

# LEGAL MANAGEMENT

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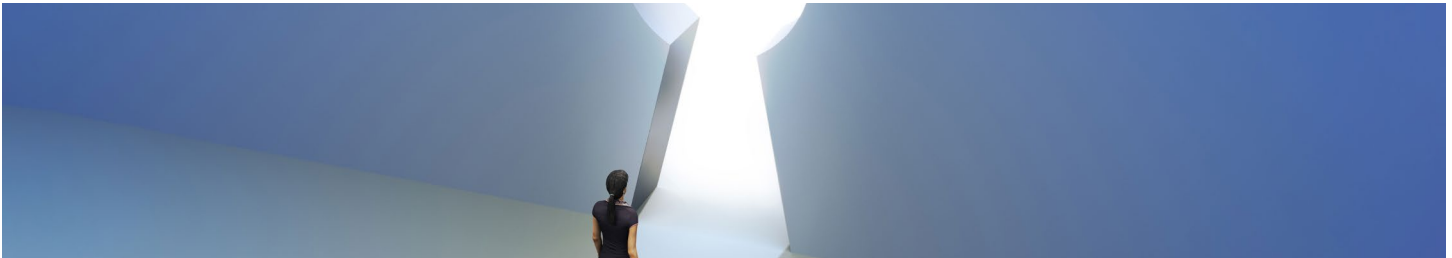
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THE MAGAZINE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF LEGAL ADMINISTRATORS

## Does Your Firm Know When It's at Risk of Losing Employees?

As employees gain the upper hand in the job market, watch out for these warning signs of departure.





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## Making an Impact in a Whirlwind of Change

**As the year winds down, I am trying to reflect back and actually remember what happened in 2021. Forget every day feeling like “Blursday” — this entire year went by in a flash, and I can barely differentiate between 2020 and 2021.**

I find myself using the start of the pandemic as a reference point: This Halloween was the second one during COVID-19 times, so it must be 2021. Despite the whirlwind of change and adaptation, I feel it's still important to acknowledge the progress we have all made over the last two years.

Last month in Austin at our Association Lunch, I gave an update on everything we've accomplished in the last year. I'm so proud of these efforts, so I wanted to share them again so everyone who didn't attend our 2021 Annual Conference & Expo (or watch the livestream) could get a glimpse of what ALA HQ has been working on.

After the pandemic lockdowns began, ALA launched virtual Hangouts and Roundtables that allow members to discuss their immediate needs with others. As acute pandemic needs faded, this gave way to more general topic discussions, plus additional roundtables for small and large firm administrators. We also created a coronavirus response page that remains updated with real-time resources as needed.

We also have the ALA Education Hub app, which serves as a marketplace for education open to all ALA members. It includes educational offerings from chapters and headquarters, as well as ALA podcasts and audio versions of many *Legal Management* articles. ALA held eight virtual conferences, hosted town halls and published LM Extras — bonus and timely content shared between issues of *Legal Management*.

“  
This leaves us in a really exciting place as we head into 2022. One thing we have coming is a revamped Online Community featuring an entirely new interface.”

But there's more! We launched Organizational Pricing, which hundreds of firms now participate in, and we opened the virtual doors of the ALA Logo Shop. We also joined a new collaboration with The Successful Firm Project to provide additional opportunities for our members and their firm management to learn together as we create solutions for some of the biggest issues firms are facing. To show how much we appreciate the volunteers who help power ALA, we started Volunteer Appreciation Week as a way of showing our gratitude. And more recently, we kicked off our Membership Ambassador program as a service to welcome our newer members.

All of this was in the background of ALA turning 50 this year! We created opportunities for our community to celebrate, including through our 50 Years, 50 Stories video testimonials, an interactive timeline on our website and a special historic yearbook edition of *Legal Management* print. This celebration culminated at the in-person Annual Conference in Texas last month.


And now for the numbers: For the first time in many years, our member numbers are increasing! We are on track to end 2021 with more members than we had at the end of the previous year. It's very likely this is due to the new Organizational Pricing model, which gives you more members to connect with as resources and collaborators.

We are also doing well with our finances. Although many associations found themselves with financial losses at the end of 2020, we did not, mostly due to excellent management of the COVID-related cancellation of our 2020 Annual Conference & Expo, stellar insurance coverage and our ability to revise and manage the budget for the year. We ended 2020 with a surplus of over \$92,000 and maintained our reserves untouched at almost \$2.6 million.

This leaves us in a really exciting place as we head into 2022. One thing we have coming is a revamped Online Community featuring an entirely new interface — but a familiar one, as it's similar to LinkedIn and Facebook. It will have more robust features, including instant video chat capabilities, and we hope it will help our members to engage with one another better.

Know that all products, services and improvements we are focused on are in alignment with ALA's strategic direction, which emphasizes Member Value; Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility; Education and Professional Development; and Influence. I look forward to keeping you posted on our progress on all the additional items we have up our sleeves to bring the most value to your member experience.

Your ALA staff has been working hard for you, and I am proud of the effort they are putting in to make ALA the Association you want and need.

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**Silent Auction Success**

The Foundation of the Association of Legal Administrators' virtual silent auction was a success! Thank you to everyone who donated items and placed bids. With your help, the Foundation raised nearly \$20,000, which will go directly toward funding its initiatives, including the Brezina Memorial Session at the 2022 Annual Conference & Expo.

Visit [alanet.org/foundation](http://alanet.org/foundation) to discover more ways to support the Foundation.



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**BRAD PAUBEL**  
Chief Technology Officer and Chief  
Operations Officer  
Lexicon

## How to Spot the Early Signs of a Ransomware Attack — and Take Action

**Ransomware will cost the economy \$20 billion in 2021 — and the legal industry is not immune from this threat. In fact, lawyers, legal staff, law firms and court systems are rich targets for cybercriminals because they are trusted with a significant amount of sensitive data.**

“Previously, paying the ransom would solve the problem. More recently, however, bad actors have taken payments and unlocked files but kept the data for sale on the so-called dark web.”

People may think there are no signs that a ransomware attack is imminent until it is too late, but that’s not the case. Here are some of the early signals that lawyers and staff can watch for to help prevent an attack.

### HOW IT WORKS

Ransomware attacks happen when a bad actor, a cybersecurity adversary interested in attacking information, phishes — in other words, tricks someone in an organization into clicking on a link or downloading a file that then installs a virus on their computer. It can involve hundreds of attempts against any users on a given network. The frightening part is only one attempt needs to work for the attack to be successful. Once downloaded, the malware will start to encrypt all the files on that individual’s computer — and then move on to any connected system.

Users will eventually receive a ransom demand asking for payment of a certain amount of money — usually in bitcoin or another untraceable cryptocurrency — to decrypt the data. Previously, paying the ransom would solve the problem. More recently, however, bad actors have taken payments and unlocked files but kept the data for sale on the so-called dark web. (They are, after all, criminals.) This outcome is another reason why spotting the early signs of a ransomware attack in the first place is so important.

## EARLY SIGNS OF A RANSOMWARE ATTACK

These are the common warning signs of an imminent ransomware attack that a firm should educate lawyers and staff to watch for:

- **An increase in phishing attempts:** If a firm's employees start noticing a significant uptick in spam emails, that could be a sign bad actors are looking for ways to plant malware. Since it only takes one person clicking on a bad link or mistakenly downloading a virus-laden file to potentially infect an entire network, any increase in phishing attempts should immediately set off alarm bells.
- **Unauthorized access alerts:** A firm's network administrator may see an increase in unauthorized access attempt notifications. Individuals could also receive emails letting them know someone has tried to reset their passwords. These attempts at your network access could indicate a ransomware attack is underway.
- **Virus protection alerts:** If a bad actor is trying to place malware on someone's computer, any installed virus protection software may raise an alert and block the program from running. Having up-to-date antivirus software is an excellent idea as it provides the first line of defense.
- **Scrambled file names or contents:** When malware encrypts the data on a computer, it will often scramble the names of files or make it so these files cannot be opened. If a user is looking at their drive and notices their usual file names have been replaced with unrecognizable gibberish, that could be the early stage of a ransomware hack.
- **Computers locking up:** Malware can interfere with a computer's operating software, and that will cause performance issues, including system freezes. If these start to happen out of nowhere, ransomware could be the culprit.

## TRAINING AND IMMEDIATE RESPONSE ARE CRUCIAL

Everyone in a law firm should be trained to recognize the early signs of a ransomware attack. There are tools available that will send fake phishing emails to simulate a ransomware attack, test for vulnerabilities and provide valuable information to use in adapting training efforts around common pitfalls.

Any initial sign of a ransomware attack should prompt a user to immediately disconnect from the law firm's IT network by removing both hardwired (LAN) connections and Wi-Fi access. Once it's completely disconnected from any other system,



the computer can be assessed for possible damage. There are services that will do this, but if cost is an issue, software is also available. However, any trace of the malware must be found and removed, or it will just spread again.


In addition to training staff and lawyers on how to recognize a ransomware attack and what to do if they suspect it's happening, a firm should regularly back up all its data — preferably to the cloud or an off-site location. That way, if there is an attack, a clean backup is available to reinstall once every trace of malware is removed from the on-site systems. Cloud backup services also regularly scan data for known malware and other viruses, and this acts as a stopgap to any measures a firm has in place.

## AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION CAN MITIGATE RISK

Ransomware attacks against law firms are only going to increase. Sooner or later, a phishing attempt will sneak in. That's why everyone should know to watch for the early signs of an infection and how to respond to mitigate potential damage.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Brad Paubel** is the Chief Technology Officer and Chief Operations Officer at Lexicon, a legal technology and services company.

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**LAURENCE WINTERS**  
*Vice President, Relationship Management and Community, SurePoint*

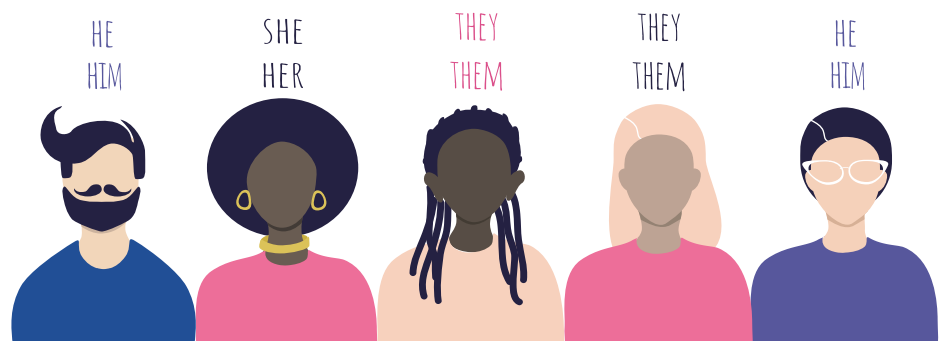
# He/Him, She/Her, They/Them: Why Pronouns Matter

**It's becoming increasingly common for individuals to state their pronouns. It's cropping up in everything from LinkedIn profiles to email signatures as just one simple way to illustrate inclusivity. There's also another place this should be appearing — in your recruitment efforts.**

Using a person's personal pronouns demonstrates respect and affirmation. It's the most straightforward approach to acknowledging someone's identity, and it provides a sense of being noticed and accepted. And what better way to alert applicants that you care about being inclusive than before they even send in the application?

Some firm employees might not necessarily understand why pronoun designations are important or believe that they don't "need" to declare it in a signature block. And if they don't personally need to, then why bother?

“It can be incredibly isolating to be the 'only' person who needs or wants to self-identify pronouns. Having others declare their pronouns empowers others to feel comfortable being themselves.”



The answer to that, quite simply, is that it's supportive. This is a remarkably simple move — indeed, a very small action — but it's one that goes a long way for setting the tone of inclusivity in legal organizations. It can be incredibly isolating to be the “only” person who needs or wants to self-identify pronouns. Having others declare their pronouns empowers others to feel comfortable being themselves.

Here's why: As humans we use words as one of our primary methods of communication, and those words have extreme power that can build us up — or tear us down. We use words to describe everything we do and everything around us. The most personal words we use to refer to each other are our names and our pronouns. They allow us to share and communicate our sense of self and identity with others. It's part of our everyday lives.

## USING GENDER-NEUTRAL PRONOUNS

Using the wrong pronouns, whether on purpose or not, can be distracting, upsetting and even enraging. Some people may interpret this as being told they don't matter or deserve respect. It's basically like deleting someone's personal identity and replacing it with your own. It's no small thing: When a person's identity is invalidated, it affects how they move through society and connect with others.

If you use the wrong pronouns, apologize and make a correction. If you are not aware of the mistake and the individual corrects you, express gratitude for pointing it out and do better with future interactions. Remember we all learn differently, so figure out what works best for you so that you can make sure to be use the proper pronouns in future conversations.

If a pronoun isn't specified or isn't known, gender-neutral pronouns (like “they” or “them”) are a good alternative. Keep in mind that when someone gives you a pronoun, it's the one they want you to use at that moment. Also, people may alter their names or pronouns or go by various names in different parts of their lives. So if someone tells you their personal pronouns have changed, be considerate of their request.

## ADAPTING YOUR FIRM

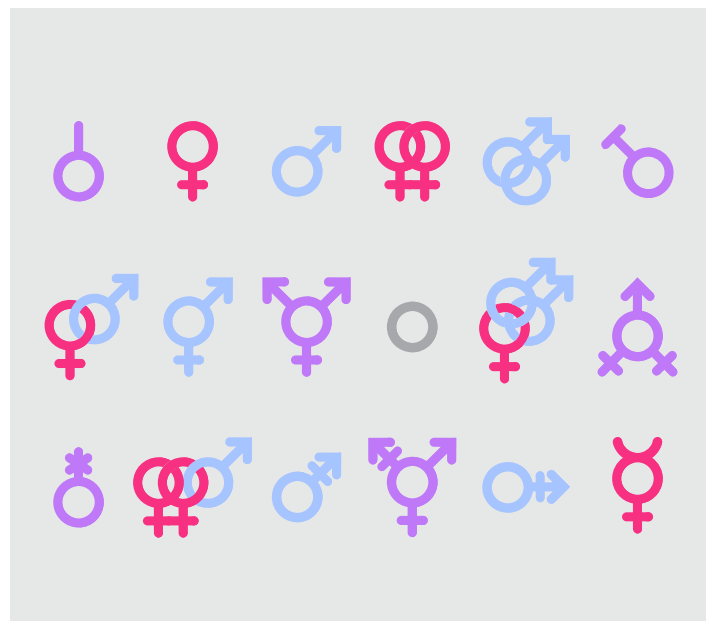
Workplaces must adapt to these realities. More and more people are identifying as something other than their assigned sex at birth. This is particularly evident in the younger generations entering the workforce.

Employers and employees have more opportunities and possibilities today than ever before to interact with a broader

spectrum of gender identities and expressions. Organizations must be aware of the importance of pronouns and explore appropriate solutions to be a workplace that supports diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility.

Here are some simple ways to make pronouns a part of your organization's culture:

- ✓ Include it in your recruiting process. You'll let job seekers know right away that you care about how your employees identify.
- ✓ Create a place to declare pronouns in the interview process and in the onboarding process, and then use those pronouns when introducing new candidates/employees.
- ✓ Allow employees to self-ID their preferred names and pronouns as part of their employee profile (intranet, website, e-directory).
- ✓ Share your personal pronouns with others. Whether it's one-on-one or in a group setting, this act can inspire others to do the same and make them feel more comfortable sharing their pronouns with you.
- ✓ Encourage all employees, regardless of gender identity, to use personal pronouns in their email signatures, name tags, introductions, meetings, etc.
- ✓ Update you firm's communication style and time entry (billing) procedures if you continue to address individuals by Mr. and Ms. — or worse yet, making a guess on preferred pronouns and salutations during that communication.



It's also extremely helpful to have people in leadership positions model this behavior because it lets others know they are an ally and support creating a comfortable environment for the people around them.

There may be individuals who do not understand, don't feel comfortable sharing or are unable to participate in a courteous manner — that's OK. For those individuals, simply share a name.

## MAKE INCLUSIVITY THE NORM

Pronouns are crucial. It's critical that we utilize appropriate language. Using the appropriate personal pronouns and creating an environment in which people feel they can be their authentic selves can revolutionize your organization.

Always remind yourself that everyone in your organization deserves to have their self-ascribed name and pronouns honored. It's an important and necessary step for organizations to adopt practices that respect people's gender identities. This one change makes society a more welcoming place for people of all genders.

It's such a small and easy thing that we can all do to be more inclusive and welcoming, and it can make a huge impact on people feeling marginalized or unseen.

### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Ellen M. Rosenstiel, SHRM-SCP**, is the Director of HR Employment and Employee Relations at Kutak Rock LLP. She has more than 25 years of law firm management experience with a special interest in leading diversity, inclusion and change management initiatives. She is an active member of her firm's National Inclusiveness and Diversity Committee and is the current Chair of ALA's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility Committee. She has also served as Chair of the Capital Chapter's Diversity and Inclusion Committee. She received her bachelor's from the University of Northern Iowa and her master's in Organizational Performance and Leadership Development from Drake University. This year, she also received a Diversity and Inclusion Certificate from Cornell University.

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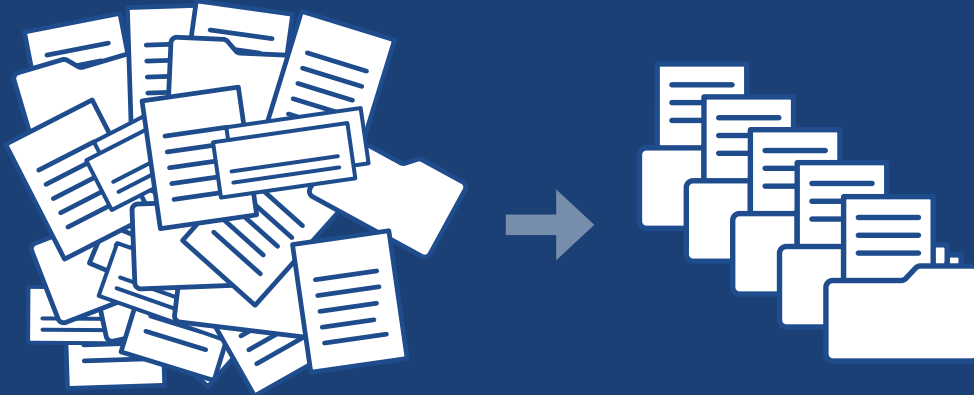


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PAULA TSURUTANI  
Freelance Writer and Editor

## Finding the Positives in Challenging Times

*After nearly two chaotic years, firms have found a greater sense of community, improved communications and social awareness.*

**As we enter the latter months of year two of the pandemic, individuals, businesses and entire communities are adjusting, pivoting and reimagining work and home life.**

For many law firms, work transitions and changes during the pandemic have yielded insights, new policies and positive outcomes — even during the most uncertain and difficult times.

### INCREASED SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVES

At Davis Wright Tremaine LLP, the twin effects of COVID-19 and social justice inspired an acceleration of social responsibility initiatives and expanded pro bono interest even further.

“During the pandemic, we collaborated with numerous legal service provider and social service agencies to understand ground-level needs,” says Joanna Boisen, Chief Pro Bono and Social Impact Officer. “We wanted to be sure we were supporting existing efforts instead of duplicating them, and identified ways we could make a meaningful difference.”

Recognizing that the restaurant sector had been hit hard — with more than 110,000 restaurants closed and over 2 million employees losing their jobs — the firm helped create the Restaurant Employee Relief Fund to financially support these workers. Additionally, the firm created educational pamphlets for restaurant workers in Washington, California and Oregon, three states where the firm has offices, that provided clear information concerning the rights, responsibilities and options of terminated employees.

“Routine probate hearings now are done without travel. We meet clients where they are — in their home office, at the kitchen table or on the patio — and answer their questions, make decisions and agree on next steps.”

## “The marketing and IT teams have started working more collaboratively, rolling out new initiatives designed to make new technology rollouts more ‘fun’ and interactive.”

It also organized a range of practical and helpful information on housing, health care, employment opportunities, utilities and other emergency supports. Feedback to the piece was positive, and the outreach effort was well received by affected workers and more deeply engaged the firm in their community.

Because the need increased, interest in firm pro bono activities also increased. “The pandemic, push for racial justice reform, and a strong commitment to protecting voting rights mobilized even more attorneys to give of their time and talent,” says Boisen. “Our numbers have always been high, but when it became clear how impactful attorneys could be in helping navigate legal issues caused by the pandemic — and inspired by race, equity and justice initiatives — we saw really incredible response across the board.”

### SPOTLIGHT ON TECHNOLOGY

Remote work shone a bright light on IT capabilities and weaknesses, motivating — and in some cases, forcing — some firms to upgrade their departments and automate their processes.

At Fairfield and Woods P.C., the pandemic accelerated the technology trajectory. Pre-pandemic, the firm had just begun its transition to a new billing system, but the lockdown forced the firm to reassess any previous hesitations and fast-track the process, says Executive Director Michelle Friends. “We had more urgent conversations about efficiencies, and improving systems became a key priority for management.”

Billing and invoicing also got an update at the Wochner Law Firm LLC, where paper had been the norm before the COVID-19 shutdown. “The pandemic helped us take our billing and invoicing from paper to electronic,” says Principal Corinne Cantwell Heggie. “It allowed us to bring clients along as we implemented a secure method to deliver invoices and gave clients secure electronic payment options if they did not want to mail a check.”

These changes and the incorporation of other technology tools as a part of its client services yielded welcome benefits: “The pandemic has normalized technology in our practice for good!” says Cantwell Heggie. “Routine probate hearings now are done without travel. We meet clients where they are — in their home office, at the kitchen table or on the patio — and answer their questions, make decisions and agree on next steps.”

### COMMUNICATION POSITIVES

Making changes in IT processes is tough under normal circumstances. Doing so while working remotely adds another layer of complexity and stress. But Friends’ background in marketing helped make the firm’s technology transition less onerous.

“The marketing and IT teams have started working more collaboratively, rolling out new initiatives designed to make new technology rollouts more ‘fun’ and interactive, including ‘tips and tricks’ and how-tos that are presented in user-friendly and engaging ways,” she says.

Clear and efficient communication became even more critical while working remotely. To address this issue, the Fairfield and Woods leadership team has embarked on formal training designed to help lead more productive meetings. The program aims to cover such topics as planning and setting agendas, controlling discussions and managing expectations, which will enhance all meetings — whether in-person or by videoconference.

Mark Hetzler, Managing Partner at Fitch, Even, Tabin & Flannery LLP, says communications have improved at his firm as well.

“People have learned to use and rely on the technology for instant messaging and emails,” he says. One technology tool even made a major comeback: the phone. “Some people are even picking up the phone and calling more,” he adds. All told, in many instances, Hetzler says the increased use of these types of communications actually decreased distractions and increased productivity.



Well before the pandemic, Fitch Even was relying on videoconferencing to stay in touch with clients, and face-to-face meetings were becoming more the exception rather than the rule. As such, Hetzler says that client interaction has not changed significantly since the pandemic began and more lawyers and staff worked remotely. But one perk has surfaced: lawyers are “seeing” their clients much more frequently because of increased videoconferencing.

## REMOTE HIRING AND ONBOARDING POSITIVES

Communication positives even extended to the onboarding process for new hires. Although some firms drastically pared down attorney and staff levels during the pandemic, Fitch Even continued to hire staff, summer associates and lateral hires — and found surprising benefits when onboarding remotely.

The firm planned virtual coffee breaks so new hires could get to know others in the firm. “Every aspect of our training programs, including the summer associate program, was transitioned to a virtual platform,” says Hetzler. The virtual orientations and meetings often were more beneficial because “it enabled our associates to have a broader exposure to attorneys and staff in our other offices.”

## CONTINUING THE SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Maintaining a sense of community, firm culture and connection prompted extra communication, creativity and innovation. To raise morale and inject more fun into the tedium of remote work, Friends’ firm scheduled regular Zoom happy hours,

started a pen pal program and planned outdoor holiday excursions, including wine tastings, dining events and trips to the zoo. The firm also launched a newsletter with wellness tips, employee assistance program (EAP) resources and staff profiles. Many of these activities, Friends expects, will continue in some form even after lawyers and staff return to the office.

The sense of shared community, perhaps, has been the biggest positive takeaway after navigating the pandemic and all its attendant challenges.

“It has made it much easier now to start a conversation. We all have something in common,” says Friends.

Cantwell Heggie agrees with this sentiment, noting the circumstances forced by the pandemic made them more cohesive. “Bottom line, we make a point to listen and work with our team because we know, pandemic or not, supporting the team makes the team stronger.”

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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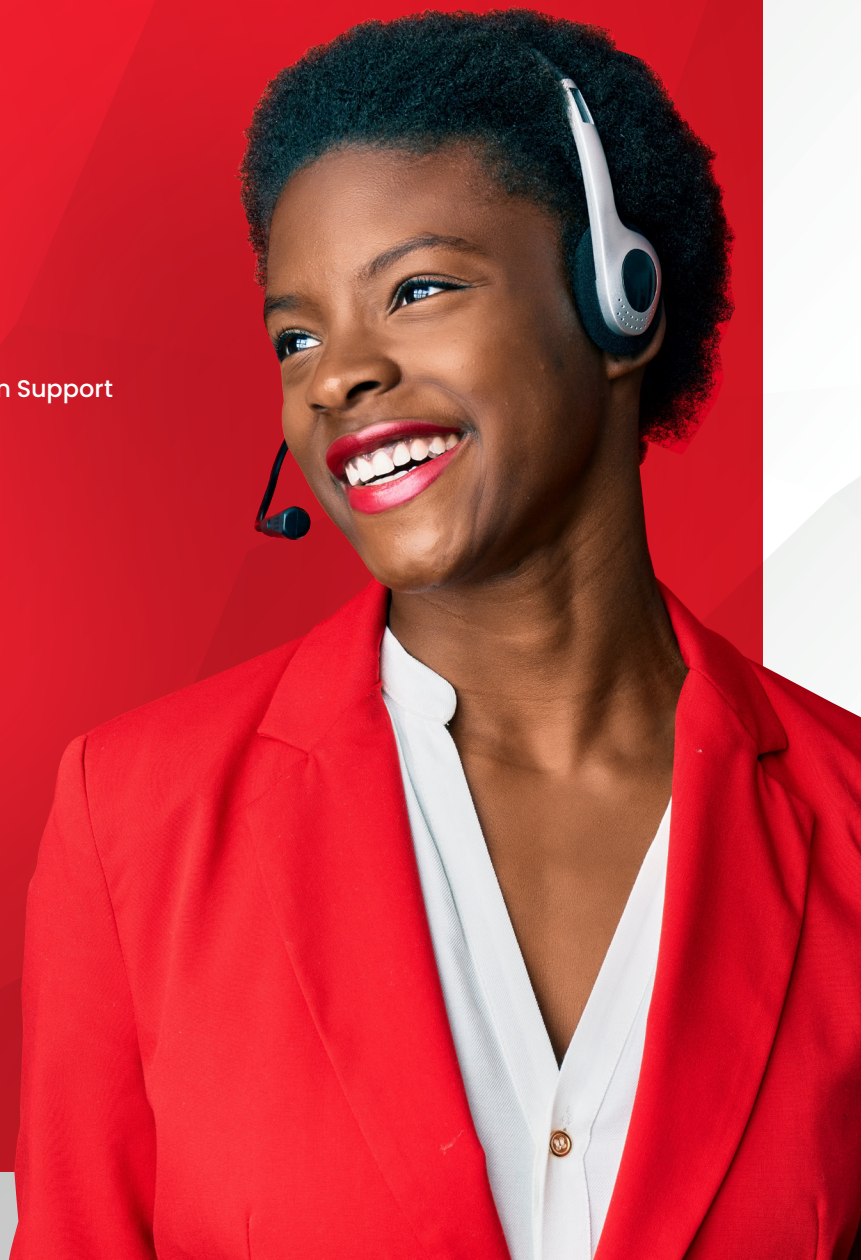
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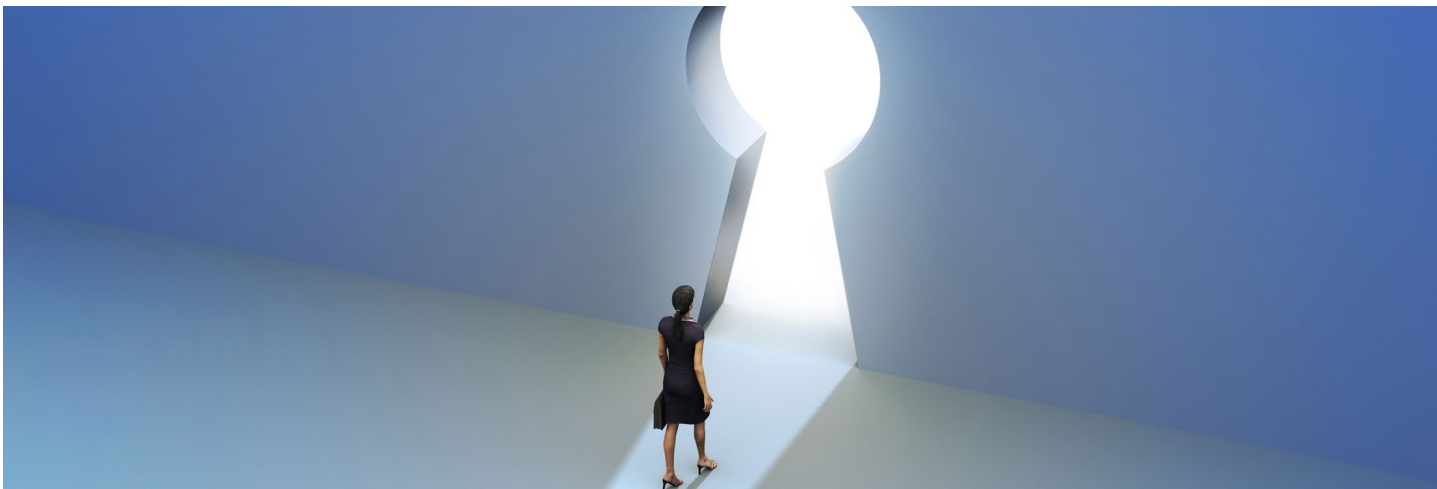
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DREW AMOROSO

Founder  
DueCourse

“Working with employees consistently as they enter the firm in an effort to truly understand their goals and aspirations is a critical part of the process.”

## Does Your Firm Know When It's at Risk of Losing Employees?

*As employees gain the upper hand in the job market, watch out for these warning signs of departure.*

**Here's a tough but critically important question: Does your firm know when it's at risk of losing its employees?**

As many companies are finding out, the Great Resignation isn't just a new buzzy phrase — it's here, it's happening and it seems no industry is immune. In fact, one survey found that 55% of workers anticipate looking for a new job this year, with flexibility being a key driver. The pandemic shifted priorities for many, and they aren't eager to go back to the way things have been.

Legal isn't immune. Even long before the pandemic, a study conducted by the National Association for Law Placement (NALP) and legal recruiting firm Major, Lindsey & Africa found that for every 20 associates hired by law firms, 15 left, with an average attrition rate of 18% a year (2012–2018).

Indeed, despite increases in salary, incentives and flexible work hours, firms are struggling now more than ever to retain new and diverse talent — including both attorneys and professional staff. The cost of turnover is expensive.

There are many reasons why firms struggle to understand when they are at risk of losing employees, but here are a few commonalities shared by firms:

**1. No direct line, many dotted lines:** Unlike other companies, law firms generally lack a traditional “org structure” where every employee has a direct report. Instead, lawyers and professional staff often report to and work with multiple people and teams. Without the structure of a “direct-line” supervisor, it's easy for employees who are struggling or unsatisfied to get lost in the shuffle.

**2. Lack of modern tools:** Another contributing factor is the absence of a system allowing firms to collect information and feedback that gives them an insight into their employees' state of mind, what is working — and what is not. Without the tools, firms cannot successfully intervene to help a struggling employee or set in motion other changes that would lead to progressive culture shifts at the firm.

**3. Lack of supportive cultures:** Traditionally, law firms have struggled to adopt a workplace culture that incentivizes slowing down, checking in with individuals and teams and promoting professional development and other resources that make people feel invested in and that keep them engaged.

This is in part due to the billable hour model (“For every hour I spend checking in with my team, that’s an hour more I have to work tonight or over the weekend”), but it’s also directly related to the systems and resources the firm puts in place to incentivize these kinds of practices.

## HOW TO PINPOINT WHEN EMPLOYEES BECOME DISENGAGED

When trying to identify at-risk employees, one of the key indicators to look to is engagement.

A recent report released by Quantum Workplace found that disengaged employees were 3.3 times more likely to leave their companies within 90 days of taking an engagement survey, as compared with highly engaged employees.

As a starting point in understanding how to identify disengaged employees, here are four indicators to focus on:

**1. A rocky onboarding process:** Onboarding is a critical stage for employees — it’s the bridge between the recruitment process and giving a new employee a clear view of the firm’s expectations and how they can succeed.

In short, a well-curated and intentional onboarding process lays the foundation for an employee’s entire work experience. As a result, firms that don’t have a well-organized onboarding process in place are at risk of immediately starting employees off on the wrong foot.

**2. Employees are not “showing up”:** If an individual stops “showing up” — physically, emotionally or cognitively — this could be a sign that they have one foot out the door. Missing work, lack of enthusiasm and low-quality work product can all be indicators that your employee is at risk of quitting. It can be hard for firms to identify when someone

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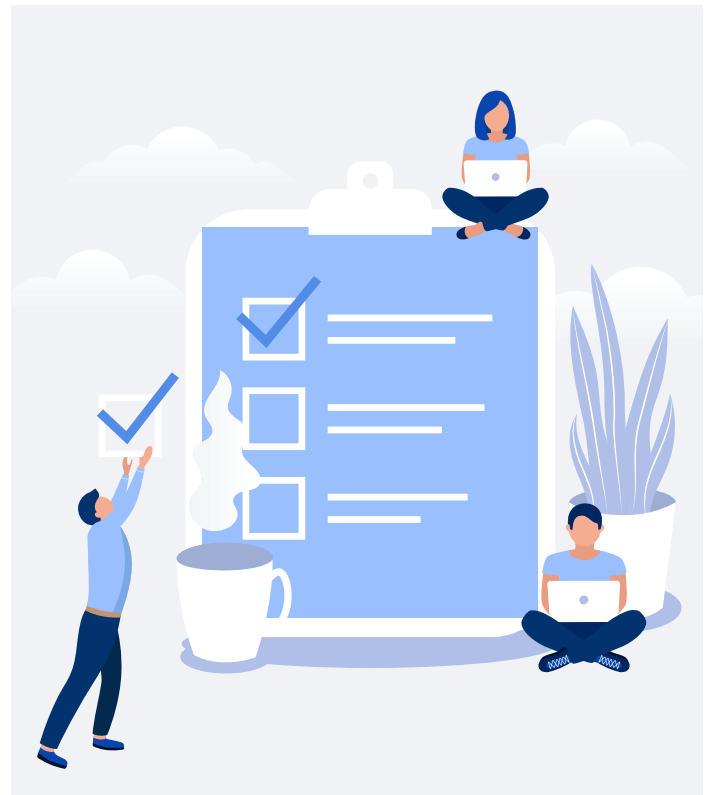
“Despite increases in salary, incentives and flexible work hours, firms are struggling now more than ever to retain new and diverse talent — including both attorneys and professional staff. The cost of turnover is expensive.”

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is not “showing up” consistently if there are no structures in place to gather real feedback and keep touch with the employee (more on that below).

**3. They stop talking about their future with the company:** Home in on things like whether employees share their progress, their goals and their future at the company — either through informal discussions or as part of the review process. (Again, though, firms must provide the proper mechanisms, tools and resources for their teams to verbalize these issues effectively.)

**4. Lack of engagement in surveys:** A lack of participation in surveys that directly impact the future or day-to-day experience of employees can also be an indication that they’ve lost interest, or that they are experiencing a disconnect between where they are and where they would like to be professionally.



## HERE'S WHAT FIRMS CAN DO

If you're looking to address attrition, identify at-risk employees and get out ahead of these issues, here are a few things you should consider.

### Start at the Beginning: Focus on a Successful Onboarding

Given the importance of the onboarding process, start by looking at how you are introducing employees to your firm and what you are doing to set them up for success from day one. This includes things like making sure that your employees know what is expected of them, that they understand their job responsibilities, and that they have the proper support and channels to ask questions at this key point in time.

"The best onboarding processes offer opportunities not just to meet new people but include milestone events intended to support building meaningful relationships over time," says Jessica Sisco, Director of Talent for Scale LLP.

Working with employees consistently as they enter the firm in an effort to truly understand their goals and aspirations is a critical part of the process, too.

"Ongoing and regular check-in meetings beginning as soon as an associate joins to find out what their goals are, and how we can connect them with the resources they need in order to pursue those goals, are great first steps," says Amy Tenney Curren, Director of Attorney Learning and Development and Morrison & Foerster LLP. "Associates join a new firm for any number of reasons, and the more we know about their goals, aspirations and needs, the better we can advise them about how to get there."

Don't neglect your non-attorney staff, either. After all, it's expensive and time-consuming to recruit, hire and train people for support and business roles, as well. Formal check-ins — whether they're conducted by the legal administrator, the managing partner or another authority figure — can go a long way toward uncovering gaps between the employee's expectations and their current experience.

### Provide Individualized Support and Gather Feedback

Set up a structure that ensures someone at the firm is responsible for supporting each employee, understanding their goals and helping them to invest in their professional development. This relationship should be more than someone simply being "available" — it should entail an intentional structure of check-ins, opportunities for discussion and re-evaluation of goals and priorities.



Similarly, to gain insight into where your employees are and to identify those who may be struggling, consider investing in employee feedback software. Platforms like 15Five, Officevibe or Engagedly, for example, provide firms with a way to add structure to the micro- and macro-view feedback that is an essential part of identifying challenges and supporting employees. Many HR software options integrate employee engagement alongside records and payroll.

"We can also make sure that we have well-thought-out guidelines available on what the firm expects at each level of practice, and on how to solicit and receive feedback throughout the year so that they can stay on target as necessary to keep up that trajectory toward long-term success," Tenney Curren says.

### Emphasize Professional Development

In addition to relying on supervisors and feedback for support, firms would be wise to proactively invest and incentivize employees becoming active participants in the trajectory of their career through a more intentional focus on professional development.

Many lawyers mistakenly equate professional development with timely completion of continuing legal education (CLE) credits. As a result, what should be a steady diet of opportunities to incrementally work on themselves and their practice often take a back seat to fitting in a few more billable hours.

But if the goal truly is to get out in front of at-risk employees leaving, firms have a huge opportunity to address these issues through shifting their focus to professional development and encouraging lawyers to work closely with those at the firm who are tasked with providing professional development support.

“One of the most important things we can offer is an open-door policy so that associates always know there’s somewhere they can go for guidance, career coaching or just to raise an issue that they’re not sure where to take,” says Tenney Curren.

“We can also make sure that associates know where to find the resources that are available to them, whether that’s just-in-time training that they may need to advance their skill sets and careers; individual coaching; our employee assistance program, where they can find mental and physical health resources or other supportive options; or help finding the right contacts within the firm to consult on a wide variety of issues.”

### If They Do Leave, Understand Why — and Take Action

If someone leaves the firm, it’s critically important that you take steps to understand why — and then turn that information into action. Many firms have exit interviews, but conducting the interviews is not enough on its own. The

information collected during those interviews is of little value unless it’s connected to action steps; it must be shared with key stakeholders and integrated into various aspects of the employee experience.

This might include things like taking the feedback to change the onboarding, support or professional development practices at the firm (or creating them if there currently are none); creating new policies or resources; or adjusting the review process in a way that speaks directly to the feedback provided.

#### 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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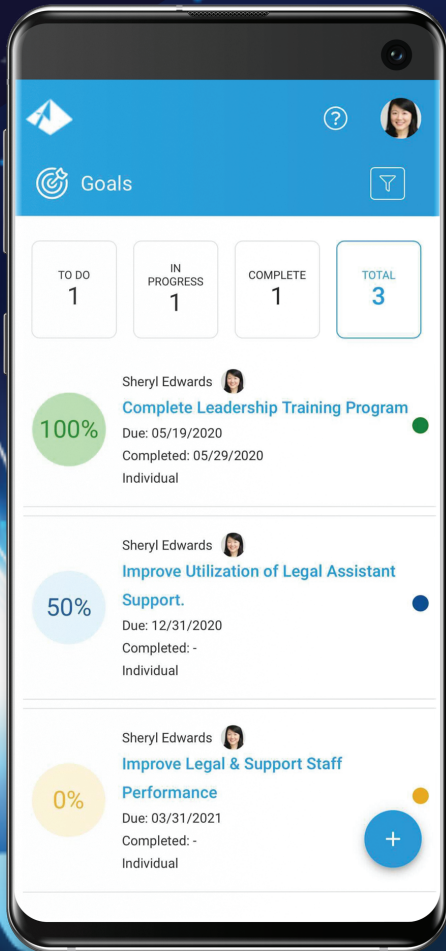
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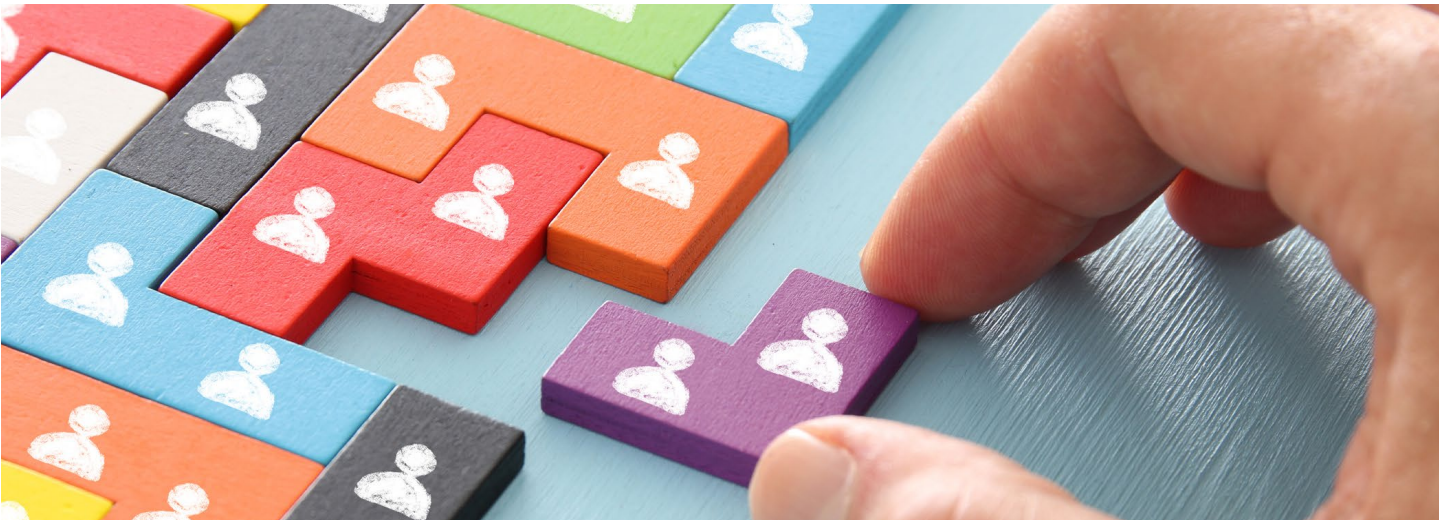
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KYLIE ORA LOBELL  
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## How Legal Organizations Can Restructure Their Culture and Adapt to Changing Norms

*Employees are driving the industry to make positive shifts in the work environment.*

**It's no secret that law firms are typically traditional when it comes to culture. They may have set working hours every day and are not as flexible as other companies. They might encourage competition, expect lawyers and staff to give their all to their jobs, and not be concerned about burnout, even though it's quite common.**

As of late, legal organizations find themselves in new territory — having to adapt to changes. If they don't, they risk losing valuable employees to their competitors.

"Law firms seem to have been behind the times in terms of promoting a positive corporate culture," says Scott Perlmutter, Esq., at Tittle & Perlmutter. "Technological advances and generational shifts in views on the workplace were already eroding those habits, but the pandemic put those changes into hyperdrive. Every other field has had to adapt to a more progressive work environment, and law firms will lose good employees to other fields if they don't do the same."

While firms may want to change, they don't know exactly how to go about it. By doing their research and committing to a restructure, they will be able to protect — and perhaps even boost — their bottom lines.

“  
Every other field has had to adapt to a more progressive work environment, and law firms will lose good employees to other fields if they don't do the same.”

## WHY CONSIDER A CULTURAL RESTRUCTURE?

According to David Clark, a Partner at the Clark Law Office, a cultural restructure can lead to better business as well as work-life balance for its partners.

“Restructuring the competitive and highly stressful law firm environment into a more diverse and supportive workplace can only mean increased productivity and bottom line,” says Clark.

In a traditional law firm — which can be uptight, dramatic and overtly professional, says Jordan W. Peagler, Esq., at MKP Law Group, LLP — it can be difficult for employees to feel comfortable and perform their best.

“They are constantly worried about tripping up (often leading to more mistakes) and subsequently getting fired,” Peagler says.

The key is to listen to your employees. Perhaps that entails annually surveying employees to gage their level of satisfaction. If there are common, negative themes, make sure management really hears that feedback and comes up with a plan of action — surveys are only successful if there is follow up.

Eric Rohrback, the Director of Growth Marketing at Hill & Ponton, pointed out that a cultural restructure could help law firms attract and retain top talent as well.

“Associates have been leaving law firms for years now, and much of it has to do with a culture that treats junior lawyers like underpaid, disposable workhorses,” he says. “This entrenched culture is ultimately bad for business.”

It can take time, but making shifts to a healthier atmosphere could help employees thrive.

## FACTORS THAT ARE AFFECTING LAW FIRM CULTURE

There are two major factors that have caused a shift in law firm culture: younger people entering the workforce and, of course, the pandemic.

Clark says as younger people enter the workforce, they continue to revolutionize the law firm culture by introducing technology and all the changes that come along with it. “This has led to a more flexible, engaging and dynamic workplace. Law offices used to be all about workaholicism, but the entry of young people has slowly changed the culture to work-life balance.”

According to Perlmutter, the curiosity, creativity and innovation from new, younger colleagues help address older systems

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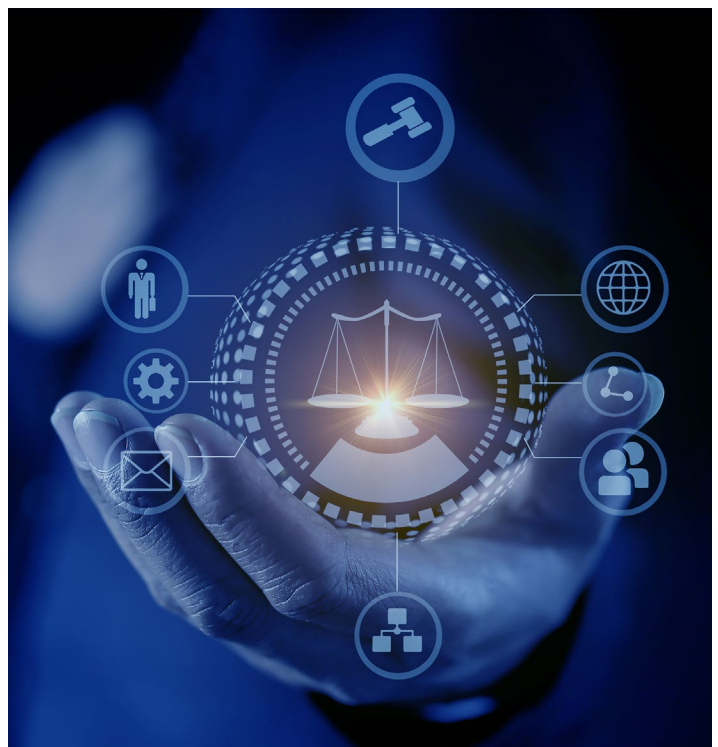
“Associates have been leaving law firms for years now, and much of it has to do with a culture that treats junior lawyers like underpaid, disposable workhorses. This entrenched culture is ultimately bad for business.”

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that no longer work, noting they also ask good questions that help bring issues that need to be addressed to light. “This can catalyze explosive improvements in firm systems and efficiencies. If leveraged correctly and used to their full potential, the new wave of young professionals entering the workforce can act as a great complement to well-established and highly qualified law firms.”

The pandemic has affected companies of all types, but for law firms specifically, Rohrback says it has “exposed how overbearing firms can be on junior associates and paralegals and opened up a long-overdue dialogue on better work-life balance.”

Additionally, in part because of the cultural and political events of the summer of 2020, recent years have “reemphasized the importance of diversity and inclusion initiatives at many firms and the need to do more to recruit and advance women and people of color,” he says.



“You can build trust and loyalty with employees by showing them you believe in them through means of financial and educational investments. Build up your employees and they will help build your empire.”

## WHAT A CULTURAL RESTRUCTURE COULD INCLUDE

When undergoing a cultural restructure, Peagler says that first, law firms need to stop demanding absurd hours from their staff because it leads to high turnover and makes it more difficult to build something.

“I personally know that at certain points in a case I prefer to throw myself all in, so from my experience, the better trick is to allow for flexibility when possible,” he says. “When firms have lighter loads, be more liberal with time off or at least flexible hours in order to offer work-life balance for employees.”

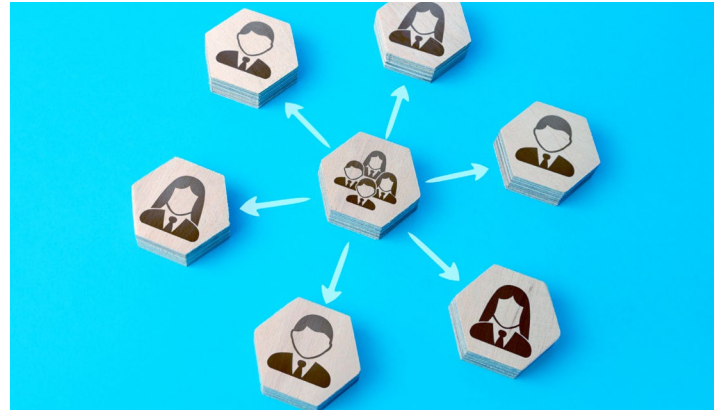
Perlmutter suggests incentivizing and motivating employees in ways other than offering higher wages.

“Make your employees identify how they define success and happiness personally and professionally and put into place a path for them to achieve those goals,” he says. “Personal and professional development opportunities are also imperative. You can build trust and loyalty with employees by showing them you believe in them through means of financial and educational investments. Build up your employees and they will help build your empire.”

A new culture could also include flexibility when it comes to work hours and remote work, as well as perks like mentorship and more paid time off, according to Rohrback. “People are willing to give of themselves a lot more when they believe their firm isn’t trying to run them into the ground and wants to set them up with skills and experience they can use to build a long, stable career in an industry that continues to be changed by automation — especially for junior employees,” he says.

Another crucial part of a cultural restructure is emphasizing diversity and inclusivity, which are particularly important to the younger workforce. Plus, studies show that diverse businesses produce more revenue.

“[A restructure] should include widening recruitment for a more diverse talent pool, a more flexible working schedule for work-life balance, and the establishment of a more engaging workplace culture to make it a more inclusive and better place for employees,” says Clark.



## ADAPTING TO THE CHANGING TIMES

Just like any other business, law firms need to adapt to the changing times in order to stay afloat.

“The one constant in life is that there will always be change,” says Perlmutter. “Having a growth and abundant mindset when it comes to evolution and change is a universal success principle that does not exclude law firms.”

If law firms want to ensure they’ll survive now and into the next generation, then a cultural restructure could be necessary.

“Our world is changing, and faster than ever,” says Peagler. “We have new generations entering the workforce that are fighting for recognition of issues like mental health, equality and diversity. The old-school practices and attitudes will need to be buried as we look forward. Law firms must accept technology, flexibility and community to not just attract current new talent but to prepare for the future.”

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Kylie Ora Lobell** is a freelance writer living in Los Angeles. She covers legal issues, blogs about content marketing, and reports on Jewish topics. She’s been published in *Tablet Magazine*, *NewsCred*, *The Jewish Journal of Los Angeles* and *CMO.com*.

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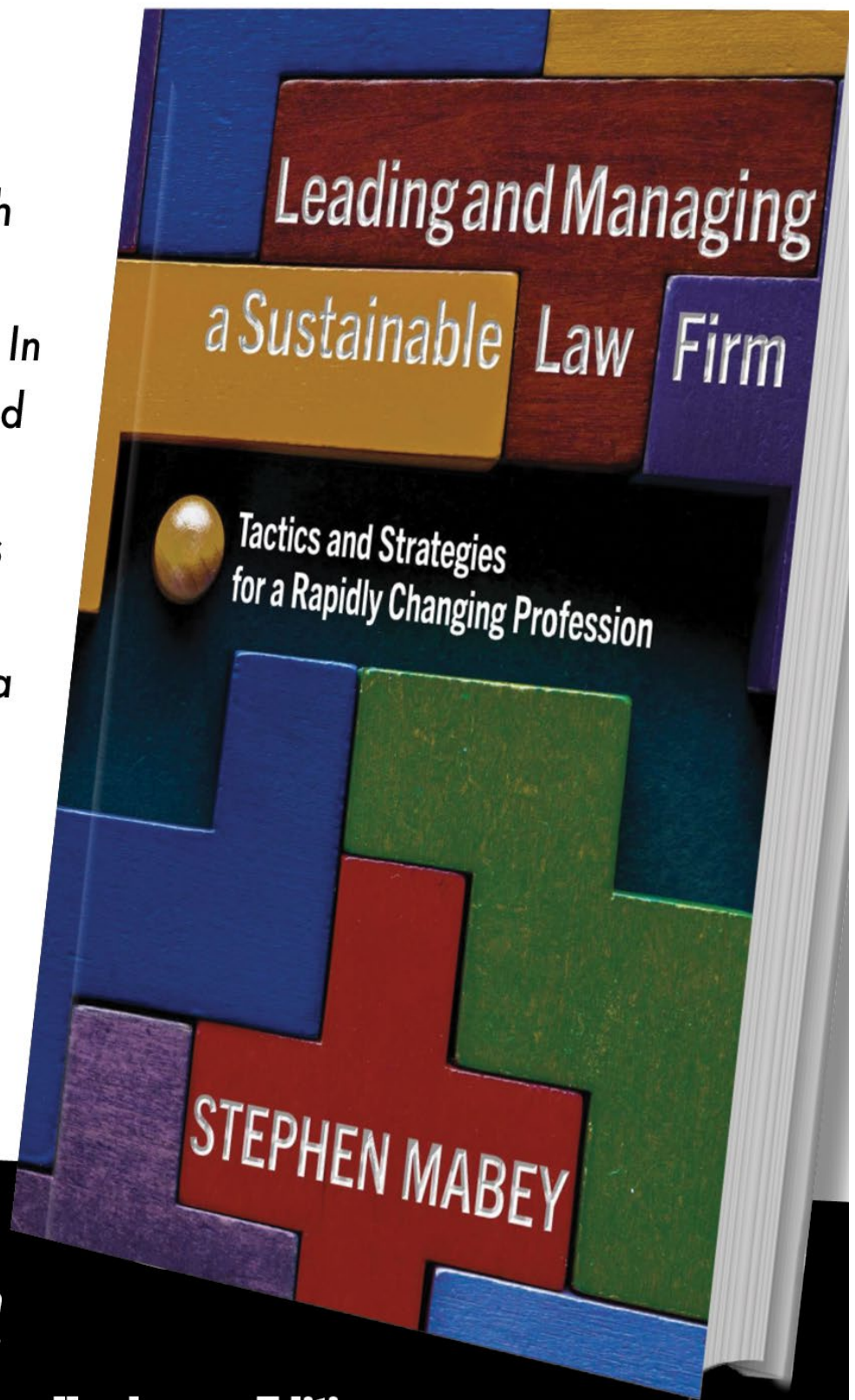
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“ I cannot think of another volume of work that covers so much important ground regarding law firms. In my opinion, it should be on everyone’s bookshelf who has a managerial or leadership role in a law firm.”

*Excerpt from the Foreword by Thomas Clay Altman Weil Inc. (retired)*



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“Instead of ever being leery of press releases and overall PR, you and your firm should see it as far more image-enhancing than advertising and well within most budgets.”

## PR Can Glean Big Exposure on Small Budgets

I was teaching marketing at a special Small Business Administration class for new women entrepreneurs. I started by asking how many had a marketing program, or at least a budget to start that work.

Several said the same thing: “I can’t afford even small ads.”

That confusion between “marketing” and “advertising” is not unusual in any business, and legal organizations are no exception. Instead of ads, try one of the greatest — but oft-overlooked — tools for marketing: public relations, aka PR.

### WHY IT'S SO EFFECTIVE

Advertising’s goal is only one thing: sales. Oh, ads can be funny or moving or initiate other emotions, but they’re still all about winning wallets, not hearts. It’s actually been shown that even the most enjoyed ads don’t always generate sales.

One of the key examples is a TV beer commercial that ran from the mid-1950s to early ‘60s. It featured two cartoon drawings of the “Piels Brothers,” Harry and Bert, touting the Brooklyn-based Piels Brewing company. Their insights on life were so clever that at one point their fan club had 100,000 members.

Yet those fans weren’t running out to purchase Piels beer. Over six years, the boys barely increased sales. Indeed, the numbers showed less than 1% growth per year on average.

### THE KEY IS STORYTELLING

In contrast, PR provides solid, more objective information. The Public Relations Society of America offers this definition: “Public relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics.”

Of course PR material wants to enhance sales — but it doesn't come across as a sales pitch. This voice truly attracts customer interest, builds relationships and then generates sales.

For example, I was once part of the team launching the first Vision Expo, a trade show for the optical industry. All the marketing was mostly ads and a few press releases in trade publications. Unexpectedly, one board member suggested a consumer news item ... about 10 days before the show.

As the only woman at the meeting, I suggested the "10 Best Dressed Eyes in America" to take advantage of the growing understanding that — like shoes — we could change eyewear to match our clothing (e.g., a sparkly pair to go with cocktail gowns vs. sunglasses to go with running clothes). They agreed, I knocked it out quickly and sent the approved final to the Associated Press.

Amazingly this inundated (free!) news outlet actually chose and distributed our release, and the story exploded around the country, no extra budget dollars required. And the show got something like 20,000 more attendees than expected. How much the consumer message led to this, I don't know — but it certainly didn't hurt.

## GENERATING IDEAS INTERNALLY

Are you a clandestine storyteller? Someone who blogs under a pseudonym or writes only in notebooks? Then maybe you can conceive and write the stories — even ghostwriting for your leader.

Or perhaps you know it would be better to delegate creating press releases to someone else in the office. Or there's another option: a team — not just one person — that bats around ideas monthly or quarterly, crafting really interesting and unique stories.

It's also crucial to determine what's generating the stories. Is your information very basic, with maybe some stats pulled off the web? Will you be handed quotes from your firm's executives, or will you be told who to interview for specific topics? Will interviews only be internal or — to create a more objective story — will you be allowed to find and quote outside experts?

## FINDING EXTERNAL EXPERTISE

Getting a press release picked up means you need a media list. You can buy them or research and create your own.

Or maybe you (or whoever else in the firm has the authority) might decide that it would be smarter to hire a professional



resource to develop and distribute releases. It can be a single-person operation or a larger firm. Like any marketing decision, do your research to determine how you like to work, your budget and other details.

## RECYCLING THAT PRESS RELEASE

Finally, understand that today's marketing options offer you all sorts of ways to take one PR item and reuse it. That's another reason PR is very cost-effective.

For example, years ago I wrote a story for a client in the automotive world about protecting pooches from antifreeze when you're doing your own car updates. It got picked up in tons of papers then, but can't you see that working as a blog today?

And then, once the blog's on a website, couldn't you tweet about it? How about pasting it into a LinkedIn Pulse story, with news about it being available linked to specific niches? What about pulling any stats from the story to craft and distribute an infographic?

Technology keeps growing recycling options — at a relatively minimal budget. That's why instead of ever being leery of press releases and overall PR, you and your firm should see it as far more image-enhancing than advertising and well within most budgets.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Wendy J. Meyeroff** the Ghostwriter Who Grabs Attention, has been a reporter for numerous trade magazines for over 20 years, as well as a marketing consultant for numerous industry leaders.

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# We Flip for the Samsung Galaxy Z Flip3

**We remember the exciting “pioneer” days of tech. Back in the mid- to late 1990s, Microsoft was hawking a revolutionary new PC platform called Windows 95; Amazon and Google were startups; and we were the coolest kids in the office with our new flip phones (the legendary Motorola StarTAC).**

“While the phone compares favorably to top-of-the-line iPhones and Galaxy S models, the bendable glass is what makes it shine. You can literally fold the phone in half.”

Some things never change. Fast-forward to the 2020s and Microsoft is hawking a new PC platform called Windows 11; Amazon and Google resemble startup nation-states; and we are still the coolest kids in the office with our new flip smartphone (the shiny new Galaxy Z Flip3).

Yes, we recently purchased Samsung’s modern-day equivalent of those ultra-cool flip phones from a quarter-century ago. The Galaxy Z Flip3 was announced in August 2021, representing the third generation of Samsung’s efforts to market a foldable phone. The Z Flip’s cousin, the Galaxy Z Fold3, was also introduced at the same time. Both unique phones feature a special type of flexible glass that allows the device to actually fold in half. The Z Fold3 folds horizontally, and the Z Flip3 folds vertically.

While the bendable glass of the Z Flip3 phone makes it seem like a novelty, it actually is a really good Android-based smartphone. Aside from all the unique features, we found the phone to be comparable to a Galaxy S21 phone except for a slightly less robust battery life. When unfolded, the phone display is vivid and tall (taller than the iPhone 12 Pro Max or the Galaxy S21). It has both facial recognition and fingerprint unlocking options. We especially like the fingerprint sensor being located on the side of the phone as opposed to on the screen or on the back of the phone near the cameras.

Additionally, the phone has two rear cameras and one front-facing camera, which is fine for our purposes but less than the three rear camera configuration found on the latest iPhone and Galaxy S models. And, of course, the Z Flip3 is 5G-enabled.

## IT HAS BENDABLE GLASS!

While the phone compares favorably to top-of-the-line iPhones and Galaxy S models, the bendable glass is what makes it shine. You can literally fold the phone in half to a compact 2.8-by-3.4-inch form factor that fits nicely in your pocket. Samsung has included a small cover screen on the reverse side of the phone so that you can see the date, time and other notifications while the phone is folded. You can even answer calls directly from this screen without unfolding the phone — the speakerphone function is activated automatically.

Unlike the nostalgic flip phones of old, you really can't "unflip" the phone with a simple flick of the wrist (darn it ... that always looked so cool). The phone is rigid enough that it takes two hands to unfold it. Once unfolded, you get the full 6.5-by-2.8 screen to work with. There is a crease in the glass right in the middle where the phone folds. At first, this crease is very noticeable and maybe a little distracting. The more we've used the phone, however, the more the crease just sort of faded from our focus.

If you leave the Z Flip3 flat, you use it just like any other smartphone with a giant display. However, when you bend it at a 90-degree angle, you can set it up on a desk and watch a video or participate in a video call hands-free. This "desktop" configuration is what we love the most about the Z Flip3. It's especially handy when traveling. You can even configure one app to show in the top half of the display and another app in

the bottom half. Or you can take advantage of the natural split in the display to use a single app in the dual-screen mode.

If you are into selfies — we have been advised to refrain from those — you'll love the ability to set up the phone in desktop mode and shoot hands-free selfies from the more powerful rear cameras. Your selfies never looked so good. More useful to us than the hands-free selfie capability is the ability to shoot a hands-free video while the phone is stationary in desktop mode. No more shaky-hand problems for our videos when we are capturing an important lecture at a conference.

There are many things to love about our new Galaxy Z Flip3. The price is not one of them. It's priced at a premium, though the price point has gotten lower from the previous foldables from Samsung. Phone retailers are, however, offering good incentives on trade-ins, so we took advantage by trading in an older Galaxy S10 phone and got a nice rebate.

We probably would not pay full price for the Z Flip3 (although it is tempting). But given the rebate incentives offered, we jumped at the opportunity to pocket our first flip phone since 1998 — and we love it!

### 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](https://twitter.com/BillandPhil)



# Learn Law Firm Management Essentials Online

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# ALA's 2021 COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS SURVEY

Managing a law firm is challenging, and the **2021 Compensation and Benefits Survey Reports** can play a key role in your success! Find out more about new remote arrangements for workers; expanded coverage for dental, vision and short-term disability; and bumps in salaries for various positions. To learn more about the survey, check out the following:



*Legal Management* article from Phillip Perry, "Law Firms Move to Retain Staff, Bolster IT in ALA Survey"



*Legal Management Talk* podcast with Phillip Perry, where he talks a little more in depth about the study



The Executive Summary, which can be downloaded for free

[alanet.org/compsurvey](https://alanet.org/compsurvey)





**TOMAS SUROS**  
Global Product Marketing Director  
AbacusNext

“While it may seem cheaper and easier to do nothing, not deciding is still a decision — and one that carries a number of costs and risks.”

## Embrace Legal Technology: Avoid the Cost of Doing Nothing

Law practices today are required to do and know more than just the law or latest court rules. Firms — and their legal management professionals — are expected to manage the business of law: finding new clients, troubleshooting IT problems and mastering accounting systems. Hours are spent tracking invoices, billable time, firm productivity and critical documents.

Getting beyond mere case and matter management to truly effective overall business management is the objective, and evolving technology-driven options can help firms reach their goals.

### COMPLEXITY AND INNOVATION IN LEGAL

Law firm managers and attorneys, like most businesspeople, are living in an increasingly complex, noisy environment where technology innovation and its effective use are accelerating. There are tools available that are extremely helpful for increasing efficiency and profitability and operational optimization. The challenge for many modern firms is how to define their strategic technology direction and select the best solution.

Managing all the business aspects of a law practice, while at the same time managing cases, clients and the workload, requires a broad skill set that increasingly involves technology decisions. In fact, nearly every activity in managing the business aspects of a law practice involves technology:

- » Customer relation management (CRM) for client acquisition, relationship management and nurturing referrals
- » Client intake process with automation
- » Document drafting and filing



- » Communicating efficiently with shared visibility in the firm
- » Tracking billable activity and generating invoices
- » Tracking receivables, accepting online payments and managing cash

Rapid innovation is creating excitement in the legal technology space. After years of steady progress, the past five years have witnessed skyrocketing innovation, in part driven by private equity investment firms seeing opportunities in the digital transformation that is revolutionizing the practice of law.

## GROWING DEMAND FOR TECH

Client demand is a key driver of tech adoption. We hear from many firms that the drive to adopt new technology often starts with client expectations of upgraded experiences. Requests for a secure communications portal, case status alerts, digital signatures and electronic payments often come from clients.

Compliance obligations also drive demand. Growing complexity in data protection and privacy regulations requires a technology solution to help organizations identify and protect sensitive information and respond to consumer demands for control of personal data.

## THE COST OF DOING NOTHING

Many firms will be pulled by client demands or compliance requirements into technology upgrades or new initiatives. Embracing technology may well be a critical factor in determining whether a law firm thrives or plateaus.

Why now? Why not wait? Fight the natural urge to delay expenditures or postpone taking action. The time and cost of implementing a major system upgrade may be daunting, but too many people overlook the costs of doing nothing — namely that upgrading and maintaining old systems can be more expensive than investing in and migrating to a new solution.

While it may seem cheaper and easier to do nothing, not deciding is still a decision — and one that carries a number of costs and risks. Consider these unforeseen consequences that may come from a decision to do nothing:

### 1. Malpractice Claims

In a data-intensive operation, having information organized and accessible is important to avoid costly mistakes. Missing a deadline or court appearance without a continuance can

end a client’s ability to pursue justice, and negligent failure to protect against such mistakes can result in a malpractice claim.

There are smart calendar tools that can track all deadlines for all cases and offer alerts or reminders of changing status.

### 2. Data Breaches or Cybersecurity Incidents

Legal organizations often don’t appreciate the inherent risks in running outdated software and systems when it comes to assuring the security, availability, confidentiality and privacy of clients’ data.

As guardians of sensitive client data related to business negotiations, assets and debts, and trade secrets, law firms’ data vaults are valuable targets for hackers. A cyberattack will result in downtime and can incur loss or exposure of important client information. Beyond the steep costs related to data recovery and ransom payments, a security incident can result in serious harm to a firm’s reputation and ability to retain existing clients or win new ones.

### 3. Missing Out on Top Talent

Outdated systems and ineffective tools sap job satisfaction, impact morale and increase the risk of losing key people. Staff turnover is disruptive for clients and extremely costly for firms. The departure of a valued attorney can cost a firm half a million dollars.

A robust and secure infrastructure supporting remote workers is also important for attracting and retaining new talent in a competitive market. Employees have greater expectations for work-life balance, flexible schedules and remote work options. Firms that offer the policies and technology to support this will have access to a much larger pool of talent.

## CREATE A PLAN OF ACTION

Work with attorneys and other stakeholders across the firm to outline priorities and identify potential solutions for



assessment. Designing the tech roadmap for your firm will take some time, but it'll be worth the effort. There isn't a one-size-fits-all solution, and this certainly isn't a check-the-box, cookie-cutter technology adoption process.


A needs analysis with a technology vendor or consultant is a good first step. They will conduct a technical assessment to understand the firm's current systems. They may outline options or recommendations for replacing the existing systems.

Innovative tools in practice management, accounting and finance, document automation, and collaboration are helping law firms grow and provide more value to clients. Stay a step ahead of clients and the competition, and don't be caught unprepared by the costs of doing nothing.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Tomas Suros** is Global Product Marketing Director with AbacusNext. A technology advocate working at the intersection of IT and client consulting, he guides firms through the process of identifying forward-facing technology options and ensuring the successful implementation of a tailored solution.

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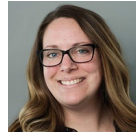


# Anniversaries, Awards and Appointments

## Members on the Move »»



**Kayla M. Carroll**, a member of the Edmonton Chapter, is now Director of Human Resources at Dane Creek Capital Corporation in Mississauga, Ontario.



**Jessica Johnson**, a member of the Minnesota Chapter, is now Office Administrator at Fox Rothschild LLP in Minneapolis, Minnesota.



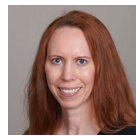
**Porsha Lee**, a member of the Greater Los Angeles Chapter, is now Office Administrator at Dykema Gossett, PLLC, in Los Angeles, California.



**Cathy Mauder**, a member of the Columbus Chapter, is now Director of Financial Operations at Ice Miller, LLP, in Columbus, Ohio.



**Vicki L. Scruggs**, a member of the Middle Tennessee Chapter, is now Director of Administration at Spencer Fane LLP in Nashville, Tennessee.



**Michelle M. Sheppard**, a member of the Dallas Chapter, is now Director of Legal Operations at Stewart Law Group in Dallas, Texas.



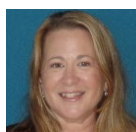
**Howard H. Smith Jr.**, a member of the Atlanta Chapter, is now Human Resources Manager at Hawkins Parnell & Young, LLP, in Atlanta, Georgia.



**Beth Sturga**, a member of the Atlanta Chapter, is now Office Administrator at Fisher Phillips in Atlanta, Georgia.



**Debra L. Tejada** (not pictured), a member of the Palm Beach County Chapter, is now Firm Administrator at Shendell & Pollock, PL, in Boca Raton, Florida.



**Kimberly D. Tooley**, a member of the Greater Kansas City Chapter, is now Payroll Manager at Polsinelli in Kansas City, Missouri.



## Listen to Learn

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



RECENT EPISODES INCLUDE:



- »» **Compensation and Benefits Trends** with Phillip Perry
- »» **The Virtual Effect on Law Firms** with Etan Mark
- »» **Building a Trans-Inclusive Workplace** with Ames Simmons
- »» **Making Mental Health Matter** with Bella Sterling, MS, MA
- »» **Law Firm Life After COVID-19** with Monique Mahler, CLM

🕒 Each episode is **free** and usually **fewer than 15 minutes long!**

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# Anniversaries, Awards and Appointments

## The 2021 Spirit of ALA Recipient

Several years ago, the Board of Directors created an honor to recognize individuals for special and unique achievements. The Spirit of ALA Award is not bestowed every year, but this year the Awards Program Project Team had the privilege of posthumously recognizing Past President Paula K. Barnes with it. This was announced during the Association Luncheon at the 2021 Annual Conference & Expo in October.

Paula sadly passed away in January after an intense battle with acute myeloid leukemia, but members will remember her as we knew her: a mentor to many, an advocate of ALA and a dedicated volunteer. The Spirit of ALA Award is not an annual honor — it is only presented as warranted to a stellar individual whose commitment to professionalism, dedication to the advancement of the legal management profession and record of long-term service to the Association sets the standard for all who aspire to achievement, excellence and success.



Visit [alanet.org/awards#spirit](https://alanet.org/awards#spirit) to learn more about Paula’s amazing journey with ALA and how she left an indelible mark on the Association during her time with us.



## Sending Our Condolences



ALA is saddened to report that member Corliss Freeman, MBA, has passed away. She served as Controller at Lewis Baach Kaufmann Middlemiss PLLC in Washington, D.C. Our thoughts are with her family, friends and colleagues.



# No-Cost WEBCASTS from the Solutions Series

ALA relies on its business partners to share solutions for pressing issues and hot topics in the legal industry as they work closely with legal management professionals. In these free webcasts — available live and on-demand — they pass along an abundance of knowledge.

Watch now! [legalmarketplace.alanet.org/events](https://legalmarketplace.alanet.org/events)

# 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.

## Want to Secure a CLM in 2022?

If you're interested in earning your Certified Legal Manager (CLM)<sup>®</sup> credential in 2022, make sure to save these dates for the exam, which can be taken at home or a testing site:



**Spring:** May 16 (apply by March 16)

**Fall:** November 1 (apply by September 1)

Your journey to proving mastery of the knowledge essential for effective performance as a principal administrator may be difficult — after all, it's a tough job — but ALA provides as much assistance as possible. That includes:

- ✓ A CLM webinar bundle for completing prerequisite education
- ✓ The downloadable *Study Guide for the CLM Exam*
- ✓ An e-learning supplement to the *Study Guide*, which features four courses that cover the most challenging content
- ✓ Packaged books and materials for background knowledge
- ✓ Virtual CLM trivia events
- ✓ A network for forming study groups with peers

Visit [alanet.org/clm](http://alanet.org/clm) for all the details.



## Renew Your Membership

If your firm isn't participating in Organizational Pricing, please renew your individual membership for 2022 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](http://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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## Upcoming Successful Firm Project Event

The Successful Firm Project is a professional network of law firm leaders, subject matter coaches and solution providers collaborating on what makes firms successful. Participants are looking for creative ways to improve the business health of their firms today and in the future. It will provide a point of access for law firm leaders to connect and collaborate by sharing new ideas and best practices. ALA members and their entire firms can take advantage of a complimentary subscription at [successfulfirm.com](http://successfulfirm.com).

Next up in the virtual event schedule is How Successful Firms Approach Diversity & Inclusion, a webcast-style Playbook event, on November 30. It will feature the following speakers:

- ✦ Tiffany Ho, Director of Operations at Rogoway Law Group and Vice Chair of ALA's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility Committee
- ✦ Les Bookoff, Partner at Bookoff McAndrews PLLC, named "Most Inclusive Firm" in 2020 by Chambers
- ✦ Elissa Knoff, Attorney, Bookoff McAndrews PLLC
- ✦ Alexandra Burk, Associate Attorney, Rogoway Law Group



## Registration Open for 2022 HR Web-Based Courses

Registration is now open for our 2022 HR web-based courses. Participating in these courses simulates the classroom experience, as you meet virtually with the same instructor and classmates once a week for six weeks. They include lectures, group discussions, case studies, readings and assessments. This learning format is great for any professional who wants to take a deep dive into the knowledge necessities for law firm human resources management.

- » **HR 1: Employee Selection and Promotion** takes place between January 13 and February 17. Sign up by January 7.
- » **HR 2: Performance Management and Compensation** takes place between May 26 and June 30. Sign up by May 20.

If you successfully complete both courses, you can earn a Legal Management HR Specialist Certificate. (If this is the route you plan to take, purchasing the two-course package will save you money.)

Visit [alanet.org/web-based-courses](http://alanet.org/web-based-courses) for more details.