

LEGAL MANAGEMENT

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2020
VOLUME 39 • ISSUE 10

THE MAGAZINE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF LEGAL ADMINISTRATORS

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*Executive Director
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“Many of you have expressed gratitude for ALA and your fellow members during these challenging times. I am grateful to all of you for building and participating in such a meaningful and supportive community.”

Experiencing Change and Changing Experiences

This is my first column as ALA's Executive Director. It feels both surreal and very comfortable at the same time. I have held this organization so close to my heart for so long that it feels natural and exciting for me to be in this role. However, I will never mistake this opportunity for being an easy one.

I will certainly call it exciting — and more so than ever because of the change experiences we have been working within during the last eight months. Just as you have had to reevaluate how you do your work, manage employees, provide client services, maintain a balanced and sane family, and even take a regular trip to the grocery store, we at ALA are taking a look at how we serve our members. You are facing so many changes and we want to be the one constant you can count on — we are here for you.

Members are getting creative and firms are opening up to new ideas — ideas that were once considered a road too far. It turns out that some of these changes are not so bad after all. You may even be dusting off those wacky proposals you kept only to yourself. We are learning that new is not bad and that it is OK to be the first firm on your block to try something new, rather than waiting for another firm to go first. And you are all supporting one another with these leaps.

It's also what we're striving to do for you as an Association. We are trying some new approaches and tailoring what we provide to you, not based on what other associations are providing to their members but on what you specifically need that is unique to you right now. We are making sure what we offer is convenient, accessible and relevant.

For example, we are working on new ways to connect you to your fellow members to solve common challenges, while inspiring one another with fresh ideas and directed action. We're also here for one another and offering what is often needed the most — emotional support to remind you that you're not alone in your quest to prepare yourself and your legal organization to tackle the next challenge. And sometimes, we just need a good laugh.

It lifts me up to see you and ALA leadership creating that environment for one another, as it is one of the advantages of this organization that I hold so dear. The ALA staff and I look forward to hearing from you about your needs and

challenges through Town Halls, Hangouts and Roundtables; through the Online Community and your emails; and, hopefully sometime soon, at our in-person events.

Many of you have expressed gratitude for ALA and your fellow members during these challenging times. I am grateful to all of you for building and participating in such a meaningful and supportive community. I look forward to fostering many more opportunities of growth, inspiration, leadership and positive change as your Executive Director.

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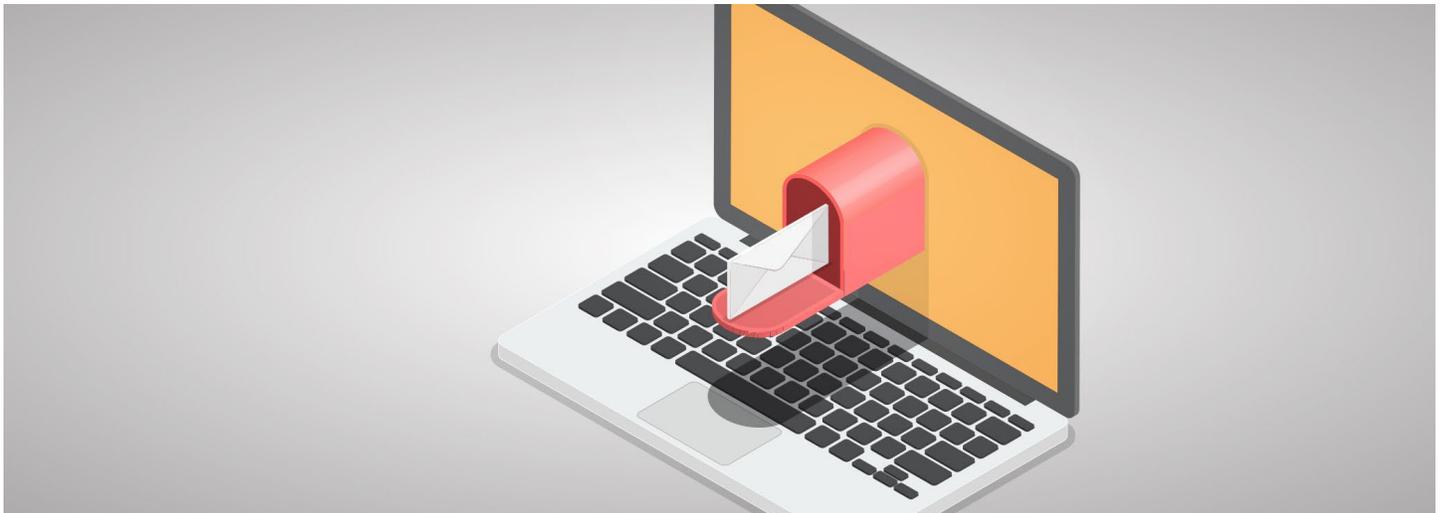


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STEVE IRONS
President
DocSolid

“The shift to a distributed workforce has not changed clients’ minds about how they’d like their information handled, secured and governed.”

A Digital Mailroom Built for Law Firms in the New Normal

As we continue to find ourselves working outside of our usual offices, many law firms are finding that they need a digital mailroom, not an ad hoc scan-to-email workaround. That was a mere triage solution at the onset of the COVID-19 crisis. Attorneys and staff working from home require reliable, secure delivery of inbound daily postal and overnight mail arriving at the main office. And they need on-call access to paper records back in the main office file rooms. A productive, secure digital mailroom operation is the most practical solution.

A digital mailroom also remains essential when the workforce returns to the office. A significant part of the workforce will continue to work from home semi-permanently, and it won't be viable to hand-deliver paper mail for those in the office while also providing an alternate digital delivery for those at home. Legal mail needs digital delivery, all the time, for everyone.

Law firms are uniquely dependent on inbound paper documents from clients, courts, opposing counsel and research efforts. Some of these paper items mandate a calendared response, or contain sensitive client information or crucial matter content.

The good news is that longstanding paper-to-digital initiatives will now accelerate without the pushback from attorneys who insist on paper files. And a digital mailroom, run optimally, will routinely digitize the biggest remaining flow of inbound paper documents — daily mail. A digital mailroom now drives the firm toward a conclusive paper-to-digital transformation.

A successful digital mailroom setup has the following requirements:

- Integration with the firm’s document management system (DMS), so postal mail can be digitized and seamlessly delivered safely within its confines
- A structured operation with daily delivery that is reliable and scheduled
- Productive workflows to minimize clerical staffing burdens
- Built-in quality controls to ensure usable image files are delivered to waiting attorneys, to prevent lost mail items, and to enable monitoring and reporting on the operation

10 REASONS TO UPGRADE

Here’s a quick test to establish your firm’s need for a digital mailroom. How many of these 10 boxes do you check for your firm?

1. The mailroom scanning operation is not integrated with the DMS, which is the destination for legal matter documents that come in through the mail. How and when emailed documents get into the DMS requires extra steps, work and diligence that aren’t managed.

2. Your firm is sending scanned legal mail documents via email, and those documents end up as unnamed attachments inadvertently stored in the email server, clogging up storage space and compromising security and compliance for these client documents.

3. Scanned mail recipients are using their email inbox as a workflow tool to process daily mail.

4. There is no integrated process for quality control and oversight that ensures all relevant documents get filed in the DMS, with multi-office consistency, help desk and reporting.

5. Fluctuations in weekly mail volume make it difficult to handle this job with a daily schedule that mail recipients can rely on.

6. Scanning and emailing is dependent on a particular mailroom clerk’s knowledge of mail distribution nuances in any given office, at any given time.

7. Too many people are involved in getting the daily mail scanned and distributed and in managing the paper after scanning. Staffing requirements can change daily.

8. After scanning, the physical paper mail is still manually distributed to attorneys’ or assistants’ desks.

9. After scanning, the physical paper mail is distributed or stored without a policy-based plan to shred it.

10. Attorneys have complaints about the mail-scanning operation, such as delays and scan issues like missing pages or document separation.

SIMPLE SCAN-TO-EMAIL WON’T CUT IT

When the pandemic sent the workforce to home offices, most law firms quickly starting scanning to email to get the mail out. Facilities management or available clerical staff went into the office and cobbled together this new work process.

Forced to use existing scan-to-email at copiers, they were jamming a critical mail delivery process through a scanning system designed to infrequently let one person scan one document at a time. Quality checks for this effort were nonexistent, evidenced by the fact that the scanned paper is still retained in makeshift filing boxes or delivered to empty desks for later pickup and review.

Email is a poor workflow management tool and nearly impossible to govern. As such, it’s a weak security and compliance link in the lifecycle of matter documents and client information. It’s also why law firms have document management systems (DMS) and why firms store client information there. The DMS is the productivity and governance tool that helps firms service their clients and protect their information.



Legal documents that arrive by physical mail should not be delivered via scan-to-email for the following reasons:

- » Email attachments are stored in the email server, unmanaged. Sensitive client information delivered as email attachments floats and bloats in the email server, violating basic principles of information governance.
- » An email inbox is not a workflow tool, and it cannot be shared with other workers to manage process. After scans are delivered as email attachments, there is no way to monitor that all documents are properly processed, or even reviewed.
- » Scans of large documents can create file sizes beyond the set limits for email attachments.
- » Email is a key source of phishing and email attachments are a key source of malware, and email attacks are constantly evolving because email is perhaps the weakest link in IT systems. So building a new business process into email is a bad idea.

THE MODERN MAILROOM

As a legal organization's evolution becomes enduring, daily digital mail operation needs to transform from heroic to organized, secure and stable. The shift to a distributed workforce has not changed clients' minds about how they'd like their information handled, secured and governed.

Similarly, government bodies have not changed regulations regarding the protection of personally identifiable, private or sensitive information. A modern, productive digital mailroom is an essential operation for the new normal, and it can drive the last mile of a law firm's paper-to-digital transformation.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Steve Irons is President of DocSolid, makers of Airmail2, the digital mailroom built for law firms.

 docsolid.com/software/airmail2

2020

ALA'S Compensation and Benefits SURVEY

New job titles and responsibilities crop up every year as the legal industry evolves. ALA's Compensation and Benefits Survey helps define these new positions and their value to firms. This year's comprehensive report includes information from 850 firms in 7 regions.

PLUS: An Executive Summary contextualizes the report and a supplementary white paper discusses the COVID-19 pandemic's effect on compensation and more.

Survey participants have access to a dashboard that allows them to compare their firm to the competition — locally and nationally.

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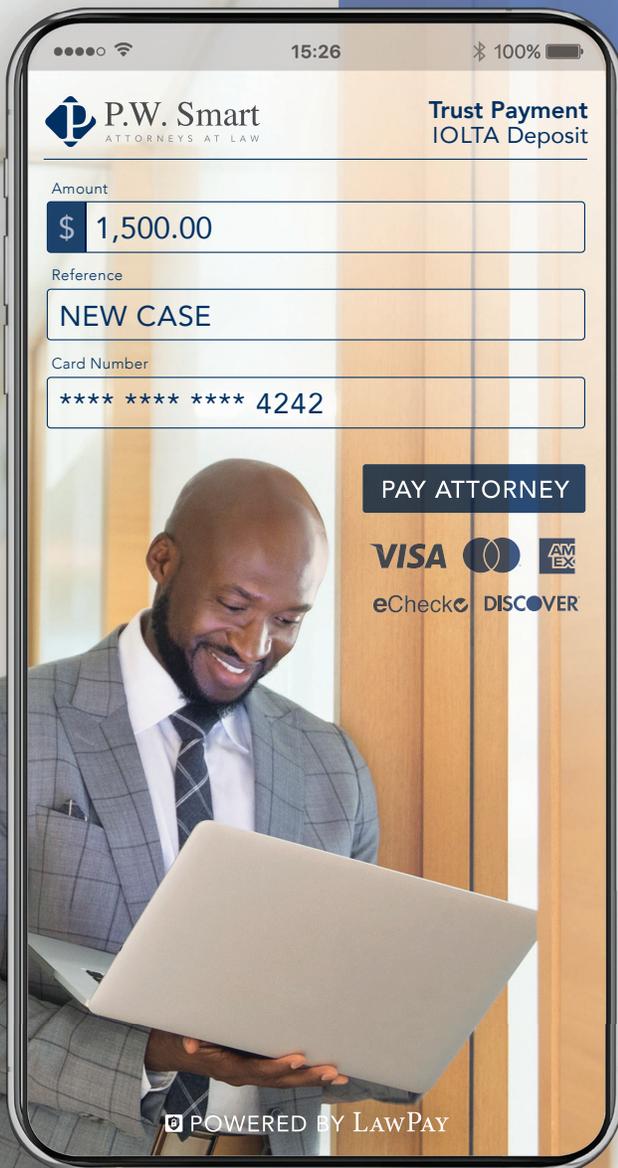
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“Our committee’s purpose is to serve as inclusion and diversity advocates for the advancement and expansion of underrepresented groups in the Association and in the legal community at large.”

ICYMI (In Case You Missed It): Free D&I Resources Available to You

The legal industry is the least diverse profession in the United States, so it is no wonder that the Association of Legal Administrators faces a similar fate in its lacking diversity and inclusion. Just over 70% of ALA’s membership is between the ages of 47 and 66, with the majority of that number also being white and female. Just over 20% of ALA members are male, and less than 17% of our members are minorities.

It is imperative to note that only focusing on diversity, without equal attention on inclusion, will fail *every single time*. Law firms have been focused on improving diversity statistics for decades yet continue to have serious issues related to firm morale and culture, leading to high turnover and little true diversity or inclusion. An inclusive firm works to create an environment that allows individuals to be their authentic selves and engages, enables and empowers employees to do their best work.

Our goal for the legal industry is for the makeup of our firms (lawyers, support staff and administrators) to be representative of the communities we serve. Simple, right? Yet we continue to fall unacceptably short of this goal and have a long road of work ahead of us. But this is where ALA’s Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) Committee can help! Our committee’s purpose is to serve as inclusion and diversity advocates for the advancement and expansion of underrepresented groups in the Association and in the legal community at large.

So, ICYMI, the DEIA Committee can help you, your firm and your chapter evolve in the D&I space in three areas.



EDUCATION

One of the biggest advantages of ALA membership is your access to chapter and law firm presentations and programs. The presentations are free of charge. However, when COVID-19 restrictions are lifted and travel is permitted again, we ask that reasonable associated travel costs be reimbursed. (There is no cost for virtual presentations.) Committee members are available to present educational content covering a variety of topics including:

-  Creating a Culturally Competent Law Firm
-  25 D&I Tips
-  All Inclusive: How Chapters Can Create a Welcoming Environment
-  Bullies in the Workplace (will be available soon!)

In response to the social uprising that our county has experienced since George Floyd's killing in May 2020, we have been hosting roundtable discussions along with a short presentation on racism in America. Our presentations are continuously updated to include the most relevant issues in the legal D&I space.

PRESIDENTS' AWARD OF EXCELLENCE AND BENCHMARKING GUIDE

By now, chapters participating in the 2021 Presidents' Award of Excellence have noticed the award criteria now includes more than a dozen D&I benchmarks. The criteria were repurposed from the former ALA Diversity Scorecard for chapters. While the criteria are currently optional, we hope they become required achievements for chapters in 2021 and beyond. Examples of the criteria include:

-  The chapter follows our committee on social media.
-  The chapter hosts a DEIA Committee presentation for its members.
-  The chapter has a formal D&I officer on its Board of Directors.

Many of you have inquired about the law firm scorecard, which was removed as an available resource in late 2019. Our committee has spent extensive time repurposing and restructuring it into the soon-to-be-released Law Firm D&I Benchmarking Guide. This benchmarking guide will help firms of all sizes navigate successful D&I initiatives, whether they have 3 or 3,000 lawyers. It also provides the right metric tracking for firms distributed throughout the spectrum — from those with no established D&I programs to those that have already made a lot of headway in this space. Members can expect this guide to be rolled out by the end of 2020.

SOCIAL MEDIA

If you haven't had a chance to follow us on social media — Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook — we encourage you to find us @ALADiversity! As you know, there is so much content out there right now and it's hard to sift through all of it. We have a dedicated team responsible for cultivating the information that is meaningful and relevant to law firm administrators.

In June 2020, we launched our first-ever monthly social media challenge, #ALABiasBusters. There are various ways to participate, and our next challenge starts Monday, November 30, so be sure to follow us on social media to join in on the fun and win some awesome prizes. A huge thank you is warranted to all the chapters that have committed to donating prizes.

Lastly, while each of the nine members of our committee works tirelessly to make strides in D&I, in order for us to succeed, we need the involvement of every ALA member and business partner. We encourage you to be part of this conversation. If you have any questions or would like additional information on how we can be of service to you, please feel free to email our committee at diversity@alanet.org.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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ARON SOLOMON

Senior Digital Strategist
NextLevel.com

“For lawyers, the ultimate goal is discovery. Who wouldn't want a larger reach and visibility for their Instagram account, if they have one?”

Why Lawyers Should Be Early Adopters of Instagram Reels

Instagram Reels is a new in-app function where users can create 15-second clips that are synced with fully licensed music, audio effects and filters. After a global soft launch in places such as Brazil, Reels launched in the United States in early August and has become wildly popular in many social media circles.

Instagram released Reels because they saw an opportunity to grab TikTok's market share in the United States and beyond. As the regulatory screws tighten around Chinese-owned TikTok, some large platform was bound to release their own equivalent, so Facebook-owned Instagram was a natural fit to eat up this social media market share. I think it can be a great marketing tool for legal organizations.

WHAT'S ITS PURPOSE?

What Reels does is simple and compelling. You can record and edit 15-second videos with audio, effects and new creative tools. (Learn more about one of them below.) You can share Reels with followers on your Feed and, if you have a public account, make them available to the wider community through a new space in Instagram's search (Explore).

Instagram users have seen a marked change over these past three weeks in the appearance of the Explore function. Reels in Explore is the first thing they now see when they search, and the company claims to have done this to offer "anyone the chance to become a creator on Instagram and reach new audiences on a global stage."

This is really a key point. Most people who use social media dream of creating a piece that can become viral. Importantly, going viral can be an overwhelming experience but a potentially very desirable one for building your brand and base of prospective clients.

WHAT MAKES IT A USEFUL TOOL?

I'm pretty bullish on Reels. As with any new social media app or functionality, it's invaluable to be an early adopter — which you can still do — especially if you'd like to use Reels for business purposes. Instagram Reels gives you a chance to try something totally new on social media, and I highly recommend trying out its functionality.

For lawyers, the ultimate goal is discovery. Who wouldn't want a larger reach and visibility for their Instagram account, if they have one? And if you don't, Reels should have you thinking twice about why you're not on a platform with such a massive reach.

As for the functionality of Reels, my favorite feature so far is something known as Transitions. Transitions allows you to create interesting and unique transitions between clips. Sure, apps such as TikTok can do similar things, but Reels brings a huge new audience to features such as Transitions because a large number of the Instagram audience hasn't used TikTok.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR USE

So here is how I recommend a lawyer use Transitions in the maximum 15 seconds allowed on Reels: Show three aspects of your life that would give prospective clients some insight into who you are as a person. See these 15 seconds as a unique opportunity to show three things about you in a way that is potentially very memorable.

Let's look at an example: You love to cook, run on trails and ride horses — great! Transitions in Reels allows you to give people your visual perspective for each of these activities. You would take a little video of you doing each of these activities then use the transition feature to pull them together. Often in Reels the person snaps their fingers or throws something in the air to mark the transition. Always think about interesting camera angles as well. Perhaps you want to do a POV — shot from your point of view, as if the camera is your eyes, rather than having the camera pointed at you.

While I don't recommend that you do anything dangerous or outlandish to do a Reels transition, there is ample room to show the same energy and creativity to prospective clients that you may one day show them as their lawyer.

So, practically, what's the advantage of being on the leading edge of not only a new technology but its newest and most popular feature? It shows that you're open to experimenting, learning and trying new things and that you aren't a stuffy person who takes themselves too seriously. In other words, Reels may be the polar opposite of that lawyer stock art that litters Google images.



Here are some examples to help get you started (see the web version of this article for the links):

- » This one shows a lawyer's Reel that uses Transitions.
- » This is a nonlegal example that also a solid use of Transitions.
- » And a funny one where the user shows that making these transitions isn't always easy and takes a little practice.

Ideally, you are searching for a balance between still being professional and showing something to the world that has the potential to garner a large audience.

I always remind clients that lawyers shouldn't be using any social media to immediately attract new clients. Rather, the goal is to build relationships with people through social media that will later bring some of them into your prospective client funnel. And then of course you will work some of these prospects through the stages of your funnel into clients.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Aron Solomon is the Senior Digital Strategist for NextLevel.com and was the Founder of LegalX at MaRS Discovery District in Toronto, Canada, one of the world's first legal technology accelerators. Elected to the Fastcase 50 in 2015, which recognizes the world's leading legal innovators, Solomon regularly consults for large global corporations, law firms and accounting firms. Solomon is now based in Berlin, Germany, where he is the Founder of Aron Brand and Cofounder of Mission Watch Company.

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“Most firms, over 60% of respondents, did not have a work-from-home policy prepandemic. Of those that did (39%), less than 20% included allowances for nonexempt employees.”

Law Firm Life After COVID-19

Where do we go from here?

March 2020 was the month my husband and I went to Ireland to celebrate my 40th birthday. It was a trip that was months in the making and, when we left the United States, COVID-19 was largely relegated to China. There was no reason to think things would change.

Four days later, an ocean away from our children, we began to receive well-meaning updates from our friends and family: the U.S. borders would soon be closed to all non-U.S. residents due to rising COVID-19 cases worldwide.

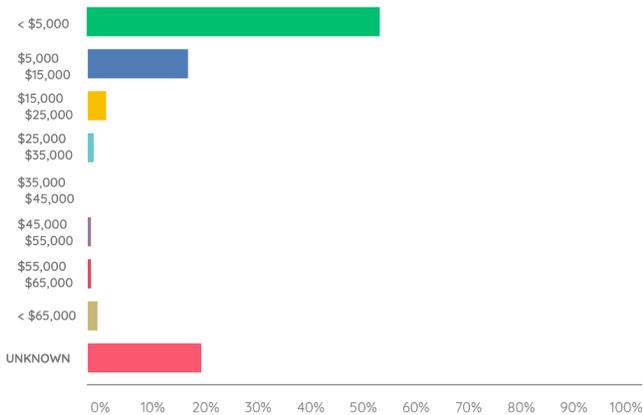
My husband and I tried our best to enjoy ourselves, but three days later the Irish government shut the country down. The streets were empty; all bars and restaurants were ordered to close. We had to get out — and fast! I was in communication with my firm and participating in COVID-19 taskforce calls from Ireland. My husband and I made it back to the States, and the following week, my firm sent us all home to work remotely — where we all remain today.

While your COVID-19 story may not be as Orwellian as mine, there is no doubt that the pandemic has knocked you, and your firm, for a loop. Although the “new normal” has proven to have some positives among the drawbacks, one thing is clear: Things will never be the same.

Pre-COVID-19, it was an absurd notion for many that nonexempt employees would ever have access to technology to enable them to work from home. “How can they be trusted/monitored/productive?” But suddenly we were forced to push forward and implement such technology options. Many of us were not prepared for the speed at which we were required to outfit the population of our firm to work from home successfully.



If your firm had to purchase equipment to get everyone remote what was spent?



I decided to take on a research project* to find out just what effect COVID-19 was having on our firms. After polling 363 ALA members, I found that 9.05% of the respondents spent \$15,000 or more in getting their firm personnel ready to work from home, with 2.34% of the respondents spending more than \$65,000.

Most firms, over 60% of respondents, did not have a work-from-home policy prepandemic. Of those that did (39%), less than 20% included allowances for nonexempt employees. Eight months later, though, we have proven it can be done. We have seen that all levels of employees can work remotely successfully if their functions allow them to. So does this mean remote working is here to stay?

"It all depends on the industry, because you can see people are working remotely and will likely continue to do so," says Ashlee Grant, a board-certified Labor and Employment Partner with BakerHostetler. "Folks are looking to adopt a policy that can be broader and more long-term. We all need to look at being more flexible."

Does this mean eligible job descriptions should be updated to include verbiage about work-from-home flexibility? "Absolutely!" she says. "Employers are going to see an influx of requests to work from home, even after COVID. The hard work has already been done — take the data, analyze it and adjust as needed."

WORKLIFE AFTER COVID-19

Of course, there are other options. The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) created short-term telecommuting agreements and temporary telecommuting policies that can be used during the pandemic, should your firm opt to continue work-from-home allowances for the near future.

Based on my survey, I believe a hybrid option is the best choice and will be the choice of many firms in the future. Of the respondents, 30% indicated they would be open to allowing attorneys to work from home at least a few days a week post-COVID-19; 26% said they were open to the same for exempt staff; and 16.21% indicated they were open to the same for nonexempt staff. An overwhelming number, 87.91%, indicated they were not considering a 100% virtual environment.

There are ways to ensure productivity and security with a remote workforce, too. "With technology, [the Fair Labor Standards Act] is adapting. There have been cases of email issues, time off the clock, etc.," says Grant. "Employers are going to have to rely on technology to track these issues — if they're using our network and our equipment, I see no issues with tracking/monitoring. Of course, how expensive is it? That is the first things folks will ask, but I do think it is necessary if we continue to work from home long-term."

Monitoring tools that track productivity and mediate potential security threats do exist. However, these tools are not without risks. According to a recent SHRM article, monitoring is subject to a variety of federal and state laws. Additionally, you should communicate to employees that they will be monitored.

But the biggest concern may be a loss of trust: 73% of employees felt introducing technologies to monitor their work product would damage trust between the employee and their employers, according to a survey cited by SHRM.

Data protection is another concern associated with remote work. Ensuring secure remote access is essential to meeting data privacy regulations. Each firm needs to review and revise their technology policies to ensure they are compliant with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), local laws, as well as ethical and professional responsibility requirements. Once finalized, the firm must ensure that each employee with remote access has reviewed and understands the policy and will operate within those parameters.

OFFICE SPACE

Continued remote working has the potential to be a win-win for the firm and its employees. Travel costs have decreased, and this period has certainly proven that some meetings really could have been an email. The firm's most considerable money-saver, though, is real estate. With the success of work-from-home, some may consider reducing their office size.

However, given concerns over social distancing and high-touch surface areas, the changes needed may not be as obvious as one would think.

“Some markets talked about putting attorneys in a shared space, and that can work in theory — reduce footprint — but that doesn’t allow for recommended social distancing,” says Kenneth Wiesehuegel, a Practice Area Leader for design firm Gensler’s South Central Region.

A recent Gensler survey showed that only 10% of U.S. employees want to work from home full-time, but those who want to return to work expect crucial changes to the workplace. So will space design change completely?

“We have seen a lot of trends focused on health and wellness. This is pushing it further — good air quality and outdoor space,” says Wiesehuegel. “The desire for more outdoor space is accelerating, and new buildings are providing that. With existing buildings, we think we will continue to see biophilic design elements like a moss wall, green wall, indoor planters. A space that creates a sense of the outdoors and a sense of well-being with the added benefit of oxygenating the air.”

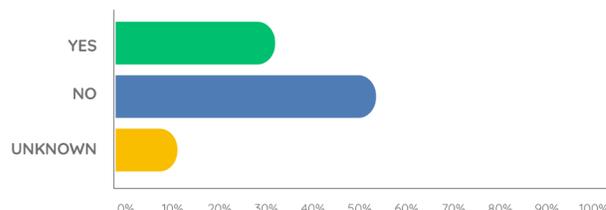
Additionally, it’s important that all people, both in-office and remote workers, have the opportunity to meet and that the space provided lends itself to doing that safely.

My previous firms traditionally had two office sizes: partner and associate. In recent years, the new firm buildouts making headlines featured single-sized offices and lots of open and collaborative spaces. In my experience, most attorneys were using their offices half the time due to travel.

“If you need to be in the office, you ‘book’ an office, like a conference room. Hoteling offices are appropriate if there are proper cleaning protocols overnight,” Wiesehuegel says. Freshfields announced in August they are implementing an “office release system,” which means someone else can use your office if you are working remotely. This will allow the firm’s new space to be 20% smaller than their existing space.



Has your firm considered scaling down or subleasing on your current office space?



While these small changes will have long-lasting impacts on the market and the way firms operate in the future, I do not believe firms are moving to 100% virtual options any time soon. Husch Blackwell launched a 100% virtual office in the midst of the pandemic; however, the data from my survey suggests most firms will not follow suit.

“We expect to see work-from-home and flexible work arrangements being implemented on a broader scale and becoming a permanent part of company policies,” says Anya Marmuscak, Vice President and Commercial Real Estate Adviser at JLL. “This doesn’t necessarily equate to less office space and office demand, but the purpose and the use of the office will evolve. Surveys are showing that people want to work from home one to two days per week, not every day, due to



Do you prefer to go back to the office or continue to work from home?



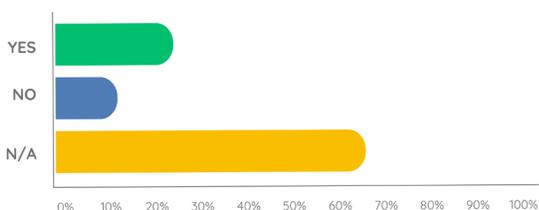
They want the higher job satisfaction that comes with working with other in-person as well as opportunity for spontaneous face-to-face meetings and increased inter-personal contact with colleagues.

There is an opportunity for law firms to lean into new ways of working that were previously thought out of reach, and potentially reduce real estate assigned to this subset of workers.

distractions, home environment and need for face-to-face interactions, etc.” This is on par with what the data from my survey suggests.

“Initially most projects and lease decisions were put on hold, and unless a lease was expiring in the near term, I was advising them to wait,” says Marmuscak. “Many tenants are delaying decisions in the short-term and looking at opportunities to restructure leases. We are taking a much harder look at employee utilization of space; companies that aren’t studying this need to.”

 If your firm was in the process of looking for new space, will you be scaling back?



So what does that mean for the downtown, Class A office space we associate with law firms? “The future of the office will be designed around the talent the organizations are trying to attract,” says Marmuscak. Now that they know they can work from home effectively, a certain number of quality candidates will be uninterested in living in or commuting to the urban core.

That may result in some organizations downsizing their headquarters in favor of “satellite” offices in outlying neighborhoods or suburbs, Marmuscak says. Employers could use the lack of a commute (and its accompanying expenses) to offer employees a lower salary — emphasizing their flexibility.

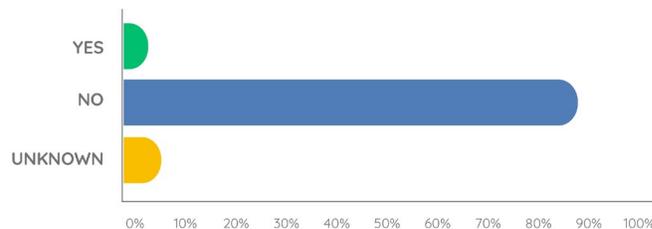
Some may even opt for coworking spaces: “There are no upfront capital costs, and they offer shorter terms with total flexibility. You can scale those offices based on where talent lives and based on business and individual employee needs.”

WFH PITFALLS

Working from home is not without its issues. Take for instance my 6-year-old, who believes she’s a star every time she crashes a Zoom meeting. People inevitably multitask; the lines of work and family get blurred, and feeling torn between them causes guilt. Setting clear guidelines and expectations of availability — while realizing that flexibility is key — is a must in a work-from-home environment. With most schools now in session and many parents playing teacher and employee, giving them grace and understanding goes a long way, too.

Then there are equipment issues. Until recently, I was struggling to do everything on my small laptop and an old computer chair. I realized in order to be as productive as I could be in the office, I needed my home office to have the same functionality of my work office. But how should firms handle expense reimbursement and possible accommodations for home offices?

 Is your firm considering a 100% virtual environment?



“Some of this will depend on how much they are working from home,” says Grant. “If [the employee works] entirely from home, I could see that being an accommodation. Of course, it could at some point become an undue burden, so there needs to be a balance. So we need to look at what is being asked in the expense. Is it an actual accommodation being requested? Is the employee asking or is the employer requiring work-from-home?”

There is also the loss of face-to-face interaction. A recent JLL survey found that 44% of people working from home miss human interaction, and it’s not being replaced by virtual meetings. People want to be in the office and engaged.

“More face-to-face interaction promotes higher levels of innovation and helps the bottom line, improving the profitability and innovation index,” Wiesehuegel says. Gensler’s survey backs this up: respondents’ top reasons for wanting to return to the office were meeting with colleagues, socializing with colleagues and face-to-face interactions.

Working remotely sometimes feels like working alone. Some of the best assignments and most innovative ideas come from those hallway and café encounters. This has a negative impact on all employees — but it has the potential to be far more damaging to employees of color. With those chance encounters all but eliminated, people of color could be left behind due to opportunity inequity or distance bias.

According to a *New York Times* article, distance bias describes a dynamic that can occur in a remote work environment. Because people put more emphasis on those closer to them and don’t try to make connections where there isn’t proximity, they only maintain relationships with the people they already know.

When a leader is looking for someone to work on a project, most go to the comfort zone of people who remind them of themselves. Managers must be aware of and trained on these issues so that they can ensure work is distributed equally.

HOW LEGAL MANAGERS CAN HELP LEAD

I believe there are a few keys to meaningful engagement and high morale during this period:

- ✓ Connection and communication
- ✓ Recognizing hard work and effort
- ✓ Showing your humanity
- ✓ Encouraging actual breaks or time off

My office sends out a weekly digital word search and hosts a weekly staff meeting, coffee chats and lunches. I created a *COVID Chronicles* newsletter that includes funny memes; a section for aww-ing over at-home “coworkers” (usually a dog or a child); and employee recommendations for books, TV shows, movies and new hobbies. We encourage body movements by occasionally asking people to increase their step count or do a form of seated or standing exercise. Lastly, a few weeks ago I began “showing my humanity” in Friday emails. I usually discuss things I am struggling with and end with a message of hope in the form of a TED Talk or article. I ask that our folks view or read the material to discuss at our next staff meeting.

The biggest job of any firm leader is to protect the firm culture

and engage the people it employs. Do we move people to work or move work to people? I think the answer is clear, open the option of both and let the work, productivity and retention speak for itself.

**The online survey was open to over 6,900 ALA members in 33 countries between July 13 and July 24, 2020. Each respondent worked within a law office or legal department environment. The 363 anonymous responses represent a wide range of positions, seniority levels, roles, ages and geographical areas.*



TUNE IN FOR MORE

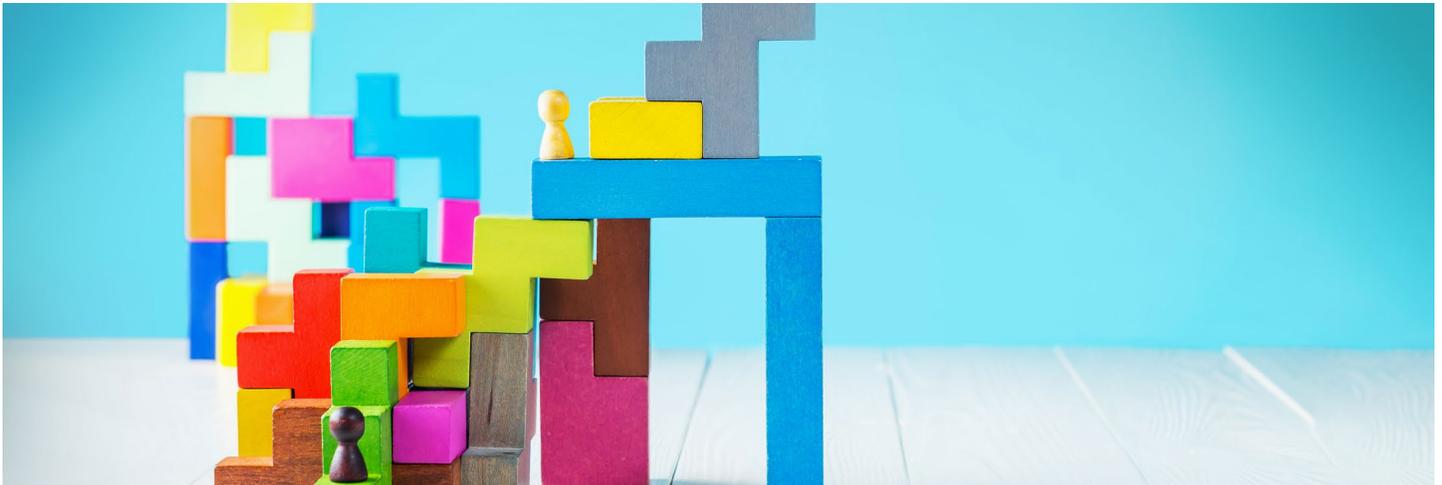
Monique Mahler recently sat down for an episode of *Legal Management Talk* to discuss her research findings, as well as her experience as the winner of the Foundation of ALA’s Student Legal Career Scholarship. Listen to the episode at alanet.org/podcast.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Monique Mahler is the HR Manager for BakerHostetler’s Houston and Dallas offices. She is the first recipient of the Foundation of the Association of Legal Administrators’ Legal Education Scholarship. Mahler received a bachelor’s in sociology from the University of Houston – Downtown. She will obtain her master’s degree in legal administration from the University of Denver’s Sturm College of Law in May 2021.

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DREW AMOROSO
Founder
DueCourse

“
If we want associates to truly and consistently engage in development, we should encourage them to consider the why behind their plan first.”

5 Ways to Guide Career Development Plans for Associates

These tips can help set your associates up for success.

“Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I’ll spend the first four sharpening the ax.” In line with this familiar quip, it’s no surprise that **planning and preparation are an essential aspect of career development.**

Nonetheless, many law firms overlook the power of investing in career development planning, and many associates massively underestimate the power of a well-crafted, well-executed plan.

The primary challenge with development plans is teaching associates how to build them in a way that is meaningful, incremental and accessible — and then how to put them into action.

Below are four key concepts to consider including as part of your career development planning.

1. START WITH THE “WHY”

Every great development plan should begin with identifying a “why.” The why is your reason, your cause, your purpose, your motivation for investing time and energy into pursuing a development path in the first place.

In other words, if we want associates to truly and consistently engage in development, we should encourage them to consider the why behind their plan first.

The why could be any number of things: to move closer to promotion or partnership, the intellectual stimulation that comes with developing a new skill set, the satisfaction that comes from representing a certain type of client, financial gain or any other number of motivations that are unique to each associate.

Understanding and keeping your motivation top of mind is key to making long-lasting, impactful changes. A strong why encourages you to stay excited about pursuing new opportunities and helps push through obstacles that you'll inevitably encounter as you start to make changes.

Try this: As your associates develop their plans, begin by walking them through a simple exercise that invites them to consider and write out the why behind their plan. If you're looking for a place to start, Simon Sinek is an author and motivational speaker who has written extensively on the topic and has a number of resources you can consult to develop a simple why exercise.

2. PROVIDE A SIMPLE, ACCESSIBLE FRAMEWORK

When crafting an outline of the plan, remember to keep it simple and accessible. Many development plans try to do too much by requiring the associate to look too far into the future or create an elaborate set of multitiered goals and action steps.

Asking an associate to craft this type of plan, particularly early on their career, can be confusing and discouraging if the associate is at a place in their career where the answers to these questions are unclear.

A well-designed plan is one that allows the associate to have an intentional path forward but that also allows for natural shifts that come with the passing of time and more experience.

Try to keep the plans simple and to the point — a succinct, simple plan encourages action and makes it more likely that the associate will engage with and refer to the plan more often.

Try this: Use a model that encourages associates to keep the plan to one page. It's valuable to have additional pages that include ideas and other aspirational goals, but reducing the specific, actionable part of the plan to a single page will make the plan more accessible.

3. DEFINE EXPECTATIONS AND PROVIDE EXAMPLES

Development plans should be driven by the expectations the firm has of the associate as well as the associate's vision for their unique path forward.



“The most effective associate development plans are both strategic and flexible,” says Lena Kravets Capehart, a Training and Development Manager at Ballard Spahr LLP. “Associate development plans should be tied to the strategic goals and plans of the firm. They also should be strategically tied to the associate’s own career goals.”

As such, part of the plan development process should be educating the associates on the specific expectations the firm has regarding the associate’s progress. This includes things like practice skills, citizenship, leadership, client development or other competencies.

Providing examples is also key to helping an associate craft an actionable plan. Share sample plans that have been made by other attorneys at the firm to give associates some clarity on what a plan should look like.

Importantly, invite senior attorneys to explain their career trajectory. One of the most challenging parts of crafting a development plan is the uncertainty around what to expect as your career unfolds. Hearing how the paths of other attorneys at the firm have been a unique mix of planning and flexibility will provide some clarity and generate ideas.

“Administrators, partners and mentors can help expose associates to a wide variety of career paths,” says Capehart. “This helps associates understand that there are many ways to define and achieve success. They can also help associates understand the big-picture strategy of their law firm and how the associate’s practice fits into that strategy. Helping associates see the big pictures goes a long way in increasing engagement both in the firm and in their own personal career development.”

Try this: Provide several sample plans that your associates can use as a starting point. Encourage them to be creative and take ownership for the development process.

4. FOCUS ON INCREMENTAL ACTION

Of course, a development plan is only effective if it results in action. Given the nature of a busy associate practice, encourage associates to include incremental action steps in their plan.

A list of action steps will provide smaller “entry points” that will encourage consistent participation and prevent goals from seeming unattainable. For example, if the associate’s goal is to take her first deposition within the next 90 days, then a list of action steps might include:

- » Expressing to the partners they work with that she wants to take a deposition, and asking them to keep her in mind for an opportunity
- » Shadowing two depositions
- » Spending one hour watching/reading a Practising Law Institute (PLI) course on depositions

Try this: Build incremental action steps into the development plan’s framework and give examples of how to include a list of tiny actions that will help the associate move incrementally toward a larger goal.

5. PROVIDE ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS AND ENCOURAGE SHORTER REVIEW PERIODS

Finally, consider what kind of accountability mechanisms you can establish to help keep associates engaged. Accountability mechanisms could include:

- » Quarterly working-lunch meetings led by senior associates or partners that are designed for working on/reviewing development plans
- » Scheduled meetings with partner mentors
- » Pairing with peers who are responsible for checking in with one another

A well-designed plan is one that allows the associate to have an intentional path forward but that also allows for natural shifts that come with the passing of time and more experience.

“Ultimately, development plans are only as effective as the execution of the plan,” says Capehart. “Many plans end up forgotten in a folder somewhere. Associates should revisit their plans regularly and revise as necessary. Even something as simple as calendaring a personal check-in for yourself at regular intervals, with the written plan attached to the calendar appointment, can be a great help.”

Whatever accountability mechanisms you choose to promote, make sure they encourage a strategic review of the plan every 90 days.

Working sessions or accountability check-ins don’t need to be more than 30 to 60 minutes. The point is to keep the goals top of mind and continue to apply light pressure with the goal of achieving incremental progress.

Try this: Within the plan, ask the associate to identify how they are going to remain accountable and provide firm-sponsored options that will promote consistent engagement.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Drew Amoroso is an Attorney, Public Speaker and Founder of DueCourse, a mobile application that helps professionals strengthen their workday mindset and show up at their best at work.

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ROSS FISHMAN, JD
 Chief Executive Officer
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I Don't Want Your Questions During Webinars. Here's Why.

Let me disagree with the conventional wisdom. I don't want to take audience questions during my webinar presentations.

For the past few months, I've been conducting five to seven webinars per week for firms and associations worldwide. When a speaker is hired to present a program on a particular topic, their job is to spend the hour providing a valuable education while keeping the audience consistently entertained.

Online presenters must work much harder to accomplish these goals. Packing up your briefcase and walking out in the middle of a bad *in-person* presentation is difficult; there's enormous social pressure to stay. But it's much easier to exit a mediocre webinar — just quietly click the "Leave" button. Today's presentations can't lag for a single *minute*.

Sixty minutes go by fast, but a good presenter can pack an enormous amount of content into an hour if they can strictly control the pacing. I don't want to interrupt the smooth flow of a well-timed presentation or hold back 15 minutes of that precious time fielding random questions at the end. Personally, I can't recall any recent webinars that were enhanced by random questions from the attendees.

I think the presenter's goal should be to pack 55 solid minutes of powerful content into a 60-minute time slot. I know what I want the audience to learn — in this narrow timeframe, I've been selected as the subject-matter expert and they're paying me to provide my best advice in the allotted time.

I'll have already done all the research, worked with dozens or hundreds of clients on this specific issue and, as a result, know just about everything available on this topic. I've distilled an enormous amount of data down to just one tight hour, discarding anything that's not critical.

“A great movie doesn't interrupt its flow by polling the audience to inquire whether they have experienced a similar situation. A bad movie will remain a bad movie regardless of any inserted interaction.”

I'll have carefully woven into the presentation a selection of stories, examples, evidence and bullets, and supported it with eye-catching visuals. I'll typically have scrupulously curated 50 to 100 PowerPoint slides for the hour. (I know, experts suggest that you should only have 10 to 20, but this is what works best for me.)

I'll have edited at least two hours of material into the tightest possible hour, added humor where possible, and rehearsed it literally dozens of times to get the timing and transitions just right before the first person sees it. I typically spend at least 100 hours preparing every presentation.

It's like a movie — there's a carefully structured flow of information with a very intentional beginning, middle and end. A good presentation should lead the viewers along, step by step, telling a memorable story, just like a trial lawyer's closing argument to the jury. Then it must be tweaked and tailored to target that firm or organization's particular audience.

THE FALLACY OF "AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT"

Among the hottest buzzwords today is "audience engagement." Experts claim that to maintain viewer attention, you must solicit their active participation, asking them questions and taking polls. I've found that's not true. We're all accustomed to TV and movies, which are one-way entertainment. A great movie doesn't interrupt its flow by polling the audience to inquire whether they have experienced a similar situation. ("When you were last held hostage by a terrorist, how did you handle it? What would you like Tom Cruise to do next?") A bad movie will remain a bad movie regardless of any inserted interaction.

Everyone thinks they need interactivity to keep them focused. But that's simply not true. My take is that a bored audience means that previous presenters didn't do their job well enough. Maintaining attendees' attention on a small phone or tablet screen is extremely challenging — especially in today's world, when we are even more attached to our devices. That means today's presenters must work even harder to ensure that every single minute of the presentation is compelling and entertaining.

WHY YOU DON'T WANT TO END WITH Q&AS

I recently watched a 60-minute webinar by a leader in the field where I learned a few useful tips. Unfortunately, I only received 30 minutes of total education because, following "generally accepted webinar rules," she left 15 minutes at the end for audience questions. And, as always, most of them were either pretty far afield or specific to the

questioner's personal situation, i.e., not useful to many others. So, after starting 3 to 5 minutes late to ensure the late logins didn't miss anything, followed by another 5 to 7 minutes of basic housekeeping and then holding the last 15 minutes for questions, it meant there were just 30 minutes for her actual content.

We missed roughly 45% of the potential value from the program. The presenter was an expert who assuredly had 15 minutes more wisdom she could have imparted, but instead, she spent it answering narrow questions that only applied to a few people.

A good question means the speaker failed.

My feeling is that if I get a question that is universally applicable to the entire audience, then I missed something during my preparation. When that happens, I immediately add that information into the slide deck. This continually improves the presentation and ensures that no one's distractedly wondering about that point the next time. I never want an audience confused; I need them enthralled.

I think it's preferable to answer individualized questions after the program ends. I'll either call or email the person offline or stay online a bit longer — like when people used to line up to chat with the presenter after an in-person program. That allows me to thoroughly engage with the individual rather than wasting everyone's valuable time on something that isn't universally applicable.



HANDLING THE CHAT BOX

Of course, I'm always happy to take important questions during the program if they cast a wide enough net. I do so by having a moderator screen the questions typed into the chat box. If they receive a question that applies broadly to the audience — that is, is it something nearly every viewer is likely to be wondering about? If so, by all means, chime in. But if not, I'll respond after the program. The few minutes it'll take to respond to Attendee Joe's personal question will force out 3 to 5 minutes of other material that I've already vetted as vital enough to share with everyone.

Also, I don't like taking questions at the end since that's when people start logging off. I've seen the attendee statistics — as soon as you get to the "Q&A" slide, attendance plummets. Most of us have learned that it's likely to be a waste of time. And that's 15 minutes I could have spent teaching you something that my experience suggests would have helped you do your job better.

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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ELI NUSSBAUM

Managing Director
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Critical Security Measures for Smaller Law Firms

While 2020 put many businesses and industries on pause, cybercriminals have accelerated and evolved their efforts further. That means cybersecurity is more important than ever. Is your firm equipped to handle whatever security threats come its way?

For many smaller firms, the answer to that question is no. For any number of compelling reasons, smaller firms are often missing a critical focus on cyberthreats. If your firm has yet to put as much emphasis on security as it should, now is the time to get on the path to a better program. The first step is understanding the nature of today's security risks and how to combat them.

COMMON SECURITY RISKS

At smaller firms, both security infrastructure and placing a priority on security can be lacking. Servers often sit in an unlocked closet or corner of the office, which effectively leaves all of the firm's work and data unprotected. User devices, employed more frequently than ever, may not include key mobile device management functions, so every time someone sends or receives an email or downloads a document to a personal device, the firm's risk exposure increases.

Risk exposure also increases when employees use unknown and unsecured Wi-Fi networks for firm business. While less frequent these days, a prime example of this is lawyers traveling and using hotel or airport Wi-Fi. When employees operate on random networks, all communications to and from their device have the potential to be intercepted.

In the days before email was encrypted, a common attack method was to infiltrate the data flow, wait for a good conversation to hijack and then inject a new communication in an attempt to have funds rerouted. Email encryption has addressed some of the risk; however, failing to secure devices can open the door to the same types of breaches.

“Data security is no different than physical security — if something looks wrong, don't trust it. We're used to identifying physical risk because we see it every day. It's time to start thinking about digital risk in the same manner.”

KEY SECURITY MEASURES

Combating today's security risks requires an awareness of those risks and how they impact your firm. You already know that your physical data needs to be protected and maintained within the firm's control, but electronic data must also be protected under a similar umbrella. As the owner of that data, your firm needs to determine how people are accessing its data and protect it where it resides and when it is moving between devices. Then safeguards need to be in place to ensure it is encrypted on devices, when communicating back to your organization and that you can remove it from devices when it should no longer be there.

Data security is no different than physical security — if something looks wrong, don't trust it. We're used to identifying physical risk because we see it every day. It's time to start thinking about digital risk in the same manner. You monitor the people you interact with, the ones you let into your spaces and how freely they are able to move about your office; you should also be monitoring which players are connecting and how they are connecting to your systems just as vigilantly.

Think back to the example of lawyers on hotel Wi-Fi — even if data in transit is encrypted, whoever controls the Wi-Fi has access to the devices on that network. Those individuals can potentially read or exfiltrate data if the device is not properly protected and encrypted. Device management ensures that you restrict access to your data to only outlets under the firm's control, including minimum security standards such as patch levels, malware protection and encryption and authentication requirements.

Of particular relevance today are the various devices your staff are using remotely. Do you know all of the laptops, phones, tablets or other devices your employees connect to your network? Even if they are not firm-issued, every device used to access your data needs to have mobile device management and security parameters. They must be protected with approved malware tools and be running current versions of operating systems — in short, they need to not be easily hackable. If devices don't meet minimum requirements, they must be denied access, even if their users have proper credentials.

There are many simple security measures that can be put in place that are often overlooked by small firms. For example, firms should require complex passwords that change every 90 days. Data should be encrypted both at rest and in transit. Multifactor authentication should be in place, requiring information beyond a password to access email and systems in order to thwart attackers if credentials are compromised. Internal systems should always be up to date, with all hardware and software continually patched to prevent third parties from taking advantage of known flaws.

Incredibly important is security awareness training: Employees should undergo regular security awareness training on current threats. End-users are the final line of defense for your organization, and if they aren't familiar with what to look out for or how they should react, they won't. Security measures are only useful if your employees understand why and how to use them.



GOING FORWARD

Small firms are realizing they haven't taken all the necessary steps to optimize their security posture. Now is the time to address your most critical security gaps.

No firm can implement foolproof security in a single effort. From a budgetary perspective, there are only so many things you can do at once. From a user perspective, there's only so much change you can impose upon your staff. Your firm's security posture should continually evolve to meet the changing threat landscape.

Consider what is most critical today — things like security awareness training, enforcing password complexity and encrypting devices — and implement that first. Then consider what you want to focus on next year and your wish list for the future.

The key to security is constant evolution and addressing it in a way that's supportive of the main goal of your business: serving your clients. The right security implementation will give you all of the tools and practices you need to keep your firm safe without interfering with your ability to provide great client service and generate revenue for the firm.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Eli Nussbaum is a Managing Director at Keno Kozie Associates. He joined the firm in 1998 as part of its Y2K audit team. Nussbaum then became a full-time engineer, holding every position within the department before taking on an account management role. During his tenure with Keno Kozie, Nussbaum has focused on physical, virtual and cloud infrastructure design and implementation for both infrastructure and client environments.

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The Rise in Interest in Lateral Moves in the Legal Industry

The pandemic has affected every facet of life, from employment to working styles, and the legal industry is no exception. Experts will agree that they have seen a rise in lateral moves from legal associates and partners between 2017–2019. So far in 2020, there has also been a notable rise in attorneys who will consider a transition and are open to considering positions not previously explored, including nontraditional roles.

Prior to the pandemic, associates typically made lateral moves for a variety of reasons, usually, within two to five years from the start of their career. For some, a change in environment was crucial. Whether it was a change in firm size or a need for more structure, some lawyers sought out a different firm dynamic that best fit their experience and work style. Others wanted to shift practice areas, either to become more generalized or more specialized. Additionally, some made a move to further their career path to be better positioned for partnership or in-house opportunities.

Financial circumstances also played a large role in sparking interest in candidates to make a change. The two biggest reasons for a lateral change were related to monetary compensation and billable hour requirements. Prepandemic, many lawyers looked for opportunities with higher salaries and quicker growth, with lateral moves being the fastest way to take advantage of that.

Finally, some associates aimed to make lateral movements to achieve a better sense of work-life balance. The legal profession can take a toll on an associate's personal life and family time, where they could feel they are often left sacrificing one for the other. Because of this, some lawyers and partners chose to make career shifts that supported a better sense of balance and mental health — something that still rings true today.

MAKING DECISIONS AMID A PANDEMIC

Like countless other industries, the legal industry has witnessed its own changes as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. For many lawyers at the associate level, when the pandemic first began, it created uncertainty but also a renewed sense of motivation and focus on individual career journeys and the potential for seizing new opportunities.

Some law firms and search firms saw associates leave big cities to move back to their hometown and be closer to friends and family. With the pandemic necessitating a remote working environment, attorneys now had the flexibility to make this change — a concept not previously embraced by many employers. With firms needing to quickly react to current circumstances, they have truly been thrust into the tech/digital age and are now catching up with other industries that have previously offered the same level of flexibility (without sacrificing growth opportunities or compensation). Law firms have found that, contrary to previous concerns, work quality and productivity have remained at prepandemic levels, despite attorneys moving out of the office.

Law firm partners have also made career adjustments as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Most notably, partners have begun leaving law firms and moving to roles in-house much sooner in their career journeys compared to previous years. Search firms have also found that many partners are even retiring earlier than anticipated, resulting in profound succession planning opportunities. Those who have retired appear to have new outlooks on life, focusing on mental health and quality time with family.

For associates looking to make a lateral move in this current environment, there are a variety of approaches to take. Candidates should focus on being open-minded, being active in local bar associations, connecting with law school alumni, as well as keeping platforms like LinkedIn up to date. Even if passively keeping an eye out, it is also worth beginning a dialogue with a professional legal recruiter.

Putting in the time and research to find the perfect career fit is invaluable, but experienced legal recruiters are also a resource to further assist in providing firsthand knowledge and to learn about unlisted positions.

Additionally, for candidates who are already in transition but not currently employed may want to consider contract/interim work to keep their skills sharp and to continue to stay engaged with their legal community.



The previous year-over-year rise in lateral moves by associates has looked differently amid the COVID-19 pandemic, and it has also created the opportunity for job seekers and employers alike to place an emphasis on family time and mental health. As the legal industry looks to adapt to the “new normal,” these trends will ultimately continue and play an even larger role in decision-making well into the future.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Elyse “Ellie” Kelly is an Attorney Search Director for Special Counsel’s Parker + Lynch Legal, covering multiple legal markets (Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Michigan) with a focus on direct hire/permanent placement of associates, counsel and partners in law firms of all sizes, as well as in-house attorneys within international companies. She earned her JD at FAMU College of Law (an HBCU), graduating cum laude. After law school, she joined a boutique firm as an Associate focusing on real estate, corporate and construction matters. She currently resides in the Cincinnati, Ohio, area with her husband and rescue dog.



What's Next? 4 Legal Trends in the New Normal

This year has forced legal organizations to change how and where they work. As firms transition to a new normal, their focus has shifted to digital transformation, remote work mobility, workplace redesign and effective financial strategies to help them achieve success in an ever-changing environment.

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1. Digital Transformation

In the legal industry, digital efforts that were once part of long-term plans have been accelerated to keep pace with the rate of change and mitigate security risk. Firms are investing in technology initiatives that will continue to help their employees work efficiently from home or the office, and they are looking for digitally based solutions for some of the day-to-day processes.

These initiatives are leading firms to invest in laptops, virtual private networks (VPNs), data centers, cybersecurity and cloud-based management systems. Law firms have begun to embrace digital transformation and realize it is essential to their continued success.

2. Remote Work Mobility

Unlike other industries, law firms were reluctant to adapt policies surrounding remote work in years past. As the pandemic drove most firms to work 100% remote, there is a new focus to implement “work-from-anywhere” policies.

Moving forward, many lawyers and legal staff will look for continued flexibility to work both in the office and at home. This hybrid model provides the job satisfaction that comes with face-to-face meetings but also allows a work-from-home option, creating an opportunity to maximize the in-office time.

Law firm leaders will need to be open to accommodating this additional flexibility and introduce a work-from-home policy that meet the needs of their current employees while staying competitive within the market.

Anniversaries, Awards and Appointments

Members on the Move »



Freeha G. Ayala, a member of the Mile High Chapter, is now Firm Administrator at Steenrod Schwartz & McMinimee, LLP, in Denver, Colorado.



Randolph C. Becker, a member of the Metropolitan Detroit Chapter, is now Chief Operating Officer at Bodman PLC in Detroit, Michigan.



Cindy L. Bennett, a member of the Orange County Chapter, is now Firm Administrator at Vogt | Resnick | Sherak, LLP, in Newport Beach, California.



JoAnne M. Gann, a member of the Mile High Chapter, is now Office Administrator at Nixon Shefrin Ogburn Drew, PC, in Greenwood Village, Colorado.



Janelle McPoland, CLM, a member of the Oregon Chapter, is now Controller at D'Amore Law Group, P.C., in Lake Oswego, Oregon.



Shelby M. Nusrala, CLM, PHR, a member of the Greater Kansas City Chapter, is now Certified Legal Manager at Dysart Taylor Cotter McMonigle & Montemore, P.C., in Kansas City, Missouri.



Janet Wulf, CPA, a member of the New Mexico Chapter, is now Chief Operating Officer at Deutsch Kerrigan, LLP, in New Orleans, Louisiana.



Stacey Zimmermann, a member of the Atlanta Chapter, is now Director of Operations at Hobson & Hobson PC in Marietta, Georgia.



Sending Our Condolences

Retired ALA member George Marcus "Mark" Dover III passed away in early November at the age of 78, according to an obituary in the *Cody Enterprise*. Between 1991 and 2005, he worked as a Legal Administrator in the areas of Salt Lake City, Utah, and Marietta, Georgia. He served as President of the Beehive Chapter (Utah) of ALA for 1997-1998. Dover retired in 2006 and lived in Utah. Our thoughts are with his family, friends and former colleagues.

What's Happening at Headquarters

There's always a lot going on at ALA headquarters in Chicago. Here's a snapshot of what's in store for the coming weeks.

Register Now: ALA Right Now

Registration is now open for ALA Right Now: A Virtual Conference, taking place December 8–10. This event has a flexible, time-considerate schedule that's ideal for the busy legal management professional. Each day will have a morning session, focusing on the personal or the individual, and an afternoon session, which expands the theme to the wider organization or even the legal industry as a whole:

- December 8:** Risk management with Chester D. White, RPLU ARM, Senior Vice President and Executive Director of Commercial Risk Solutions, Professional Services, at Aon Risk Services Northeast, Inc.
- December 9:** Remote work with Jennifer Cameron and Kaleem Clarkson, Co-Founders of Blend Me, Inc.
- December 10:** Resilience with Jane Bishop, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Take the Next Step

Register now at alanet.org/rightnow!



Renew Your Membership

If your firm isn't participating in Organizational Pricing (alanet.org/membership/organizational), please renew your individual membership for 2021 term. If you renew before January 1, you'll earn a free webinar with our thanks. Just await an email with instructions on how to redeem your complimentary gift.

Log in to your ALA profile at alanet.org and view your account details. Renew online or by phone (847-267-1585) with a credit card. To renew by mail, print a personalized invoice and send it and a check to:

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Share Your Story!

ALA is celebrating its 50th Anniversary as an Association next year, and we're asking members to help us celebrate by submitting their story to be featured in next year's 50 Years, 50 Stories video campaign. Each week we'll be highlighting a member's story on our website and social media.

Filming your story is super easy. Follow the instructions on app.videopeel.com/kg80v4k2 to easily record and upload your video. No professional acting experience required! The video will take less than 60 seconds to create and you're free to respond to a prompt or tell your own story. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to ALAI50@alanet.org.

ALA Needs Your Feedback

ALA members have intimate knowledge of the ways the Association currently serves you and how other benefits could address the professional challenges you encounter. The biannual Member Needs Assessment is dedicated to quantifying and describing how ALA impacts its members.

This year, to make the Member Needs Assessment even easier to complete, it's been divided into three brief online surveys:

- Core Focus segment, which should take about 20 minutes
- Business Partner Opportunities segment, which should take 5 minutes
- Education and Professional Development segment, which should take 10 minutes

Responses are due November 30. If you provide your contact information after completing each segment, you will be entered into a drawing for prizes. We appreciate your feedback.

Visit the web version of this article to find links to each survey segment.

