SEPTEMBER 2020
VOLUME 39 • ISSUE 8

LEGAL MANAGEMENT

THE MAGAZINE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF LEGAL ADMINISTRATORS

Working Around Micromanagement

A tough employee-manager relationship can make work unbearable, but there are ways that can help improve your situation.

LEGAL
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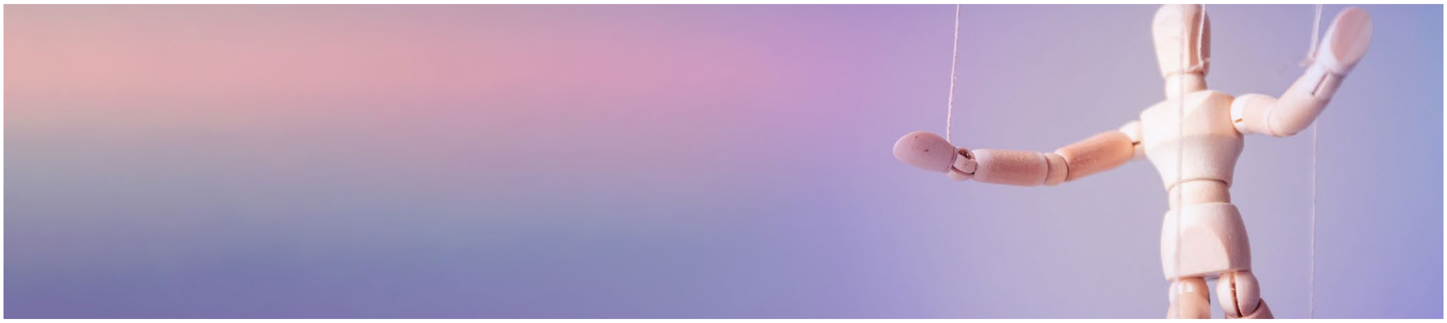

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Finding the Bright Spots

Editor's Note: While we searched for ALA's next Executive Director, our volunteer leadership has been taking turns writing the Executive Director's Big Ideas column. We hope you've enjoyed the fresh perspectives they've been sharing. Executive Director April L. Campbell, JD, will be writing our November/December column.

CANDACE K. CHILDRESS
Office Administrator, Blank Rome, and Director, ALA Board of Directors

It can be incredibly difficult to find the bright spots when life throws harrowing things your way. Sometimes, we really need to look for them.

A few years ago, my son Cody was diagnosed with cancer after he had just returned from his honeymoon. We had gone from a celebratory time to one that was quite terrifying and filled with unknowns. My husband and I were fortunate enough to be able to buy a house on a lake close to where Cody and his wife live. We wanted them to have a place where we could all get away, relax and not focus on everything we were going through.

> "This year has certainly tested the most optimistic people in our lives. But these highs and lows of life are something that binds us together as humans. We find ways to get through it."

I'm grateful to report that Cody's cancer is in remission and he's doing well. And even though that chapter was dark and trying for my family, it ended up being the catalyst to get that lake house, a place where we have found much comfort together. It continues to be our respite as we settle into a world with COVID-19. Quarantining and being able to work remotely at the lake house has given me more time with my husband, my two sons, my two Labradors and my horse.

Being remote does definitely have its drawbacks. I feel that I am working longer hours because the computer is sitting right here, making it too easy to plop down at any time and start responding to emails. But then I can look down at my dogs or out the window at my horse and it all has a calming effect on me. We purchased the lake house to help our family get through a difficult time, but it has become a sanctuary for us, a small piece of heaven — one of those bright spots when we need it.

These are some of the challenges I've been dealing with in the last few years. I know you all have your own struggles you're dealing with, too — as do the staff at our organizations. This year has certainly tested the most optimistic people in our lives. But these highs and lows of life are something that binds us together as humans. We find ways to get through it.

Everyone needs to figure out what works best for them individually. I personally found that working on puzzles calms the nerves and just takes me away from reality, even if for a brief moment. I started working them when we spent months at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, for Cody's surgery, chemo and radiation. Now we also work them at the lake house; it's become a fun way to bond with the family and helps us all destress during COVID-19. I walk in the evenings when it is not too hot (Houston is an oven right now, though!), and I enjoy swimming at the lake and floating on a noodle.

For the office, it takes a little more work so that everyone feels appreciated and needed. I have weekly videoconferences with the staff and have been known to get them up and do the "Cupid Shuffle." Each week, one staff member takes the Blank Rome staff chat and can speak about anything — personal or professional — that comes to mind. I send a "funny for the day," which even the partners enjoy and have come to expect. I email the staff individually every day and keep an eye out for warning signs. I have become a counselor to one of my staff members who is now going through a divorce due to the stresses of COVID-19.

For more inspiration on how to lead your staff (and yourself!) through these times, I invite you to check out how ALA member, Krista Hart, implemented a wellness program at her firm in 2019. She's shared how her firm has transitioned that wellness program into a virtual setting to help everyone as we socially distance. You can read her article, "How One Firm Encourages Employee Wellness," in this issue on page 8, and hear more from her in a companion podcast at *bit.ly/podcast-hart*.

As you lead your law firms or organizations through these unprecedented times, I encourage all of you to be open and honest about conversations with your staff. It can be difficult to admit we aren't OK, but I promise you, sharing experiences let's others know it is OK to not be OK at times. If not, they need to be able to reach out for help. There is absolutely nothing wrong with reaching out for help when needed; it's something all of us will need to do at some point in our lives.

There are days that I struggle, like everyone, and have to find what works for me. I invite you all to share how you handle challenges with each other. #ALAisHere, and I find comfort knowing I have my ALA network to lean on during these times.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Candace K. Childress is the Office Administrator at Blank Rome in Houston. She also serves as a Director on the ALA Board of Directors.

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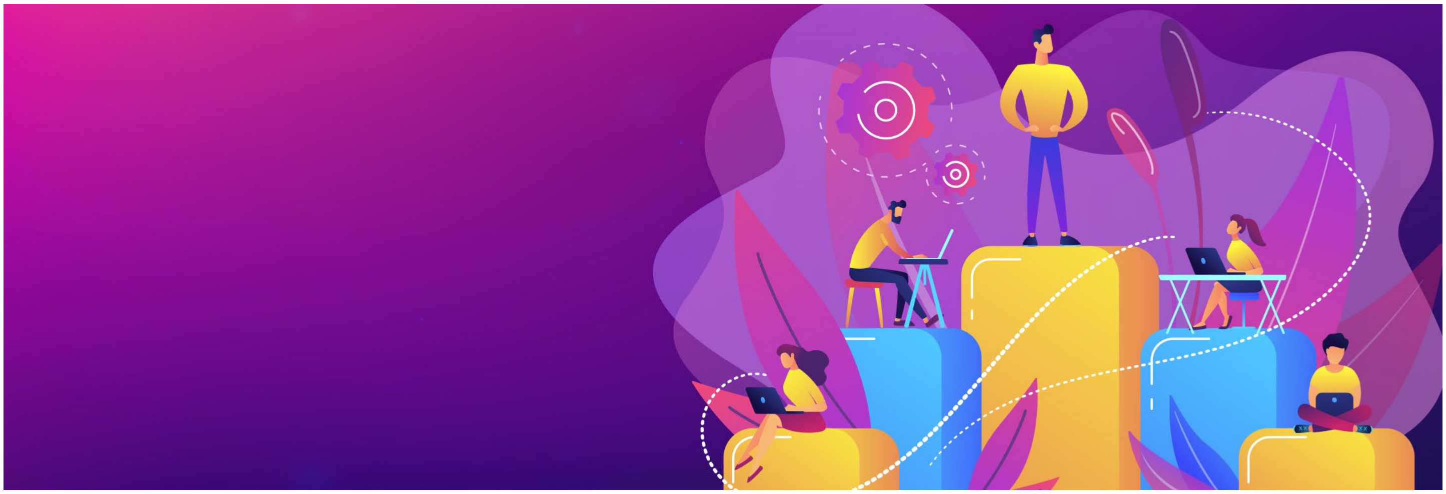
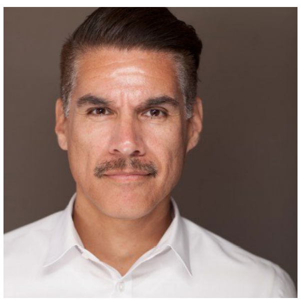


Pandemic Priorities: Your People



ROY BAEZ
Manager of Organizational Development, ProSearch

Now more than ever, employee satisfaction is critical. Organizations managing remote work environments often face challenges they never anticipated. This is true for large and small law firms, corporations and other businesses — whether their work-from-home situation is temporary or the new normal.

The most important factor for most organizations to look after right now is their people. Regardless of your size or the market you serve, keeping your team healthy and happy — both personally and professionally — is more important than ever. Even if it has never been a priority in the past, now is the time to focus on organizational development.

> "Now more than ever, keeping teams connected and maintaining a positive culture will help organizations better position themselves for whatever is to come."

WHAT IS ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

The pace of change in any firm or company can be overwhelming. Priorities, technology, people and outside influences are always changing. Organizational development is a focused effort around planning for and managing these changes with methodical strategies and processes aimed at improving organizational effectiveness and overall health.

Organizational development applies behavioral science to influence employees to be honest with one another about their experiences and perceptions of the organization and to assume a greater role in the organization's success. In doing so, lines of communication open and shared goals are identified, such that people find improved ways of working together to achieve those goals.

An important component of this concept is collaboration. Org dev is not a one-time project nor is it handled by a single resource in a vacuum. Rather, its success requires acceptance of both its premise and the strategies and processes implemented throughout the organization. Engagement in those structures is necessary to achieve the goals of the program.

ORG DEV IN PRACTICE

Law firms, corporations and even government agencies can benefit from a focused effort around organizational development. There are several tools organizations can adopt to advance their org dev initiatives, a few of which are described below.

Ongoing performance management: Reflektive is one example of a flexible, powerful performance management tool that provides real-time feedback and instills accountability. In addition to supporting annual performance review cycles, it is also used to support monthly one-on-one check-ins between managers and their direct reports. The check-ins support goal creation and tracking, constructive feedback and shoutouts between employees.

What is a "shoutout"? Shoutouts are short submissions, generally a few sentences long, that highlight a company core value demonstration and are themed to either congratulate a team or an individual on a success, recognize outstanding work or express thanks for assistance. They are published in the Reflektive tool in a format that is like a Facebook homepage, visible companywide, allowing fellow employees to like or comment on the shoutout.

Morale measurement: Happy employees are less likely to leave their jobs than those who are unhappy. And those with positive attitudes are more innovative, creative problem-solvers than those who bring a negative outlook to work. Measuring how people are feeling allows organizations to make real-time observations and changes when necessary to address serious issues.

Friday Pulse is an example of a tool used to gauge employee happiness on an ongoing basis. The platform generates a weekly survey asking employees the following: "How happy were you at work this week?" "What went well (your celebrations)?" "How can we make things better (your ideas)?" Answers are anonymous, with overall scores across teams or departments made visible to group members.

There are additional questions around lighthearted topics or polls that are meant to initiate discussion among the team — topics like "What's a great movie you have seen recently?" or "Would you rather sail around the world or climb Mount Everest?" Discussing the Friday weekly results is a nice way to kick off team meetings, especially when much of the team may be working remotely, to help re-engage those who may be feeling disconnected.

Internal blog: An internal blog is a useful way to share information and keep employees connected via a more relaxed communication channel than formal emails.

Our internal company communications blog is named "Frank." It is used to support official communications from our executive team, as well as news, events and company culture-related topics. The site is interactive to allow for comments and likes. The name Frank came from our chief executive officer and is meant to underscore the frankness of the communications on the blog and the conversations that result from the posts.

Now more than ever, keeping teams connected and maintaining a positive culture will help organizations better position themselves for whatever is to come.

Prioritizing collaborative environments and open, honest communication promotes a healthy culture, one that serves to attract and retain the best employees. And regardless of profession or industry, or how much technology we employ, the truth remains that it is people that make the biggest difference between organizations that are successful and those that are not.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Roy Baez is the Manager of Organizational Development at ProSearch, a global e-discovery company, where he oversees communications, culture and training and development. He has more than two decades of experience managing and innovating training, operations, sales operations, digital operations, and company culture for both dot-com and legal-related organizations.

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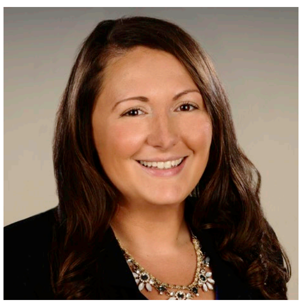

KRISTA HART
Firm Administrator
Panitch Schwarze Belisario & Nadel

How One Firm Encourages Employee Wellness

Law firms always have grappled with the profession's dark side, such as high rates of depression, anxiety, drug and alcohol abuse, divorce and suicide. To that list, we must now add the novel coronavirus.

The health, safety and welfare of Panitch Schwarze Belisario & Nadel employees, clients, vendors and friends is of the utmost importance to our firm. Since the pandemic was declared in March, we have been operating remotely, but wellness still plays an integral role within the firm. That's why we offer a program to provide our team members with the tools and resources to empower them to be healthy in mind, body and spirit.

Launched in 2019, the Panitch Schwarze Wellness Program is open to all our team members — attorneys and professional staff alike. In 2020, we had planned to grow and expand the program through a partnership with Prasada, an organization that offers workplace wellness programs. When the pandemic hit, we had to adjust our plans.

We shifted gears from in-person classes to all virtual sessions, but canceling these sessions was not an option. Wellness classes are more relevant than ever, as our team is adjusting to home being work and work being home. Working at home makes it far too easy to sit at the computer all day; there is no driving away and "leaving the office" to give structure to the day and ease transitions between worlds. In these new circumstances, focusing on stress relief and learning to practice gratitude and mindful movement can help you become more aware and enjoy life more. Even while operating remotely, we have held bimonthly classes including chair yoga, meditation and gratitude.

"In these new circumstances, focusing on stress relief and learning to practice gratitude and mindful movement can help you become more aware and enjoy life more."

UNDERSTANDING "WHOLEBEING"

According to Prasada, wholebeing means recognizing that we each live within three worlds: the inner world of the mind, the world of the physical body and the world outside, which Prasada calls nature.

The world of the mind is the world that you make up inside your head. It holds the interpretation of your experiences, your stories, your thoughts, emotions and feelings, the ideas of love and fear and so much more. It can be a place of joy, curiosity and wonder or a place of terror, uncertainty and chaos. It is a place you create through practices such as meditation, mindfulness, gratitude and breathwork.

The world of your physical body is the structure that holds you together in the material world. Your bones and muscles provide the framework through which the systems for air, blood, information and energy flow. Your body is also the place where your mind and soul reside and the vehicle that moves you through space and time to experience life. Your body is honed to function optimally through movement, exercise and practices such as yoga.

The world of nature includes all that is outside your body: the natural world of forests and birds, the sun, oceans and fishes, sand and soft moss. The word nature here also includes the manmade, built environment that we have constructed for our survival and comfort as we live, work, gather and play. Staying close to nature as much as possible enhances healing, happiness and health.

These programs focus on wholebeing as a way to discover the ways in which all three worlds are intimately connected. Whole-being practices are habits of awareness where we train, create, heal and grow within each of these three worlds.

A SMART INVESTMENT

Panitch Schwarze's Wellness Program includes several components to share health-related information and reinforce healthy regular practices. Lunch-and-learn workshops run for about 15 minutes and focus on resiliency, moving for health, mindset and gratitude. Monthly 30-minute classes teach employees healthy practices, including chair yoga, walking and mindfulness. And monthly 15-minute "fix" classes put the learning into practice through stretching and breathing exercises and explorations of mindfulness, joy, gratitude and creativity.

The 60-minute workshops help participants explore the science, strategies and interactive activities of wholebeing practices. They reinforce habits of awareness for mind and body in order to move their physical, emotional and mental health to a better state. These programs include strategies that can be incorporated into daily life.

Our goal with these programs is to create happy, healthy, satisfied employees. The classes are open to all levels; no experience is required. Research has shown that focusing on wellness, even for just a few minutes a day, improves health and decreases stress levels.

It also brings benefits for the firm. Energized, engaged employees demonstrate greater focus and drive greater productivity. At Panitch Schwarze, we believe that this investment in a firmwide wellness program will pay handsome dividends for our employees personally and for our business.

Tune In for More

Krista Hart recently chatted with *Legal Management Talk* about how and why she established a wellness program for staff and attorneys at Panitch Schwarze Belisario & Nadel. Listen to the episode at *bit.ly/podcast-hart*.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Krista Hart is a Firm Administrator who is dedicated to assisting the Panitch Schwarze Belisario & Nadel attorneys and staff with all their workplace needs. Motivated by the belief that employees are the No. 1 asset of a firm, Hart sees her role as crucial to maintaining Panitch Schwarze's workplace culture. She currently serves as President-Elect of Association of Legal Administrators' Philadelphia Chapter.

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Where Are Your Markers?

Re-evaluating how you mark your success can make you a more effective leader.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

"Where are your markers?" is a delightful play on words that will get you thinking and maybe even making a few powerful changes. The world has certainly changed since March 2020. As a legal management professional, having little or no control over much of anything is not your normal mode of operation. There's stress, frustration and even numbness in response to what's going on. But what if there were a way for you to regain control and stop feeling like you've involuntarily entered your washer's spin cycle? That's where this course will get you started — it may be just the perspective shift needed during these times and all others.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Describe the four most common markers that draw out achievement.
2. Identify your main marker and determine if you still want to use it.
3. Modify your markers while still getting credit for your efforts.
4. Apply the marker concept to your leadership of others in the office.
5. Recognize how to relinquish the stress from trying to control outcomes with old metrics.

As kids, we lived in a land of make-believe filled with crayons, markers and made-up realities. Markers could record a world sometimes only we could see or imagine, and no one taught us our world wasn't just as we believed.

Maybe you chased those dreams, and your role in the incredible legal profession is filled with joy, fulfillment and glitter. But the rest of us only use our markers to fill in the blanks when we're asked what success means. Somewhere from childhood to adulthood, markers go from coloring our world to being used to determine our success. We may still use markers, but they no longer create a colorful new reality or answers to big life questions. Instead, they tell us where we should be. In our youth, markers were just colored pens. Now, markers convey a different meaning — they are milestones of success. They show us and others whether we've made it. The challenge is that where we put them seems to determine our happiness.

Where we put our markers affects our view of our position, maybe even our chosen profession, our business (if we have one), our leadership, our relationships and, yes, our progress. And that was well before the entire world went on lockdown, client flow slowed considerably and Zooming in one's pajamas became the only viable option for connection.

The world has changed quite dramatically, but our markers have changed only slightly. Most of us are merely in a holding pattern while we wait for "things to get back to normal." What if, instead of waiting for something outside ourselves to alter, we took a moment to consider if what we used to see as successful still meets those standards or expectations? Perhaps we can use this time to consider if our markers are still the primary tool to determine when — and if — we can give ourselves permission to be pleased and happy with our progress.

If you find yourself having rigid measurements for where you are in life or work, chances are you've located your markers. Success will be reached when there are X dollars in the bank or when the degree is complete. Success will arrive when Dad tells me he's proud of how I run my business. Success will be mine when all debts are paid in full or when we have doubled profit instead of just making it. When everyone on the team gets along and respects my leadership. When we live in this neighborhood and get that kind of car.

No matter the marker, these examples tend to measure our progress toward happiness. Are we there yet? If not, happiness waits until that happens. But in reality, happiness doesn't wait for anyone. Life moves on; so does your interest in pursuing what you once thought would produce the happy feelings — unless you lead your actions and attitude around those markers a bit differently. For the sake of your office, your firm, your partners and the morale of the team you have the privilege of leading, take a healthy look at what your key markers are and where you have them positioned. Which ones need to stay? And which ones need close examination, because you have finally realized that they are of no help to anyone?

THE MARKER OF PROGRESS

In the spring of 2020, the world seemed to have lost its forward momentum. Agreements made were no longer kept, contracts written were simply ignored or forgiven, and progress came to a halt. Those who value the marker of progress suddenly found themselves facing an identity crisis. When you value this marker, everything's current status is not enough and good enough doesn't exist. The current number of clients or a beautiful office location doesn't matter; it's all about what's next and what could be coming down the pipeline.

If you're always focused on what's next, your clients will sense it by the way you talk to them. The team you lead is part slighted, part ready to give up, part feeling not good enough and part wondering if they'll ever measure up. Leaders often hold the teams they manage to a similar standard to which they hold themselves, but this marker doesn't write well on most human surfaces.

So how can you tell this is your marker of choice? It's likely you're unable to be present and grateful for what you have. Your decisions often have you asking "Am I good enough?" and your answer will rarely be yes. You probably don't accept or receive compliments well. If this is your marker, nothing will ever seem to be good enough to outsiders. For example: the employee grateful for the news of last year's bonus, who then gets an earful about the state of your first-quarter targets, may begin to question your credibility.

Ambition and progress build practices; being reasonable about the speed of progress breeds reasonable, reachable expectations and confidence in your entire workforce. Both are to be considered before giving your team and clients the impression that not only is your office not yet up to speed, but that you're looking at them thinking the same thing. Is all that progress really the only thing you've got going?

THE MARKER OF STATUS

These markers are about the accumulation of shiny things, name-brand objects or anything that screams to the world that you've made it. But the marker of status can rapidly ruin a team's morale. If you're measuring success based on material things, chances are good there is distance between you and team members — not to mention a risk of outspending the revenue coming into your wallet or office.

The marker of status isn't just about pursuing the best of the best. It rests more on the belief that without such external objects to "ooh" and "ahh" over, no one would pay much attention to the person who bought them. Blending in or feeling left out are risks those with an affinity for the marker of status are unwilling to take. In leadership, this marker will cause you to make the safe decisions. That means you may very well miss some of the most golden opportunities to excel or rise to the occasion for which you may not yet have the skills or knowledge required.

Strange as it may seem, the desire to appear of highest status — to believe success has been achieved — will set you apart from those you lead (unless your whole team uses this as a marker, too). It may widen the chasm between "us and them" and cripple your ability to see what those you lead need, particularly if your eyes are more focused on buying yourself more things.

Remember the phrase "if you don't stand for something, you'll fall for anything"? If you claim you must acquire status before you have value, then the marker of status is what's keeping you from being an effective leader. And not just of your team, but of you and frankly, anyone else in your presence.

THE MARKER OF PROFIT

Tied to ambition and overlapping with the marker of status, the ardent pursuit of profit can create different problems. If the only metric of whether you've made it starts with a dollar sign, people may miss so many other factors that could be considered successful.

Profit-based markers that are unrealistic can result in not giving the team access to adequate resources, and they can breed real resentment. Spending less can result in more profit, but it can also prevent you from providing competitive salaries. Staying in search of success only measured by monetary means can also remove your ability to see people's needs.

If furloughs or layoffs are done in the pursuit of merely boosting the bottom line instead of as a last, difficult option, you're

relying on the marker of profit at work. Perhaps spending on a team event is what will create much-needed synergy. But arguing over the cost of one-ply toilet paper versus the staff's preferred two-ply because you're overzealous about expenditures (true story!) is not going to do anything to build morale. Focusing solely on a singular marker like profit is not an accurate way to determine happiness or an effective way to stay in touch with the happiness you experience or convey to employees.

THE MARKER OF POWER

Bigger than an ambitious streak, the marker of power gives new meaning to valuing a title or position. It doesn't have to be official, like office administrator or partner, but it has to provide power over something or someone. Sometimes it's those who feel slighted by their parents or compared to a sibling who end up seeking power through approval or attention. There is a need to continuously prove prowess or ability or being better than the sibling (or whatever you are using for the comparison). But it's a losing battle that will leave you constantly reaching for the unattainable.

In leadership, people who value the marker of power and the marker of progress behave similarly. Where they differ is when someone consistently seeks a position that others warn them to avoid, that is an ardent pursuit of the marker of power. The title has more value than their interest in the responsibilities of the actual position. Perceived power over others can be addictive, yet every pursuit of this nature originates in a reasonably deep-seated lack of belief in one's own value.

SHIFTING YOUR MARKERS

Markers represent where we think we need to be before we can be happy — in leadership, in life, in managing a legal office, in leading a family. Much has been written about the choices we make to be happy. But these markers can still persist and make us resist the simplest of feelings.

If you can stand still and still be happy, those you lead will follow your example — not by standing still but by ironically becoming more motivated. There's less fear, less stress and less that brings them down or freezes them in the face of distracting activity. Think of this analogy: As children, we imagined and assumed that what we drew or made up was our reality. As adults, we measure reality based on what we see, forsaking what we imagine, often believing it will just never be. We forget to just be happy. Instead, we keep our eye on the marker — that is, where we think we should be — and don't focus on how far we've come and what we're building.

With children, misplace one marker and some kids won't notice. Misplace their favorite color? That can be a disaster. How emotionally attached are you to the markers you choose? Society may of course weigh in, giving guidance on which markers of success to choose. But the only one who gets to decide what markers mean in terms of success and satisfaction with your choices is *you*. Maybe we actually knew more as children — we could draw clearer pictures of what we really desired, instead of all the things we now believe we require before those things can happen. But we still have the imagination and child-like drawing skills, and as adults we have access to even better markers and crayons. Enjoy drawing your own conclusion.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Monica Wofford is a leadership development coach, consultant and keynote speaker. As Chief Executive Officer of the training and consulting firm Contagious Companies, Inc., she and her team assist organizations and their management in developing powerful skills in leadership. She's the author of *Contagious Leadership* and *Make Difficult People Disappear*. She has also been a frequent speaker at ALA's national conferences and chapter events. Since March 2020, she has had the privilege of consulting as the Interim CEO of a two-county United Way nonprofit.

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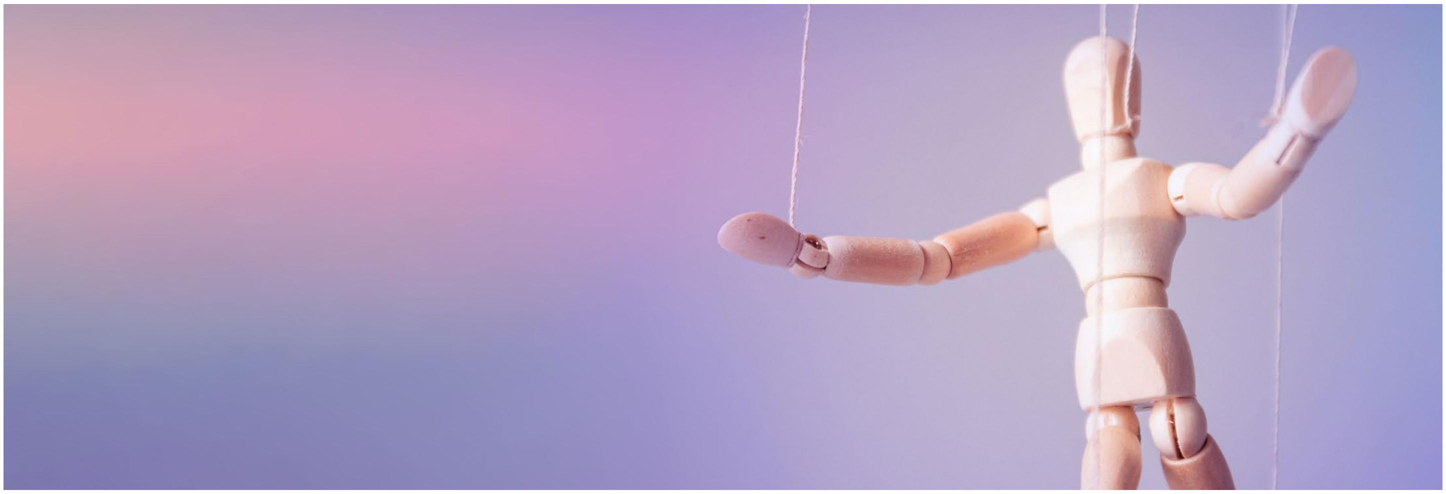

Working Around Micromanagement

A tough employee-manager relationship can make work unbearable, but there are ways that can help improve your situation.

KYLIE ORA LOBELL
Freelance Writer

Micromanagers are toxic and unpredictable. They may watch your every move, criticize you for not doing a perfect job or refuse to give you the freedom or support to make your own decisions.

Chances are, you've experienced this situation in your career. Even if you've been spared the draining drama of reporting to one, you likely still will need to help employees stuck in such a situation. If these problems aren't addressed, they can drive down productivity while also driving away otherwise good employees who are being stymied by the situation.

"Micromanaging means applying excessive control," says Halelly Azulay, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of TalentGrow and creator and host of *The TalentGrow Show* podcast. "Managers need to learn to provide the right level of balance between autonomy and control based on the specifics of the person and the task."

You may not be able to change a micromanager's behavior, but you can learn to handle them better. Addressing the issues respectfully, but head-on, will make the manager-employee relationship more productive and create a better work environment for everyone involved in the process. These tips don't just apply if you are in this challenging situation yourself — they can also help you coach a colleague through it.

SCHEDULE A MEETING

If you're having trouble working with your micromanager, then meet with them to discuss how you can make progress moving forward. In this conversation, don't blame your micromanager or put them down. Instead, come up with a checklist of different things you can do to improve communication and make their job easier.

"If you're having trouble working with your micromanager, then meet with them to discuss how you can make progress moving forward."

"You may not be able to change a micromanager's behavior, but you can learn to handle them better. Addressing the issues respectfully, but head-on, will make the manager-employee relationship more productive and create a better work environment for everyone involved in the process."

"This might be a difficult conversation, [since] giving this kind of feedback is often uncomfortable for both parties," says Azulay. "But I think that it's important to give them the benefit of the doubt and give them the chance to discover that there's a problem for you."

If you go about the meeting in a polite fashion, then you could end up strengthening your relationship. "You will probably increase the level of trust, intimacy, cooperation and respect between you by showing that you care enough to be open and vulnerable," Azulay says.

INVOLVE THE MICROMANAGER IN YOUR WORK

You might try to keep your micromanager out of your business, but that's not the right approach. Instead, you should tell them what's going on — especially in this new remote workplace, where they can't see you on a daily basis.

"Though it may be difficult, one of the most peaceful ways to resolve a micromanagement problem is to make them feel involved in your work," says Xavier Morales, Esq., a trademark attorney in Texas and CEO of Secure Your Trademark. "A micromanager will often want to feel needed, so try involving them in affairs."

Whether or not your micromanager requires them, you should send them regular progress reports to assure them that you are staying on track with tasks, says Michael Hammelburger, CEO of The Bottom Line Group. This is imperative for at-home workers, since you can't meet with your micromanager face to face and let them know how things are going.

BE IN COMMUNICATION

Micromanagers may get nervous about whether work will happen on time and to their satisfaction. According to Azulay, this is especially true when it comes to remote work.

"We have not yet established routines and patterns for working in this new way," she says. "And what we now know from cognitive [science] and neuroscience is that humans are hardwired to crave certainty. It makes us feel safe."

In order to make your micromanager feel safer, instead of communicating on a need-to-know basis, be in communication more often. For instance, Azulay says you could ask your micromanager, "Would it be OK with you if I send you a quick bullet-point status update at the close of business each day in the next couple of weeks?" or "May I send you a progress report on [insert day of week]?"

You could tell your micromanager that you thought it would be good to let them know your progress on a task. Make sure you actually follow through and send confident and competent updates at the same time every time as promised, says Azulay.

Morales says another way to improve communication is to check in on your law firm's communication platform (like Slack, Teams or email) every single day. "This way, your boss will come to see you as trustworthy and reliable."

PRACTICE SELF-CARE

If you're having a challenging time dealing with your micromanager, you need to incorporate self-care into your routine.

"Meet their expectations but then set aside a 'me' time every day at the office (or at home when working on a WFH setup) to compose your thoughts and maintain your mental health," says Hammelburger.

Azulay adds that you could go for a brisk walk, talk to a best friend, listen to uplifting music, volunteer to help out in your community, pick a fun hobby or cuddle with your pets.

"These are just a few examples of activities you could do for short breaks throughout your day to shift your mood into a more relaxed, positive one. Take care of yourself so you can do a great job for your firm," she says.

ESTABLISHING A HEALTHIER WORKING RELATIONSHIP

Of course, you need to look at your own behavior and take personal accountability for your work results and outcomes as well as your impact on others, according to Azulay. You can't always point the finger at your micromanager for a negative work environment in your law firm; you need to improve how you work, too.

"Always take ownership of your part, step up to help and 'criticize by creating,'" she says. "When something seems broken or ineffective, instead of ignoring or complaining, take the lead on suggesting solutions and building something better. This will make you an indispensable employee to your boss. Plus, you'll gain valuable experience that will prime you for your next desired role."

No work situation is ever perfect, and it can be easy to slip into a negative pattern when you're in an unhappy work situation. But it can help to focus on your own attitude and try to find the positives about your environment. If nothing else, it'll be a learning experience that you call upon throughout your career.

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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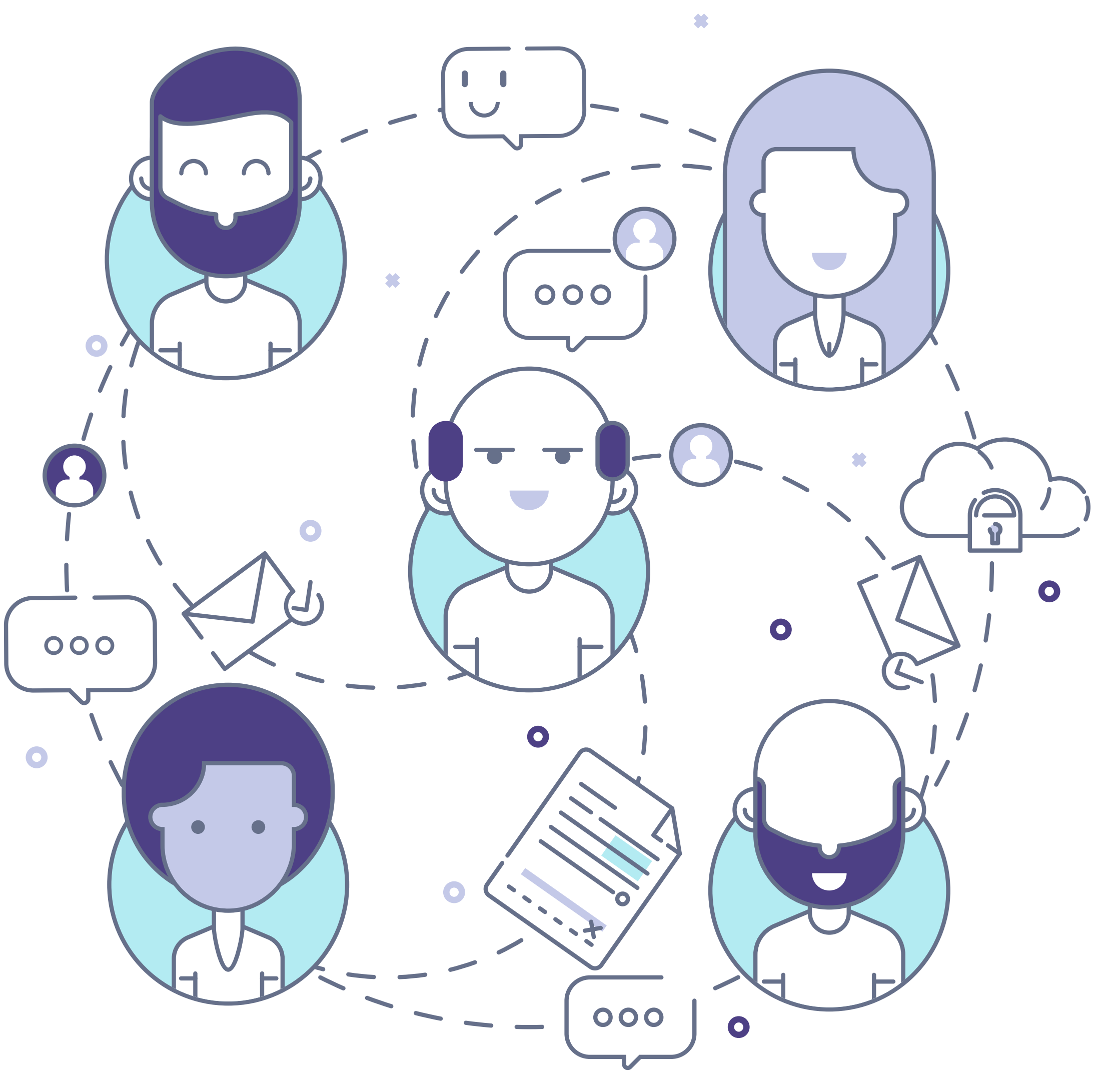

ERIN BRERETON
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Engage Employees with These 5 Low-Cost Amenities

Even before the COVID-19 crisis, research indicated telecommuting and a flexible work schedule were the most common employee perks law firms and legal departments offered.

Now that numerous industry members have grown used to working from home — and may still be balancing caregiving and other needs — employees' interest in the amenity isn't likely to wane anytime soon.

Employers, though, might find they're facing unexpected post-pandemic revenue and budgetary challenges in the coming months, which could reduce spending on other employee initiatives.

However, as the following low-cost amenity examples prove, firms don't need to spend a fortune to effectively influence engagement, recruiting and retention.

> "We definitely have to make an effort to create the glue that might more naturally occur when people are working together in the same space. It's something we've gotten better at over time."

1. REGULAR EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION PROGRAMMING

The majority of Rosenthal, Levy, Simon & Sosa's 42 employees have been with the Florida law firm for a decade or more, according to Firm Administrator Lori DeMayo.

"We're not flying people on private jets or yachts," DeMayo says. "But I've queried other law firms to hear what they do, and I feel like we have a really robust [employee morale program] for our size. It really helps with employee satisfaction and retention; people like to come work."

The firm's ongoing appreciation efforts range from sending a dozen roses on Administrative Professionals' Day and monthly birthday celebrations to time off and a $150 gift card on employees' fifth anniversary. Employees who work there for 10 years receive a four-person trip to Disney World, with $1,000 for incidentals.

> "I was interviewing somebody once and mentioned the dog-friendly policy, and at the end of the conversation, she said, 'You should have led with that!' People love their dogs — and it's also a symbol of believing in work-life integration and how you can bring your whole and authentic self to work."

"When interviewing potential new hires, that's very attractive," DeMayo says. "I've heard from staff it makes them feel cared about, because maybe attorneys sometimes are not so good about saying great job — but people see someone else gets [a birthday or other recognition] and know their turn is coming."

After firm members suggested Lyda Law Firm LLC start an Employee of the Month award, the firm, which employs a half-dozen attorneys, instituted one in January. An indirect benefit is that it's helped promote positive team member interactions, says founding attorney Mark Lyda.

"The award is a public thing people actually requested," Lyda says. "There's no bonus; it's just a pat on the back. It's something that's free and boosted morale, [and] it has encouraged employees to congratulate each other."

2. RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING ACTIVITIES

To facilitate social engagement between employees, Fox Swibel began sponsoring what the 36-attorney Chicago firm has coined "frolic and detour" events about a year and a half ago, according to partner David Morris.

A randomly selected firm member chooses another employee to spend a business day together participating in cultural or other events with a firm-provided financial allowance. They later share their experiences — which have included golf, a museum visit and a trip to Las Vegas — with the rest of the firm.

"The idea is to do something fun and interesting," Morris says. "It's been well-received. It allows people to spend quality time together in a different environment. We're all working hard; we, as a team, want to have people collaborate and interact on multiple levels."

Numerous firms, including Fox Swibel, have had to pause in-person events during the COVID-19 crisis. Some, though, have sought ways to connect employees who are working from home.

That's familiar territory for Practus LLP's 22 attorneys and 12 staff members, who have worked separately since the decentralized, virtual firm was founded in 2018, according to Co-Founder and Partner Robert Elwood.

"We definitely have to make an effort to create the glue that might more naturally occur when people are working together in the same space," Elwood says. "It's something we've gotten better at over time."

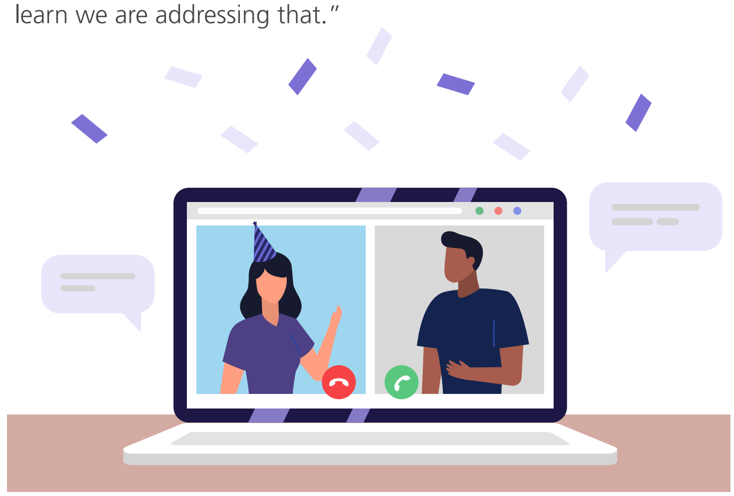
The firm has held numerous virtual events, including BYOB happy hours on Zoom and two recent virtual wine tastings.

In the first tasting, held on a Friday at 5 p.m., the firm shipped three Italian red wines to all partners and staff. Two of the winemakers called in from Italy as a surprise. During the second videoconference, firm members, some joined by their spouses and adult children, discussed what they liked about three Spanish white wines Elwood had selected.

"Not only did we get to taste great wines, we had wonderful camaraderie," he says. "For the first one, we simply wanted to cheer everyone up during the COVID pandemic. Everyone had such a good time that we decided to do the second one!"

While the firm's BYOB happy hours obviously cost less, the virtual wine tastings and shipping were only about $80 per person. Both tastings, Elwood says, had close to 100% participation.

"There was much laughter and enjoyment; it was a real bonding experience," he says. "Virtual events have been great for making everyone feel they are part of a single team, no matter where in the world they are. Our model is very different, and sometimes attorneys interested in joining us worry they'll miss the social aspects of a traditional office. They are reassured when they learn we are addressing that."



> "Our view has always been people do their best work when working on things they're passionate about and happy about their work situation. We have a lot of people from Big Law looking to join our firm as laterals; part of the appeal is the fact we have this culture. It's been helpful in terms of keeping and attracting people."

3. AN OFFICE ENVIRONMENT THAT PERMITS PETS

Lyda Law Firm was able to establish a dog-friendly workplace in 2018 after moving into a coworking space that allowed animals.

Some minor logistical issues had to be addressed: a water bowl needed to be put out, Lyda says, and employees would have to find someone — potentially from another company that shared the space — to keep an eye on their dog if they were called into a client meeting.

Some now bring their pooch to the office periodically. One dog, who accompanied his owner daily, became somewhat of an office mascot, according to Lyda.

Job candidates may view that type of setting as a strong selling point, giving you an advantage over the competition. Attorneys ranked a pet-friendly office as the most-loved low-cost employee benefit in a 2019 Special Counsel survey.

"I was interviewing somebody once and mentioned the dog-friendly policy, and at the end of the conversation, she said, 'You should have led with that!'" Lyda says. "People love their dogs — and it's also a symbol of believing in work-life integration and how you can bring your whole and authentic self to work."

4. UNRESTRICTED VACATION TIME

Job candidates have expressed interest in Edelson PC's high-end office amenities. Chief of Staff Kelsey McCann says candidates sometimes ask during interviews if the firm truly uses its volleyball court (it does).

However, Edelson's unlimited time off policy is arguably one of its most notable perks. Employees in the firm's California and Chicago offices aren't just encouraged to use vacation time — they're required to take a minimum of two weeks off each year.

Even during the months of COVID-19 isolation, when travel was less frequent and employees were working from home, the firm's work-life balance commitment remained in full force — and firm members took vacation time, according to McCann.

"Part of it is the two weeks is not optional," she says. "Our view has always been people do their best work when working on things they're passionate about and happy about their work situation. We have a lot of people from Big Law looking to join our firm as laterals; part of the appeal is the fact we have this culture. It's been helpful in terms of keeping and attracting people."

Firms can package PTO options as a perk in different ways, according to Jamy Sullivan, Executive Director at legal recruiter and consultant Robert Half Legal — such as allowing employees to roll time over into the next year.

While giving employees additional time off may initially seem like a no-cost amenity, it can theoretically involve direct or indirect expenses, such as bringing on temporary help — something firms that are thinking of offering it should consider.

An expanded PTO amenity may also not be a great fit for firms with a consistently busy schedule and billable hour requirements, Sullivan says, which could prevent firm members from being able to use the additional personal time.

"If you're an attorney and you have that work ethic, it's hard to take off in the midst of things," she says.

5. DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING ASSISTANCE

Professional development, Sullivan says, is another low-cost amenity professionals view as providing significant value.

"From an employee engagement standpoint, when you're interviewing for a role and also when you're within a firm, it's extremely important," she says.

However, knowing specifically what instruction to offer is key. A Tilt Institute and LawVision Group survey found law firm business professionals weren't receiving equal learning opportunities. Generation X industry members expressed dissatisfaction with the investment their organization is making in their career development in a Nimble survey. Roughly half of midsize law department respondents were unsatisfied, as were around 40% of midsize law firm attorneys.

Sullivan says some firms are talking to industry groups and colleagues about what overall services and programs they're offering — and utilizing brief five- to seven-question monthly surveys to confidentially gauge what development and other amenities would be of interest to employees.

In addition to external and formal internal instruction, firms may benefit from a more personal development approach.

According to Morris, Fox Swibel believes it's important to offer associates guidance in joining professional associations and other organizations that can them get involved in the community and help establish their career.

The firm also provides coaching and other types of development. Experienced senior attorneys, for instance, may help younger associates prepare to market and pitch opportunities to clients.

"We have a really good core of younger attorneys who are building significant books of business," Morris says. "Mentoring and financial support is a key piece of the puzzle; it pays dividends to the attorneys and firm. The people we attract value that. We want to encourage people to make building relationships and marketing the firm — and their services — part of their normal routine."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Erin Brereton is a freelance writer, editor and content strategist who has written about the legal industry, business, technology and other topics for 20 years.

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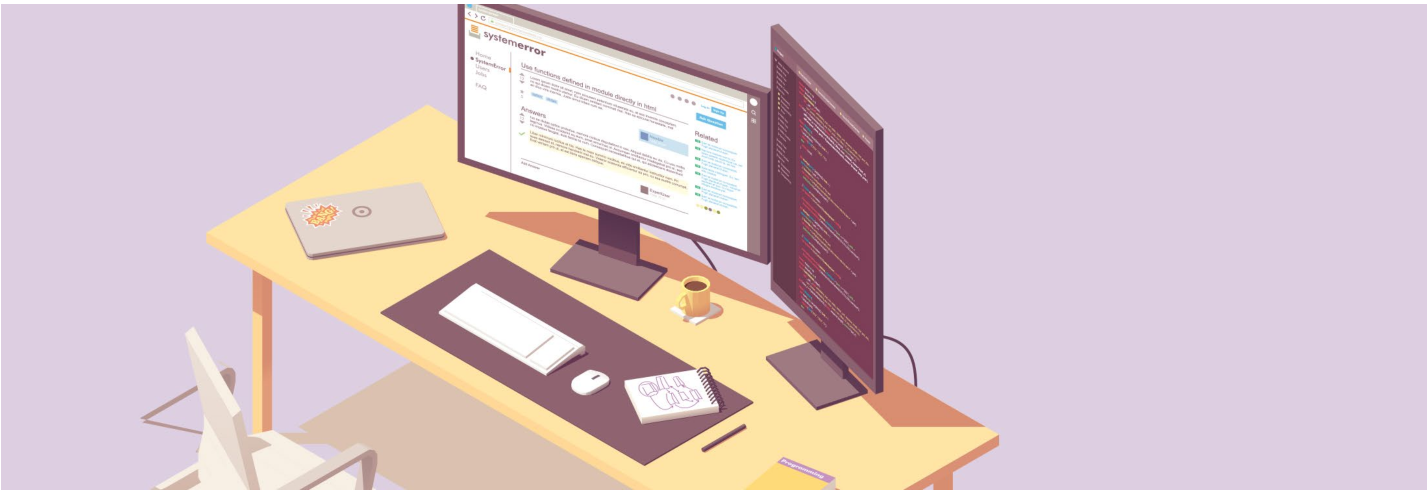

BILL & PHIL

William Ramsey, Partner, Neal & Harwell

Phil Hampton, Consulting President, LogicForce

More Screens, Please

We have seen the future, and the future is two or more screens on your laptop. We saw many of these new form factors in the coming attractions at the Consumer Electronics Show (CES), and it's a trend that's accelerating as much of the workforce continues to work remotely. In some, the two screens are connected by a hinge; others have a flexible screen that can be folded in half.

We have also seen that this future is not going to be cheap. Nonetheless, you don't have to wait until these expensive new laptops hit the market to join the multiscreen craze. And you don't have to break the bank either.

We found an add-on second screen option that can be paired with just about any laptop: the Mobile Pixels Duex. The 12.5-inch second screen is just $250 and is very easy to "install" on your existing laptop. We bought one and used it with a Microsoft Surface Laptop. The Mobile Pixels Duex is almost a half-inch thick and weighs 1.7 pounds. It can be attached to the back of your laptop screen with the included magnetic metal plates. It connects and receives power via a USB cable that you plug into the host laptop. Basically, we just plugged it in, and it worked. That's the kind of installation process we like.

"We have seen the future, and the future is two or more screens on your laptop."

The Mobile Pixels Duex slides out from its protective case (attached to the back of your laptop) and can be rotated 270 degrees. We have used it primarily as a second screen on our laptop. So now, when we're on the go and sorely miss having a large monitor like we have back at the office, we can just pull out the Mobile Pixels Duex as a second monitor without feeling cramped. We have also found it to be very useful when sharing content from our laptop (like a spreadsheet, document or presentation) on a one-on-one situation with someone — socially distanced, of course — sitting across the table. We simply rotate the Mobile Pixels Duex 180 degrees, and it serves as a mirror display for the person across from us.

While the Mobile Pixels Duex is an economical solution, it is not necessarily the most aesthetically pleasing solution. The second screen does add some thickness and weight to the laptop when attached. The USB cable also tends to get in the way when rotating the screen around. When we are not using the second screen, it is easy to detach from the laptop because it is held in place by magnetic metal plates affixed to the back of the laptop display. Those plates don't particularly bother us, but they do look sort of out of place when the Mobile Pixels Duex is not attached. However, for the relatively low cost, we can overlook these minor inconveniences in order to add a trendy second screen to our old hardware.

There are other similar solutions, but they are bulkier. One option is to get a separate monitor, such as the Asus ZenScreen Touch ($339), the AOC USB Monitor ($150), the Lenovo ThinkVision M14 ($250), the Asus ZenScreen Go (a more portable version of the Touch at $250) and the HP EliteDisplay (even more portable at $220). A more direct competitor to the Pixels Deux is the SideTrak Portable Monitor ($300), but the display is dim and the mechanism is clunky.

Bill thinks he has the best solution for those who carry a laptop and an iPad. You can simply turn an iPad into a second screen with a cable and an app call Duet Display ($9.99 for a version that requires a cable attached to the computer; the wireless version costs $19.99 per year). Uncharacteristically, Bill chose the cheaper, wired one.

You install the Duet Display app on your iPad, attach the iPad to your laptop via a USB cable and then install a free app on your laptop. Magically, the iPad turns into a second display for your laptop. If you have the larger iPad with the 12.9-inch display, it almost matches the display on a 13-inch laptop. Duet Display also allows you to use the touchscreen capabilities of the iPad with zero lag in the movement from the laptop display. Sweet!

Finally, if you have a MacBook, there is a built-in app called Sidecar. It works great. You can use the iPad as a touchscreen for your Mac, even though (for some reason) no MacBooks have a touchscreen.

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

Corry Johnson
Founder and Chief Executive Officer
GLJ Financial

"If you are a small employer (less than 100 employees) and do not have a plan, there are tax credits available to start one. If you have a plan in place and have considered adopting automatic enrollment, there are tax credits available for that as well."

Your Primer on the Secure Act

What a year it has been so far. The tumultuous road we have been on that started with COVID-19 and has continued with the economic slowdown, the tragic killing of George Floyd and the subsequent social unrest has precipitated a re-evaluation of work-life balance and social norms across the board.

Given our current reality, it is understandable that a landmark piece of legislation that was adopted shortly before all the upheaval occurred may have been overlooked.

The Secure Act became law on December 20, 2019. It was designed to make employer-sponsored retirement plans easier to administrate and less expensive to implement. As with all legislation, there are both carrots and sticks included. What follows is a summary of some of the key provisions of the Secure Act.

- **Small Employer Automatic Enrollment Credit:** To qualify for this credit, an employer must offer a 401(k) plan or SIMPLE IRA that includes automatic enrollment. The credit is $500 per year for a three-year period. This is available for both existing plans that add the provision or new plans that include them in the setup process.
- **Small Employer Pension Plan Startup Costs Credit:** To qualify for this credit, an employer must set up a brand new 401(k) or SIMPLE IRA plan. New plans must cover at least one nonhighly compensated employee who is also not an owner of the business. The maximum amount of the credit you can potentially qualify for is $5,000 per year for a three-year period.
- **Safe Harbor 401(k) Plans and Timing of Plan Amendments and Adoptions:** The Secure Act very generally permits employers to add a safe harbor feature to their existing 401(k) plans during the year; such additions are permitted very late in the year and even after the end of the year if the employer contributes at least 4% the of employees' pay instead of the regular 3%. It also allows employers to adopt a plan for a taxable year as long as the plan is adopted by the due date for the employer's tax return for that year, including extensions.

- **Long-Term, Part-Time Employees:** Employers are required to include long-term, part-time workers as participants in defined-contribution plans except in the case of collectively bargained plans. Employees who have completed at least 500 hours of service for three consecutive years and are 21 years old or older are eligible to participate in the plan. (Previously they could be excluded if they worked less than 1,000 hours in a 12-month eligibility period.) However, these participants can be excluded from employer contributions, nondiscrimination and top-heavy requirements.

- **Increased Required Minimum Distribution Date:** Required Minimum Distributions (RMD) now begin at age 72, increased from 70½. The CARES Act further changed the rules for RMDs in the year 2020, stating that RMDs may be waived without penalty in the year 2020.

- **Post 70½ IRA Contributions:** The prohibition on making deductible contributions to a traditional IRA after age 70½ is repealed.

- **Stretch RMD:** The Secure Act imposes a 10-year distribution limit for most nonspouse beneficiaries to spend down inherited IRAs and defined-contribution plans. Prior to passage of the Secure Act, withdrawals from inherited accounts could be stretched over the life expectancy of the beneficiaries in order to mitigate taxes.

For existing plans, it is important to note that some penalties have been increased as well. For example, failure to file the annual 5500 form with the IRS in a timely manner prior to passage of the Secure Act carried a penalty of $25 per day, not to exceed $15,000 per year. That penalty is now increased to $250 per day, not to exceed $150,000 per year. An increase of 100%.

What does all this mean to you and your plan? There are many potential uses of these provisions. If you are a small employer (less than 100 employees) and do not have a plan, there are tax credits available to start one. If you have a plan in place and have considered adopting automatic enrollment, there are tax credits available for that as well. If you have an existing plan with top-heavy violations or other testing issues, you can convert your plan to a safe harbor plan midyear rather than pay penalties or disgorge contributions from partners and highly compensated individuals. If you have a large population of part-time workers who have not been eligible in the past, it's important to allow them into the plan and offer them education on what that means and how to join — failure to do so could carry significant penalties.

The increase in the starting age for required minimum distributions (RMDs) and the loss of stretch provisions for inherited assets are important points for individual planning that need to be communicated.

If these items have not been brought to your attention, it may be a good time to review the service providers for your plan or consider options to enhance your current level of service.

NOTE: This information is not intended to be a substitute for specific individualized tax or legal advice. I suggest that you discuss your specific situation with a qualified tax or legal adviser.

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Corry Johnson is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of GLJ Financial. He works closely with businesses and individuals to help them meet their retirement planning goals. Johnson is a registered representative of LPL Financial (member FINRA/SIPC) and an Accredited Investment Fiduciary (AIF). He also consults with NextPath Legal, a succession and contingency planning firm for ALA member firms.

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Modernizing the Attorney-Paralegal Relationship

JOSEPH PASTINO
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The competitive and often cutthroat atmosphere that divulges itself whenever attorneys interact can shock the conscience. The legal industry tends to focus success and failure exclusively on attorneys. After all, it is the attorney who signs off on — and is ultimately responsible for — the work product presented.

However, the industry fails to realize that an attorney's success often hinges on the success of their counterparts — paralegals — who are in the trenches every day reviewing discovery, producing documents, filing pleadings and scheduling appearances. Surprisingly, paralegals are not subject to the same level of regulation and scrutiny as their attorney counterparts even though paralegals perform many of the same tasks carried out by attorneys.

Regrettably, many stereotypes continue to linger throughout the profession. Some within and outside the industry view paralegals as glorified secretaries, attorney wannabes who lack the aptitude for law school or the types who knowingly engage in the unauthorized practice of the law.

In today's dynamic legal landscape, modernization is the key to success. Therefore, the legal industry must institute a robust training and development program that advances the paralegal profession alongside their attorney counterparts. The systematic approach outlined below provides solutions that will modernize an antiquated industry.

"Therefore, the legal industry must institute a robust training and development program that advances the paralegal profession alongside their attorney counterparts."

Modernization requires multilevel industry involvement. Private law firms, government agencies and nonprofit legal organizations must work alongside the various paralegal trade associations, as well as state bar associations, to produce a uniform set of regulations to be adopted industrywide. A three-tiered structure could be the hallmark of any training and development program — general paralegal training at an accredited educational institution, practice area/job-specific training and ultimately licensure by a state bar association — to ensure everyone meets minimum levels of education and experience before one is granted the title of paralegal.

REINVENTING THE PARALEGAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

TIER 1 Find the Best Educational Programs

To begin training, research the various educational programs available. Choose a reputable program that is certified by the American Bar Association, which sets rigorous standards for legal education providers. The provider you choose must have a job placement program where students can receive internship/externship experience, career coaching and mentoring.

By way of example, when I began my paralegal studies (I enrolled in a post-baccalaureate certificate program at Fairleigh Dickinson University in New Jersey) I was fortunate enough to work with knowledgeable and seasoned attorney instructors who were well-versed in their respective practice areas. The students in my program had the opportunity to learn about theoretical concepts of the law in the classroom, while also learning about the practical aspects of working in the legal field through interactive labs and an internship. I worked for a small firm while I completed my studies, and the supportive work environment at that shop was crucial to the success I enjoy today.

TIER 2 Get Job-Specific Training

Support from attorneys is critical to paralegal growth and development. This brings us to the second tier of paralegal training: practice area/job-specific training. Similar to our attorney counterparts, paralegals must have the opportunity to participate in continuing legal education initiatives. Training should focus on an array of legal topics but also on legal administrative ones, such as technology practices, ethics, financial management, research and writing, sales/business development, leadership development, and oral and written communication skills. Training needs to be tailored so that both attorney and paralegal can sharpen their skills, stay up to date on the latest industry trends and drive innovation within their organization.

Firms should encourage their paralegals to broaden their knowledge base and skills because a well-trained paralegal team is beneficial to the organization, the attorney and, ultimately, the client. Furthermore, the presence of a well-rounded paralegal brigade provides a differentiating factor by allowing your firm to close the access gap that exists within the industry. The presence of such a gap brings us to the third tier of paralegal training: licensure.

TIER 3 Discover the Benefits of Licensure

Licensure of paralegals is a controversial topic within the industry. While there are genuine concerns associated with implementing licensure requirements — malpractice, educational cost, etc. — the benefits of licensure outweigh the costs. It ensures that paralegals meet a minimum level of proficiency needed to deliver competent service to a firm's clients with minimal supervision.

At first glance, the idea of a paralegal working independently seems reckless. However, other industries have embraced, and flourished, by using licensed professionals with varied levels of education and experience. For example, the health care field issues licenses to physician assistants, nurses, dental hygienists and countless other professionals who work independently and alongside an industry superior to care for the ill and injured. The industry recognizes the benefits of having tiers of licensed professionals at the ready to service their clients.

Both the health care and legal industries recognize that a gap exists with respect to their ability to adequately and competently service their clientele. For instance, the health care industry understands that it's impossible for a doctor to handle every aspect of patient clinical care. Doing so would cause inefficiencies, leading to longer wait times for patients and cost overruns; it may even jeopardize a patient's care due to doctor fatigue. Allowing a licensed assistant to practice independently within a limited scope frees up the higher qualified professional — the doctor — to tackle more pressing and complex problems.

Think of it this way: is it a more efficient use of a dentist's time to perform a routine cleaning? The industry asked itself this very question and implemented a practical solution. Today, odds are a licensed dental hygienist will clean your teeth while your dentist focuses on complex dental issues. Similarly, by granting licensure to paralegals, a substantial burden would be lifted from the attorney's shoulders. It would allow them to turn out the best possible work product without being overwhelmed by run-of-the-mill processes, such as trying to navigate a court's e-filing system or attending a routine court conference in a low-risk case.

MOVING FORWARD

The legal industry needs rejuvenation and expanding the role of its human resources is a logical first step to ignite a much-needed renaissance. By breaking down the barriers that restrain paralegals from operating at maximum capacity, the legal industry will unleash a wave of innovation that will lead to increased efficiency, lower costs and greater access to legal services. Furthermore, the expansion of the paralegal role will decrease the burden that plagues our attorneys and courts. With a new wave of licensed professionals ready to work, an antiquated industry will be ready to operate in a 21st century environment.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Joseph Pastino is a Litigation Paralegal who oversees calendaring and docket management matters at Tanenbaum Keale LLP. He leads efforts to support the firm's mass tort litigation team, which includes scheduling attorneys for depositions and court conferences along with using case management technologies to organize and maintain client data.

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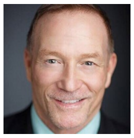
Anniversaries, Awards and Appointments

Members on the Move



Mark A. Bridgeman, CLM, CRM, MBA, a member of the Wisconsin Chapter, is now HR Manager at Shuffield Lowman & Wilson, PA, in Orlando, Florida.

Dana Burleigh, a member of the Metropolitan Detroit Chapter, is now Office Manager at Secrest Wardle Lynch Hampton Truex & Morley, PC, in Troy, Michigan.

Michelle Liffman, SPHR, SHRM-SCP, a member of the Greater Los Angeles Chapter, is now Director of Talent Management at Paul Hastings LLP in Los Angeles, California.

Joni L. Pardue, a member of the Kentucky Chapter, is now Legal Administrator at Pardue Law Group PLLC in Louisville, Kentucky.

Cynthia M. Schuler, PHR, SHRM-CP, a member of the Capital Chapter, is now Director of HR at Boies Schiller Flexner LLP in Washington, D.C.

Kim Williams, a member of the Dallas Chapter, is now Senior Office Administrator at McGuireWoods LLP in Dallas, Texas.

Sending Our Condolences

ALA recently received news that longtime member Nan Buckingham, 79, passed away in July. She had worked at Cassem, Tierney, Adams, Gotch & Douglas in Omaha, Nebraska, for more than 60 years — starting as a part-time employee while in high school — and she had just reached her 42nd year with ALA. Donations in her memory can be made to Camp Calvin Crest or the Presbyterian Church of the Master. Our thoughts are with her family, friends and colleagues.

ALA is also saddened to pass along news of the death of Susan "Sue" Kuder, 77. She had served as the Director of Administration at Cunningham, Machanic, Cetlin, Johnson, Harney & Tenney, LLP, in Natick, Massachusetts, for more than 20 years until retiring earlier this year. Sue was a dedicated member of the Boston Chapter since 1992, serving on many committees and welcoming attendees to events. She was also heavily invested in social justice causes through the Peace Corps, Amnesty International, Watertown Welcomes Immigrants and her church. Donations in her memory can be made to First Parish of Watertown, a Unitarian Universalist congregation.

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.

Welcome to ALA's New Executive Director April L. Campbell, JD

The Search Committee and the Board of Directors are thrilled to welcome April L. Campbell, JD, as ALA's next Executive Director. It was effective on August 24. We are proud to recognize that April is the first female Executive Director in ALA history. She has served as the Interim Executive Director of the Association since February 2020.

After a thorough and thoughtful search process, including more than 100 candidates considered for the role, it became abundantly clear that April's abilities best align with our ALA culture. Her passion and extensive legal management experience uniquely position her to attain ALA's mission and reflect its values. April has been a member of ALA for 15 years and a part of the legal industry for 25 years. She previously served as a Regional Director, President-Elect, President and Past President from 2014 to 2020.

Call for Volunteers

ALA is seeking volunteers for some of our most critical roles. Please consider applying to boost your leadership bona fides, expand your professional network and help devise programming and strategy for the Association.

Applications due September 16: The Board of Directors, the Chapter Resource Team and the Foundation Board of Trustees. Click on the previous links to learn more about each role's time commitment, responsibilities and expectations. Please note that Board of Directors candidates are required to include a completed questionnaire with their application.

Applications due October 30: Committees and project teams. Service is open to ALA members, business partners or other interested parties whose knowledge, skills and expertise are deemed useful to a specific project.

You can also recommend a colleague for one or more of these roles. They're not obligated to volunteer, but ALA staff will follow up with more information that may persuade them to take the leap.

Find applications for all of these positions at *alanet.org/volunteer.*

Secure Your Compensation and Benefits Survey Report

You can preorder your copy of the Compensation and Benefits Survey or the Large Firm Key Staff Survey today! Get the information you need to ensure that your firm remains competitive in what you offer current and future employees. Compare your firm to the 850 firms in 7 regions of the United States that submitted data.

This year's reports will come with a bonus white paper about the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on member law firms. Authored by regular *Legal Management* contributor, Phillip M. Perry, it will address discrepancies between the compensation data and the reality — including layoffs, furloughs and pay cuts — that many law firms have experienced since March. Visit *alanet.org/compsurvey* to order your copy.

Last Chance to Enroll in Organizational Pricing for 2021

ALA's new Organizational Pricing model is now available for the 2021 membership term. This model allows firms, legal departments and other institutions to pay for membership on an organization-wide basis, expanding access to ALA's services and resources to every eligible employee (each of whom is entitled to individual benefits). If your organization is already paying for multiple memberships across multiple office locations, this model may very well save your organization money. If your organization is only paying for one membership but wants to expand professional development opportunities for staff, this is a cost-effective way to do so.

Learn more about how this model works and how your organization can sign up. But make sure to do so before the enrollment period ends on September 30. Visit *alanet.org/membership/organizational*.