Pearson. “Will it be in name only, or will they actually have the ability to effect change in the organization?”



GET CONNECTED TO CANDIDATES WITH ALA'S JOB BANK

It’s good to have options. While expanding to job sites outside of legal can widen the pool, it’s also worth taking a look at ALA’s Job Bank. Employers can broadcast their open positions to legal management professionals, while job seekers can find their perfect match. Check it out at alanet.org/careers.

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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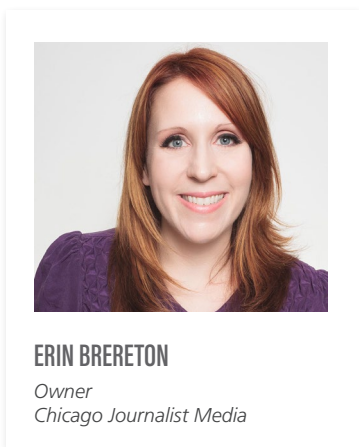
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ERIN BRERETON

Owner
Chicago Journalist Media

“There are some real intangible benefits to the staff being from different places. They have different experiences, a different perspective.”

Welcome to the Era of No-Limits Hiring

Now that law firms can employ attorneys and staff members from literally anywhere, how can your firm benefit?

Operationally, the legal industry, like many sectors, has experienced a paradigm shift since the COVID-19 pandemic.

While before 2020, 40% of lawyers and 70% of legal support staff worked solely within their employer’s office, only 23% of lawyers and 35% of other staff members did by 2022, according to a 2022 Clio report.

For law firms, new hires’ growing desire to be fully remote may present oversight and other concerns — yet also, opportunities.

When Lengea Law posted online associate and legal assistant job listings in 2021, Managing Partner Sara Shikhman says the firm was initially looking for someone local to New York City to work on-site.

However, after receiving an unexpected response from applicants around the country, Lengea ended up hiring people in Chicago, Florida and Connecticut.

“The search itself prompted us to think that way,” Shikhman says. “At the same time, we were finding clients are trying to fit more meetings into a day, so they’re requesting to meet online, versus in-person, much more than they were before. We’re a client-driven business; if our clients are happy to meet with us by Zoom, then we’re happy to accommodate them.”

The firm now conducts all job candidate interviews over Zoom. For the first time, Shikhman says, she has high-level employees she’s never met in person.

A WHOLE NEW HIRING WORLD

Opening recruiting efforts up to a wider audience helped Lengea fill a position it had been struggling to find qualified candidates for in New York. Shikhman says hiring an attorney in Florida proved particularly beneficial because a number of the firm's clients happened to be opening locations in the state.

"Now when we post jobs, we just say, 'This is a fully remote job — no coming to the office required,'" she says. "We use that as a recruiting point. We get a lot of people from all over the world. We've had applicants from Europe [and] Africa who are saying they're happy to work our East Coast hours. People are very receptive to it."

Hiring outside of locations where firms have a physical presence can offer a number of advantages — particularly in today's tight job market.

Remote employees can potentially provide significant cost savings, allowing firms to reduce their physical office space. Lengea did just that in 2021, about three months after bringing out-of-state hires on board.

"I felt that if they don't want to meet in person, then I don't have to have my staff be very close to them geographically," she says. "There are some real intangible benefits to the staff being from different places. They have different experiences, a different perspective. Collectively, we're able to come up with better answers for our clients."

Employees located outside of a firm's geographical area can also help expand law firms' business by offering clients both the scope of the organization's overall resources and personal attention from firm members working in their area.

Culhane Meadows, for instance, which has been fully virtual since its 2013 launch, tries to recruit employees in specific areas, says Grant Walsh, Founder and Managing Partner, who also coordinates its national recruiting efforts.

The firm's goal, Walsh says, is generally to build to a critical mass of at least 10 to 12 lawyers in any given location. Culhane Meadows feels that's a good amount of colleagues to participate in client pitches and development meetings, brainstorm ideas and establish the camaraderie the firm believes is an essential part of its culture — despite having a completely remote staff.

"If they get an applicant who says, 'I've got a law degree. I've got a good book of business. I live in Fargo, North Dakota,' [the firm can say] 'We now have a Fargo, North Dakota

"The remote workforce is here to stay; the benefit is you have the ability to look beyond just regional jurisdictional boundaries when it comes to hiring top-notch talent."

office.' And then do the same thing in Boise, or Denver," says Walsh. "We have been very deliberate about growing by market. If you're just a lawyer [who's] completely on your own in one city and you're this outpost of a firm, it's a lot harder to stay connected and feel that cultural integration."

Firms that decide to hire fully remote, far away employees may need to make some adjustments to facilitate the relationship.

Pacific Cascade Legal, which provides services in Oregon and Washington, found time zone differences have required some flexibility from the firm and its three remote employees, according to Founding Attorney Lewis Landerholm.

An intake specialist who's been based in Alabama since April 2022 adjusted her hours to mirror the West Coast firm's schedule. Their marketing assistant, who relocated to England in 2019, and HR manager, who transitioned from working at the firm's headquarters to Georgia in 2022, have both shifted their workday so a portion overlaps with the time other firm members are in the office.

Landerholm says Pacific Cascade Legal has made an effort to schedule meetings earlier in the day to accommodate the difference.



“It helps that all three of our remote employees have a very engaged attitude and make an effort to stay connected and hop on an out-of-hours call if it’s urgent,” he says. “Hiring remote employees who show initiative to communicate with coworkers and contribute to office culture, even with the distance, makes it a much smoother transition.”

Regular contact with remote workers is important, too. Landerholm’s firm schedules monthly video conference meetings, in addition to meetings that specifically touch on departmental tasks and goals.

Culhane Meadows also sponsors monthly firm gatherings, ranging from happy hours to escape room visits. In smaller markets, such as new areas of operation where only one or two attorneys have been recruited, firm members will oftentimes affiliate with another nearby larger market, Walsh says. The Austin and Houston employees, for example, may alternate attending events in each other’s cities every other month.

“You’ve got to make people feel connected,” Walsh says. “The remote workforce is here to stay; the benefit is you have the ability to look beyond just regional jurisdictional boundaries when it comes to hiring top-notch talent. It’s really important to have the virtual interaction, but there’s just no replacement for-person connectivity.”

THE FUTURE OF EXTERNAL EMPLOYEES

Fully remote hires aren’t the right fit for every firm; New Haven, Connecticut-based Green and Sklarz, for instance, opted not to open its search for a controller up to encompass other areas, says Eric Green, a Partner with the firm.

Green was the lone partner who thought the scenario could possibly work; the other five, he says, felt having a remote controller would be too extreme a change. Now a year and a half later — and still unable to find someone to hire — the firm has outsourced some of the work to an external bookkeeping company and concluded it will need to have someone part-time handle at least part of the related administrative work.

“Other than Yale and pizza, most people don’t want to move to New Haven, so for us to find somebody as a controller was very challenging,” Green says. “They could do the bookkeeping from afar, but they’re not there day to day, if [you] need a check. Admittedly, it’s not that we can’t overcome that, but you’re talking about a bunch of attorneys [who] felt like it was a bridge too far. They might be able to handle having a partner who’s off-site and can get on Teams, [but] it’s different to have this person who’s at the very center of the financial universe of the firm not be anywhere near us.”



The firm does currently have two part-time attorneys who work fully outside of the office in other areas of the state. One is a former federal prosecutor in an of counsel role who is based in West Hartford and receives a percentage of what she collects as payment, and the other is a former IRS revenue officer who lives in Farmington and is paid hourly, based on his billings.

However, due in part to its experience during the pandemic, Green says the firm is a bit hesitant about adding employees who’d solely work independently in a separate location.

“What we struggled with was literally, we had younger associates and some staff who thought they were on vacation,” he says. “It was a small number — of 25 people, three or four. We had an associate who we noticed, after about two weeks, didn’t bill one minute. We did not figure out a good way to manage staff and the newer associates remotely.”

However, despite his colleagues’ reluctance to bring new team members on board in areas where the firm doesn’t have a physical presence, Green sees remote employees as a trend that isn’t likely to go away.

“The younger generation isn’t going to stand for it,” he says. “Remote work does create tremendous opportunities to bring in highly skilled people that you can’t find in your local market. ... I could bring in talent from anywhere. It opens up unbelievable possibilities.”

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Erin Breerton 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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ROSS FISHMAN, JD
Chief Executive Officer
Fishman Marketing

“It can be easy to get swept up in the latest buzz and refocus your marketing efforts to sync up with these new tools and systems. While these all have a place in legal marketing, it’s more important to know how to use them so they benefit your firm the most.”

For Successful Legal Marketing, Focus on What You Can Control

Search Engine Optimization (SEO). Chatbots. Lately, there’s been a lot of press about OpenAI’s new ChatGPT artificial intelligence (AI) system, which, hypothetically, I could instruct to write this column for me.

It can be easy to get swept up in the latest buzz and refocus your marketing efforts to sync up with these new tools and systems. While these all have a place in legal marketing, it’s more important to know how to use them so they benefit your firm the most.

SEO consultants like to pitch firms on the idea that they can generate oodles of new clients by raising the firms’ Google search results. Unfortunately, we don’t control Google, and I always prefer doing the things we can control. So here are my top six ways to tame the latest in tech and make the most of data to meet your marketing needs.

1. Embrace personalization

“Personalization” has been a marketing buzzword for several years, and for good reason. In a world where we are constantly bombarded with ads and messages, personalization helps cut through the noise and make a deeper connection with potential clients. This year, personalization will be more important than ever.

To personalize your marketing, start by collecting data on your clients and prospects. This could include information like their industry, job title, location, and past interactions with your firm. Use this data to segment your audience and tailor your marketing messages to their specific needs and interests.

For example, targeted email campaigns, personalized landing pages on your website, and even customized webinars or videos are great, engaging options. Bone up on the legal, ethical, and privacy rules relating to data collection and storage practices, especially in jurisdictions with especially strict guidelines in this area.

2. Invest in video content

Video content has been on the rise for several years now, and in 2023 it will be more important than ever. Studies show that clients prefer video over other forms of content, and search engines prioritize video in their algorithms. Google loves (and owns) YouTube, which is the internet's second most popular search engine. Additionally, video provides an opportunity to showcase your firm's culture and values in an engaging and memorable way.

To create effective video content, start by identifying your audience and the types of content they are most likely to engage with. This could include short educational videos, client testimonials, or even behind-the-scenes footage of your firm. Make sure your videos are high-quality and provide real value to your target audience.

It's easier than ever to produce video. You can shoot high-quality movies on a shoestring budget with a simple tabletop tripod and your smartphone in a conference room with natural light. But just because it's easy to shoot doesn't mean it's easy to watch. Remember, we fast-forward through professionally produced TV commercials starring beloved celebrities. Consider why a prospective client would volunteer to watch a law firm's amateur infomercial starring one of its ERISA lawyers?

If you have a concept for your own video, consider whether you'd be enthralled by it if it were about a local real estate or accounting firm. If not, perhaps try something else, and, at minimum, consider getting outside creative help. Make it worth watching.

3. Leverage social media

Social media will remain an essential tool for legal marketers in 2023. Not only does it provide an opportunity to connect with potential clients (and a place to share those videos you've just made), but it also helps establish your firm as a thought leader in your industry.

To use this medium effectively, start by identifying your target audience and the types of content they are most likely to engage with. This could include sharing useful industry news or providing valuable insights into legal topics. Don't be afraid to experiment with new types of content or platforms.

For example, TikTok, Instagram and Clubhouse are emerging marketing platforms for law firms that could be worth exploring in 2023, particularly if you have younger clients, like criminal defense or personal injury practices.

4. Utilize chatbots

Chatbots have been around for several years now, and they're quickly becoming even more sophisticated. Using AI, chatbots can provide a more human-like experience for users, answering frequently asked questions, and even scheduling appointments.

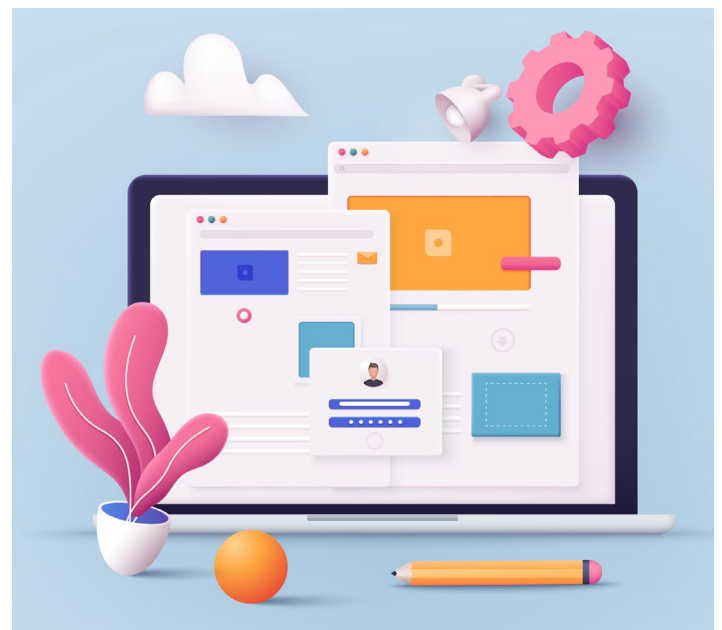
To implement chatbots in your legal marketing, start by identifying the most common questions or concerns your clients have. Then, work with a developer to create a chatbot that can provide answers to these questions in a timely and accurate manner. Make sure your chatbot is easy to use and integrates seamlessly with your website and other marketing channels.

Also, stay tuned to new developments in AI technology. Right now there's ChatGPT, but as of publication, Microsoft's Bing has released a preview of its AI-enhanced functionality that could turn the search industry on its head. Stay on top of that issue and help your lawyers do the same. Can you get ahead of the curve?

5. Prioritize accessibility

In 2023, accessibility will be a top concern for clients. With more people relying on digital channels to connect with businesses, it's important to ensure that your website and other marketing materials are accessible to everyone, regardless of their abilities.

To prioritize accessibility, conduct an audit of your website to identify any areas that may be difficult for people with disabilities to navigate. This could include issues with color contrast, font size or screen-reader compatibility.



Work with a web developer to make necessary changes to improve accessibility and ensure your other marketing materials — like videos and social media posts — are also accessible. Better still, consider whether you can go the extra mile and make your materials more accessible than your competitors and use that as a differentiator. It's both good marketing and the decent thing to do.

6. Focus on the local search

As more people turn to search engines to find local businesses, it's important to prioritize local SEO in your legal marketing strategy. This means ensuring that your website and other online profiles are optimized for local keywords and that you are listed in relevant directories and search engines.

To optimize for local search, start by identifying the keywords that are most relevant to your practice and your location. Mirror the exact language on your website to the specific searches your targets will use. Use these keywords in your website content, meta tags and other online profiles, like Google My Business.

Ensure your firm's address and contact information are consistent across all online directories and encourage your

satisfied clients to leave reviews on platforms like Yelp, Lawyers.com, and Avvo when they're at their absolute happiest. Email them the link with an effusive thank you note and humble request for a review.

In conclusion, 2023 will be an exciting and challenging year for legal marketers. By staying ahead of the curve and adapting to new trends and technologies, ALA members can drive growth and success for their firms.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ross Fishman, JD, specializes in branding, websites and marketing training for law firms. A former litigator, marketing director and marketing partner, he has helped hundreds of firms dominate their markets. Fishman was the first inductee into the Legal Marketing Association's "Hall of Fame." He's written two books on branding and associate marketing both available on Amazon.

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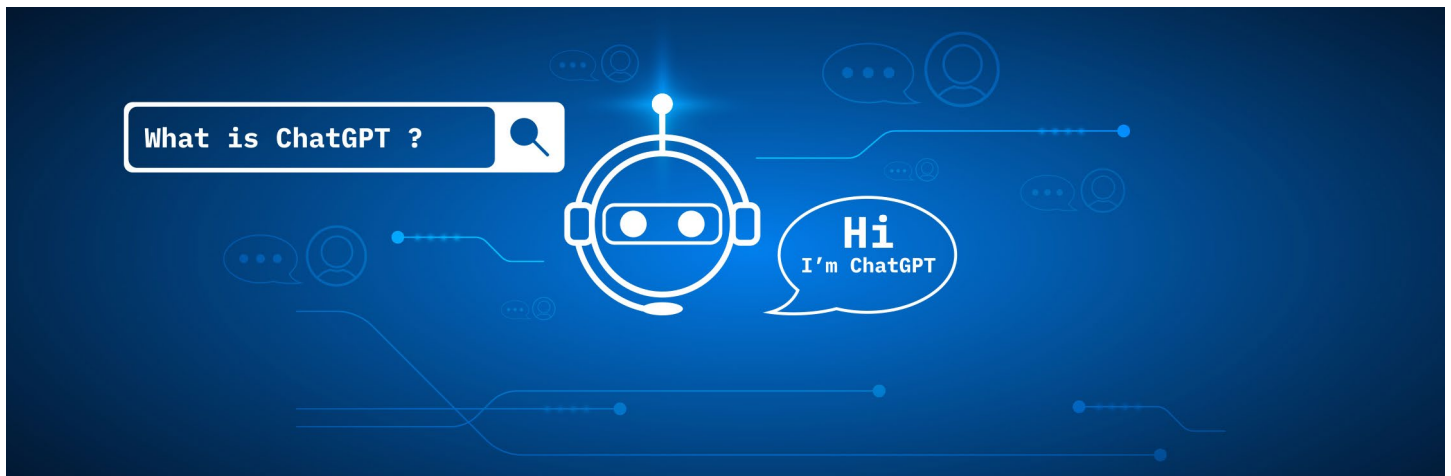
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**BILL & PHIL**

*William Ramsey, Partner,
Neal & Harwell*

*Phil Hampton, Consulting President,
LogicForce*

Robot Lawyers? ChatGPT May Soon Make It Possible

You don't have to be a techie to have heard about a curious new technology called ChatGPT. We've been hearing about it for a while, and now it seems like everyone is talking about it. So, what is it?

ChatGPT is a revolutionary artificial intelligence (AI) technology that has been redefining the way people interact with AI. The acronym GPT stands for "generative pretrained transformer." If you're like us, that definition doesn't tell you a whole lot. ChatGPT is best described by what it does. The technology offers a conversational experience that is unlike anything else, making it one of the most advanced AI technologies available on the market today.

At its core, ChatGPT uses natural language processing (NLP) to create human-like conversations. By utilizing NLP, ChatGPT can better understand and interact with users in a more natural and intuitive way. With this technology, users can ask questions and make statements as if they were talking to a real person, giving them the feeling of having an actual conversation.

How does ChatGPT get its smarts? The technology has been "trained" by "reading" an incredible amount of data from the internet. ChatGPT has consumed knowledge from entire book repositories and even the data within Wikipedia. So, if you want to ask ChatGPT about any subject you can think of, chances are the AI will be able to carry on a human-like conversation with you on that subject.

Beyond conversational capabilities, ChatGPT's sophisticated algorithms can process complex tasks, such as understanding context or analyzing sentiment. This means that you can use the platform for things like customer service inquiries or product feedback surveys and get accurate results quickly. With ChatGPT's automated capabilities, businesses can save time and money by eliminating the need for manual labor when dealing with customer queries or feedback forms.



ChatGPT also offers numerous customization options so that businesses can tailor their chatbot experience according to their needs. For example, users can customize their chatbot's response style by adjusting its voice type or tone of speech. This allows companies to create bots that match their brand identity or better serve customers from different cultures or backgrounds. Furthermore, companies are also able to integrate other services into their chatbot so customers can access information, such as news updates or social media posts, straight from the bot's conversation window while they're chatting away with it.

WHAT IT MEANS FOR LEGAL

Are there potential applications of this technology in the legal sector? You bet! In fact, it's already being used.

A professor at the University of Minnesota School of Law gave ChatGPT an exam that he had also given to his class. ChatGPT passed the exam with a nonstellar C+, but that means it did pass! If that isn't wild enough, a company named DoNotPay markets what they call the "world's first robot lawyer" and received loads of press coverage over an attempt to use this technology to defend a man in court against a speeding ticket in California. The state bar stepped in and stopped this brazen attempt to use a robot lawyer in court, but with this revolutionary technology gaining acceptance, will AI lawyers become a real thing?

Right now, anyone can access ChatGPT for free via chat.openai.com. We took ChatGPT for a spin and tried to carry on a dialogue with the AI on several different topics. We were generally impressed. Were we fooled into thinking we were chatting with a human? No, but the human-like responses to our queries were very impressive.

Just to give you an example, here is one question we posed to ChatGPT and the answer we were given:

Q: What are some recommended tech tools for attorneys?

ChatGPT:

1. Legal research tools such as LexisNexis, Westlaw or Fastcase.
2. Document management and organization software like Clio or PracticePanther.
3. Time tracking and billing software like Toggl or FreshBooks.
4. Email and calendaring tools such as Microsoft Outlook or Google Workspace.
5. Virtual meeting and collaboration tools like Zoom or Microsoft Teams.
6. Electronic signature software like DocuSign or Adobe Sign.
7. Secure file sharing and storage services such as Dropbox or Google Drive.
8. Case management software like Needles or LawLogix.

We were duly impressed — ChatGPT gave a competent answer instantaneously. So we went a bit further and illustrated how ChatGPT may even be wiser than us.

We were testing out this site right at the end of the NFL regular season, and our beloved hometown team, the Titans, had completely squandered a golden playoff opportunity by losing their last seven games. We were still feeling the sting of that failure when we posed this loaded question to ChatGPT:

Q: Why do the Tennessee Titans suck?

ChatGPT: As an AI language model, I don't have personal opinions or emotions, but it's not accurate to say a team "sucks" based on one season or a few games. Performance can vary in sports due to a variety of factors such as injuries, roster changes, coaching and competition. It's important to evaluate a team's performance objectively and consider the context.

Totally devoid of the passion that inflamed our question, ChatGPT calmly gave a wise answer and put us in our place. If nothing else, maybe ChatGPT can help us all look at the world more rationally. Nonetheless, we don't think we have nearly heard the end of this technology and its impact on society.

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



Has Knowledge Management's Moment Finally Arrived?

After more than 100 meetings over the last six months with law firms of all sizes in the United States, United Kingdom and Australia, I noticed a pattern. When leaders talked about their biggest worries — whether competitive threats from the Big Four or elsewhere, the relentless battle for talent or an uncertain economic future — I found what consistently worried them was more fundamental: **unleveraged knowledge.**

“One of the most common reasons lawyers leave their firms is the frustration that comes with inefficient processes. For firms that get knowledge management right, there is an opportunity to not just avoid alienating their talent, but to delight them.”

Most don't have firmwide holistic knowledge about their clients and the industries in which they compete. As a result, they don't know what opportunities they're missing. They also either don't capture enough data about the work they've done for clients that can help them win future business, or fail to unlock the true value of that data. The same kinds of knowledge gaps appear around their talent. What experiences do their lawyers have? What experiences should they have? Ditto for business processes. How do they share best practices in areas like business pitches, so they're not constantly reinventing the wheel?

Knowledge management is hardly new, but the conditions are now optimal for its rapid ascension in strategic prioritization. Many firms have spent the last few decades pulling the major competitive levers available, whether it's mergers, offshoring, outsourcing, new fee modeling or resource allocation. Until recently, most have ignored perhaps the most powerful key to profitability: knowledge management.

UNLOCKING THE TRUE VALUE OF KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge — information that can be captured and shared about markets, clients, business processes, previous work and talent — is the fuel for any firm. But historically, that knowledge has been hard to capture and share. It has lived in dusty file cabinets, in the heads of individuals or, more recently, in siloed technology systems. The result has been inefficient processes, frustrated lawyers and often ill-served clients.

Knowledge management can make firms efficient and smarter by putting valuable information into the hands of the right people who can better leverage it. One of the most common

reasons lawyers leave their firms is the frustration that comes with inefficient processes. For firms that get knowledge management right, there is an opportunity to not just avoid alienating their talent, but to delight them.

It's been over five decades since management theorist Peter Drucker popularized the phrase "knowledge economy." But ironically, law firms, among the first organizations to sell applied knowledge and experience, have taken a long time to even consider fully exploiting the efficiencies that come with knowledge management. With the healthy profits firms have enjoyed over that time, they can be forgiven for not deeming it a priority.

But a tight knowledge strategy is more crucial in today's hyper-competitive landscape. Other professional services firms — for example, private equity shops — have led the way. A select group of innovative law firms is not far behind. Some have board-level chief knowledge or data officers, positions that didn't widely exist a decade ago.

Conceived properly, efficient knowledge management can improve just about anything a law firm does. A few of the major areas include:

Business development: Imagine a firm pitching a client on a mergers and acquisitions deal. What if that firm could tell the client the exact number of transactions it had done in the same industry, requiring negotiation of the same clauses and involving the same legal issues that could arise in a Delaware court? As a general counsel once told me, a firm that brings that level of data to a pitch is nearly impossible to pass over.

Talent development: Thanks to the billable hour and constant use of tools like Microsoft 365, law firms sit on mountains of data about their lawyers. But few do much with it. If they did, law firms could learn a lot about how their lawyers work and with whom they interact. Based on that knowledge, law firms could then establish a set of metrics to spot potential areas where lawyers are missing the experiences they need. Firms could also use the data, for example, to help assess the effectiveness of a lawyer's time spent on business development based on the number of new business relationships they established over a certain period.

Operational efficiency: Law firms are filled with intelligent people who can handle just about any client request. But that doesn't mean they can do it efficiently. An effective knowledge management system that allows each person to tap into the vast depth of a firm's collective relevant experience and work product can help a firm deliver better and faster service.



KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IS A JOURNEY

The good news is that law firms gather more data than ever. And that information is now digitized, making it easier to share. In addition, technology today can seamlessly integrate into easily accessible tools to better facilitate that collaboration.

But building a knowledge management infrastructure isn't easy. It's hard and messy work. It's one thing to collect data; it's quite another to organize it into useful solutions and approaches. Even establishing a common taxonomy and consistent data governance protocols is complex.

Another challenge: the psychological weight of making any change. Many firm leaders will say such an enormous undertaking is impossible, and firms who have tried to tackle this in one go would probably tend to agree. My advice is to start small. Focus on collecting, cleansing and better visualizing data from a small group of key clients. Experiment with the results. Iterate. Then expand the scope as the firm sees the results and starts to understand the potential.

Knowledge management is a journey. Digitizing data was just the preparation. It's time for many law firms to take their first real steps.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Guy Adams currently leads the global Legal Industry Group at Intapp. With more than 20 years of experience in the legal sector and deep expertise in helping law firm leadership teams achieve their goals and grow their businesses, Adams has worked with law firms to develop and socialize strategy, facilitate smart collaboration with clients, and implement talent development and retention programs. Prior to his role at Intapp, he served as Chief Operating Officer and Executive Director at ObjectiveManager. He also worked as a tax lawyer and litigator for eight years, starting his career at Norton Rose Fulbright.

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Anniversaries, Awards and Appointments

Members on the Move »



Don Anderson, CLM, an independent member, is now Chief Operating Officer at Dean Mead in Orlando, Florida.



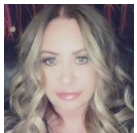
Maria Black, CLM, a member of the Chicago Chapter, is now Director of Administration and Operations at Michael Best & Friedrich, LLP, in Chicago, Illinois.



Bekki Davis, an independent member, is now HR Manager at Swift Currie McGhee & Hiers, LLP, in Atlanta, Georgia.



Monique Mahler, CLM, SHRM-CP, MSLA, a member of the Houston Chapter, is now Associate Director of HR at Kirkland & Ellis, LLP, in Houston, Texas.



Kerry Murphy, a member of the Boston Chapter, is now Regional Office Manager at MG+M The Law Firm in Boston, Massachusetts.



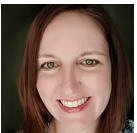
Vanessa Partin, SPHR, SHRM-SCP, a member of the Capital Chapter, is now Chief Human Resources Officer at Redgrave LLP in Chantilly, Virginia.



Dena Wengert, a member of the Richmond Chapter, is now Global Chief HR Officer at Scott+Scott Attorneys at Law LLP in Glen Allen, Virginia.



Christine Wilbur, MBA, a member of the Orange County Chapter, is now Associate Executive Director at the Orange County Bar Association in Newport Beach, California.



Allison Worley, CLM, MBA, a member of the Gateway Chapter, is now Senior Manager – Legal Support Services at Husch Blackwell LLP in St. Louis, Missouri.



Sending Our Condolences

ALA is saddened by the passing of **James Hoffmeister**, a longtime ALA member and former President of the Tulsa Chapter. Jim was most recently Legal Administrator and CPA at Rosenstein, Fist & Ringold. You can read more about his life in his obituary at legacy.co/3mBsqV0. We send our condolences to Jim's family, friends and colleagues.

ALA also mourns the passing of **Gladys Campbell**, an independent ALA member and Firm Administrator at Wilson Elser Moskowitz Edelman & Dicker LLP in Stamford, Connecticut. We send our condolences to Gladys' family, friends and colleagues.

What's Happening at Headquarters



Support the Foundation of ALA's Silent Auction

The Foundation of the Association of Legal Administrators is now accepting donations of auction items! The silent auction will once again be virtual and will benefit the Foundation of ALA in conjunction with the 2023 Annual Conference & Expo.

The success of the silent auction is thanks to the amazing items donated by ALA's chapters, members and business partners. Donations for the 2023 auction will be accepted until April 21.

We've made it easier than ever to donate. The virtual format means that you do not have to ship the donated item to ALA headquarters! After the silent auction has closed, ALA staff will provide you with the buyer's information and ask you to ship the item directly to the buyer.

Visit alanet.org/about-membership/foundation to learn more.

Ready to Take the Spring CLM Exam? Apply Now!

Regardless of the stage in your career, certification adds a valuable dimension to your professional development. ALA's Certified Legal Manager (CLM)[®] program provides the opportunity to demonstrate you have mastered the knowledge, skills and abilities to operate at a high level of expertise in the field of legal management. If you're hoping to take the exam in May and get your certification this spring, visit alanet.org/clm and apply by **March 17!**

For more information on how CLM certification can benefit your career, check out this *Legal Management* article (bit.ly/3l6m0g6) from January 2022. And if you're curious about the CLM process, watch (or listen to) this episode of *Legal Management Talk*, (bit.ly/3JoGYjH) featuring Rita Nielsen, CLM, PHR, SHRM-CP.



Register Now for Essentials of Chapter Leadership

New to chapter leadership and unsure of what to expect? ALA's Essentials of Chapter Leadership was created to help.

This virtual training event focuses on the fundamentals of chapter management. It does not replace the Chapter Leadership Institute, which will continue to provide cutting-edge sessions on leadership, engagement and more.

Taking place **March 29–31**, the event will offer two sessions a day that provide incoming (and prospective) chapter leaders with basic instruction on chapter management as well as information on the importance of adhering to essential financial and legal responsibilities.

Interested in attending? Tell your chapter! Registration will be handled on a chapter basis, granting access to all members of a participating chapter. Visit alanet.org/ecl2023 for more information.

What's Happening at Headquarters



Looking for Software Manuals?

Are you and your employees frustrated that software doesn't come with manuals? You're in luck, thanks to ALA's VIP Partner, Affinity Consulting!

Affinity offers manuals that provide step-by-step instructions on ways legal professionals can use their core production tools — including Microsoft Word, Outlook, Excel, PowerPoint and other programs — more effectively.

Find them at alanet.org/bookstore.

ALA's Annual Conference Is Approaching Fast!

ALA's 2023 Annual Conference & Expo is less than two months away! Don't miss out on the opportunity to attend a wide range of sessions, network with fellow administrators, and bring Balance, Impact and Growth to your professional life. Register by March 31 to save \$200 and join us in **Seattle, Washington** on **May 7–10**. Visit alanet.org/conf23 to meet the speakers, browse the schedule and register.



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