

Feb / Mar 2016  
Vol. 2016, No. 1

## *Membership*



### **DON'T MISS:**

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**Leadership for Firm  
Administrators**

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**On Membership**

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**How to Manage  
Underperforming  
Employees**

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Letters to the Editor of *The Verdict* are welcome and can be e-mailed to [gluessenheide@danielskibortlaw.com](mailto:gluessenheide@danielskibortlaw.com). In your letter, please include your name, firm name, mailing address, daytime phone number, and e-mail address. Letters that do not contain full contact information cannot be published. Letters typically run 150 words or less and may be edited. Your letter may be on any topic. You will be contacted before your letter is published. Thank you.

## 2015 - 2016 ALAMN OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

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### ALAMN has adopted ALA's Mission Statement

To improve the quality of management in legal services organizations; promote and enhance the competence and professionalism of legal administrators and all members of the management team; and represent professional legal management and managers to the legal community and to the community at large.

## 2015 - 2016 ALAMN COMMITTEES & SIGs

**ALAMN COMMITTEES** serve as liaisons between membership and the respective director, representing the ALAMN Board of Directors.

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**ALAMN SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGs)** are educational forums specific to functional specialty. Special Interest Group (SIG) meeting attendees need not be ALAMN members.

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# ALAMN CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## FEBRUARY

SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	1	2	3	4	5

- 2 Webinar: Legal Process Improvement - Going Lean Without Getting Heavy**  
2:00 p.m.  
Location: Best & Flanagan
- 4 Webinar: Trimming the Fat**  
2:00 p.m.  
Location: Best & Flanagan
- 10 Simpson Shelter Meal Service**  
5:00 p.m.  
Location: Simpson Shelter, 2740 1st Ave S., Mpls.
- 16 Facilities SIG**  
12:00 p.m.  
Location: Briggs & Morgan
- 17 Webinar: Expansion Strategies to Grow Your Firm**  
2:00 p.m.  
Location: Best & Flanagan
- 19 ALAMN CLM Study Group (Session 14)**  
11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
Location: Merchant & Gould
- 23 Webinar: Leveraging the Power of Employee Engagement in Government**  
2:00 p.m.  
Location: Best & Flanagan
- 24 Communications Committee Meeting**  
12:00 p.m.  
Location: TBD
- 25 26th Annual ALAMN Educational Conference and Business Expo**  
8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
Location: Hyatt Regency Minneapolis

## MARCH

SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
28	29	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	1	2

- 1 ALAMN HR Committee Meeting**  
11:30 a.m.  
Location: Robins Kaplan LLP
- 11 ALA CLM Study Group (Session 15)**  
11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
Location: Merchant & Gould
- 15 Facilities SIG**  
12:00 p.m.  
Location: Faegre Baker Daniels
- 23 Communications Committee Meeting**  
12:00 pm  
Location: TBD
- 24 Diversity & Inclusion Committee Meeting**  
8:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.  
Location: Fredrikson & Byron



### 26th Annual ALAMN Educational Conference & Business Partner Exposition

**Thursday, February 25, 2016**  
**New Location: Hyatt Regency Minneapolis**

*Don't miss this event!*

Connect with fellow ALAMN members, enrich your knowledge from great education sessions and check out new products/ideas from our Business Partners.

**\*PLEASE NOTE:**

**Special Interest Group (SIG) attendees need not be ALAMN members**

## MEET THE ALAMN BOARD NOMINEES FOR 2016-2017



### **PRESIDENT** **Sarah Didrikson**

Sarah Didrikson joined as the Applications and Database Manager at Nilan Johnson Lewis PA, where she has been since 2002. Sarah began as the firm's trainer and help desk technician and has transitioned her role over the past thirteen years.

Sarah began her ALAMN involvement by assisting with publishing *The Verdict* each month as a non-member. In 2008 she became a member of ALAMN and was asked to co-chair the new Communication Committee, which she led from 2009 through 2012. Sarah's involvement on the Communications Committee was vital in launching the new website in 2012. She has also served on the Business Partner and Conference Committees and on the Region 3 Conference Liaison Team. Sarah was appointed to the ALAMN Board in 2012 as the Communications Director and has also served as the Membership and Administrative Director.

Sarah and her husband, Mark, live in Brooklyn Park along with their Miniature Schnauzer, Roscoe. They enjoy traveling together, visiting family in Florida, walking the dog, and attending baseball games.



### **PRESIDENT-ELECT** **Sarah Evenson**

Sarah Evenson, JD, MBA, is currently the Minneapolis Office Administrator for Barnes & Thornburg LLP. Sarah graduated from Hamline University School of Law in 2002 and received her Masters of Business

Administration in 2007 from the University of St. Thomas. Sarah practiced law for eight years before transitioning her career to the administrative side of practicing law.

Sarah joined ALAMN in 2009 at the suggestion of another member who transitioned from the practice of law to legal administration. Sarah believes you get out what you put into something, and your success will be proportionate to the quality and quantity of your efforts. As a result, she has actively participated in ALAMN through membership on the Small and Medium Firm group, Co-Chairing the Communications Committee two years, attending ALAMN general meetings and annual conference, participating in ALAMN community service projects, writing articles for *The Verdict*, traveling to the national ALA meetings, and regularly attending ALAMN socials and business partner events. Sarah has also worked diligently to

build and grow ALAMN's relationships with the local bar associations and law schools. This has helped bring greater awareness not only of the association, but also the profession of legal management in general. Sarah currently serves on the ALAMN Board as the Director of Finance. In 2014/2015 she was the Director of Communications for ALAMN.

Sarah and her husband, Thomas, live in Maple Grove. They enjoy cooking, baseball, running 5Ks, and Hawaii.



### **PAST PRESIDENT** **Katherine Hubbard**

Katherine Hubbard joined Madigan Dahl & Harlan PA as their Firm Administrator in 2014. Kathy's legal career spans 29 years, during which time she has had the privilege of wearing several wonderful hats such as legal secretary, paralegal, and firm administrator.

Kathy believes serving on the Board of ALAMN has increased her professional knowledge and performance. Kathy's highlight from her fourth year on the Board has been organizing and hosting an ALAMN leadership retreat with the Board and co-chairs. Kathy has served several terms as co-chair of the Small/Medium Firm Committee and enjoyed serving and being a member of the Communications, Membership, Diversity, 30th Anniversary, and Community Service Committees of ALAMN.

Kathy's immediate family includes her husband, Doug, a general contractor and carpenter whose continued support is priceless. Kathy's son, Albert is a senior at the University of Minnesota in the college of Science and Engineering. Kathy's daughter, Grace, is a senior at Patrick Henry High School. Grace is preparing to attend Winona State's nursing program after graduation. Kathy firmly believes in service in her professional and personal life. She was the troop leader for her daughter's Girl Scout troop and volunteers at Sharing and Caring Hands serving Saturday lunches with her church.



### **FINANCE DIRECTOR** **Philip Rush**

Philip Rush is Finance Director at Moss & Barnett where he has been employed since 1997. With more than 25 years of legal administration experience, Phil's first connection with the association

was as a charter member of the Finance Special Interest Group (formerly known as the Controller's Group). Phil officially joined ALAMN in 1999 and has sought to increase his

## MEET THE ALAMN BOARD NOMINEES FOR 2015-2016

involvement with the association each year. After serving as chair of the Finance SIG in 2006, Phil served on the Region 3 Conference Committee in 2012, the Communications Committee in 2013, was chair of that Committee in 2014, and has been a Board member for the past year.

Phil resides in the northeast metro, not too far from White Bear Lake, where he enjoys many outdoor activities, including biking, walking his dog, and spending time with family and friends.



### COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

#### Abby Rooney

Abby Rooney is the Director of Human Resources at Foley & Mansfield. She has a BA in Sociology from the University of Minnesota.

Prior to moving into Human Resources, Abby worked as an accounting professional. Abby was on a path to becoming a CPA when she realized that, while good with numbers, she prefers to work on the “people” side of business. Abby’s accounting background often comes in handy when analyzing benefits data or reviewing vendor contracts.

Abby has been with Foley & Mansfield for about nine years, and she enjoys her role at this mid-sized firm because she is truly an HR generalist. Abby gets to work in many areas, including benefits, recruiting, employee relations, and more. She appreciates the variety she gets from her role. Abby believes it is a wonderful organization, and she has a great team.

Abby has served as a co-chair on the HR Committee and is finishing up her first term on the ALAMN Board as the Administrative Director.

When not at work, Abby enjoys spending time with her family. She lives in Edina with her husband, Colin, and their sons, J. J. (6 ½) and Will (3). The boys are very active and keep them exhausted and busy.



### EDUCATION DIRECTOR

#### Terri Stewart

Terri Stewart, PHR, is the Director of Human Resources at Felhaber Larson, where she has been since 2002. She started in the legal field over thirty years ago as a legal secretary and quickly discovered she liked the administrative/management side of the legal practice.

Terri has been a member of ALAMN since 2003. She has been a member of the Human Resources Committee, which she co-chaired for two years. She has also worked on the publication of *The Verdict*, served on the Green Initiative SIG and Communications Committee, is currently on the Diversity and Inclusion Committee, and is co-chair of the Education Committee.

Terri and Paul live in Lino Lakes along with their poodle bichon named George. They are the proud parents of three adult children, Jody, Jennifer, and Jonathan. As proud as they are of their children, they are even prouder to be the grandparents of seven-year-old Jadelyn, five-year-old Janessa, and 16-month-old Jaxson! Terri enjoys reading and quilting. Together she and Paul enjoy traveling, camping, and doing both with family and friends.



### MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR

#### James Fowler

James Fowler is the Firm Administrator for Yost & Baill, where he has been employed since 2008. James has previously served ALAMN as a co-chair of the Membership Development Committee and as a member of the Diversity & Inclusion Committee.

James resides in south Minneapolis with his wife and son. He regularly returns to his native Wisconsin to spend time with both family and Yost & Baill’s Milwaukee office. When not at work, James enjoys thumbing through books and taking the boat (canoe) out on the lake (Nokomis).



### ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR

#### Laurie Greenberg

Laurie Greenberg, SPHR, is the Benefits and HRIS/Payroll Manager at Briggs and Morgan, P.A. where she has been practicing in the Human Resources field for 25 years. Laurie joined ALAMN in 2006 and currently serves as Member Placement Coordinator and as co-chair of the HR Committee. She is also a current member of the Community Service Committee (past co-chair) where she enjoys volunteering and supporting local community organizations and charities. She also participated on the Diversity Career Fair in 2015.

Laurie resides in Blaine with her husband, John, and their two Maltese, Lexi and Micki. She enjoys reading, running, volunteering, and spending time at the lake.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT OF ALAMN

By: Katherine M. Hubbard; Madigan, Dahl & Harlan, P.A.

### **ALAMN, HOW DO I LOVE THEE? LET ME COUNT THE WAYS**

We and our firms all work hard for our money. So, when we are determining how best to spend that hard-earned money, there have to be justifiable examples of a positive return on investment. So, I have done the work for you on why you and your firm should invest in ALAMN membership.

1. Access to High-Level Education Opportunities.
  - a. Not only does ALAMN offer an annual, full-day educational conference and exposition, it is offered at a reduced price to ALAMN members.
  - b. General meetings focus on different areas of the legal management profession, again, at a reduced price for ALAMN members.
  - c. Webinar series covering too many valuable topics to count. These are offered complimentary to ALAMN members.
2. Networking.
  - a. Special Interest Groups and Committee meetings offer an excellent chance to meet fellow ALAMN members while learning about area-specific topics related to the legal industry.
  - b. Several socials each year provide networking among ALAMN members and ALAMN business partners.
3. The Not-Having-To-Recreate-The-Wheel Effect. Many of the Special Interest Groups and Committees have email groups that offer a platform to share information ranging from the best business partners for a specific product or service to the best common practices among your peers.
4. Informal Referral Source. Many of our employers are competing for the same business. However, there are times when our clients need legal services our firms do not provide, and times when we are conflicted out of representing a potential client. In these instances, having access to a highly-organized group of fellow legal professionals at your fingertips can mean potential business for your firm.
5. Personal Growth and Improvement. There is a saying that if you are not growing, you are dying. Well, at ALAMN we fully embrace that philosophy. Belonging to the ALAMN exposes members to many opportunities to become involved, improve their public speaking, writing, and organizational skills. These new and improved skills then transfer to members' performance at work, and our employers are direct beneficiaries.
6. I Am Not Alone, Thank God. Being in the unique and wonderful positions that ALAMN members possess often means they have no contemporaries in their organizations. Talk about a bummer! Humans are not meant to go through life alone. And, thankfully, you do not have to go it alone at your organizations either. Membership in ALAMN affords members access to similarly-situated individuals who are willing to be sounding boards or offer words of advice, whatever you may need. Just ask most ALAMN members and they will gladly do what they can to help a fellow ALAMN member. Often, these interactions turn into full-fledged friendships. I am a personal testament that even an odd-duck such as I can make lasting, cherished friendships through ALAMN.

So, get ready to join or renew ALAMN. You and your firm will benefit immensely.

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE 2016-2017

I would like to extend a sincere thank you to the members of the Nominating Committee for the 2016/2017 Board of Directors. Michele Brauch, Colette Canniff, Jessica Gerhardson, and Sarah Didrikson were tasked with identifying, completing due diligence, and recommending candidates from submitted nominations for the 2016/2017 slate for the Board of Directors. Each

member of the committee was focused, diligent, and efficient in their tasks. Thanks to each of you for your commitment and service to ALAMN. Also, thank you to all the nominees for your consideration to serve on the Board of Directors.

**Deb O'Connor**  
2016/2017 Nominating Committee Chair

# HCBA Connection

February 2016



Updates for Legal Administrators and Law Office Managers from the Hennepin County Bar Association

# HCBA MEMBER SOCIAL

WEDNESDAY  
FEB. 17  
5:00 to 7:00 PM

Expand your network as you mix and mingle at downtown's beautiful Minneapolis Club.

HCBA members:  
Enjoy complimentary  
appetizers and a drink.

## Minneapolis Club

729 Second Ave South,  
Downtown Minneapolis, 55402

Free parking onsite after 4:30 p.m.  
(Enter on 8th Street)



## Inviting ALL HCBA Members:

From new lawyers to our most experienced attorneys.  
Join us and join the fun at our winter social.

HCBA members: Attend for free. Non-members: \$10.  
Contact Sheila Johnson at sheila@hcba.org for more info.



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Be a Part of Our Annual Fundraiser for the Hennepin County  
Bar Foundation, the Charitable-Giving Arm of the HCBA.

Contact Joy Hamilton at 612-752-6614 or joy@hcba.org to become  
a sponsor or to purchase tickets. Thank you for your support.

## Thursday, March 10

5:00 TO 8:00 PM at Minneapolis Marriott City Center

Honorary Chair: Tom Johnson, *Gray Plant Mooty*.

An Exciting Night of Fun & Fundraising including a Silent  
Auction and Presentation of Pro Bono Publico Awards to:

Jim Long, *Briggs and Morgan*

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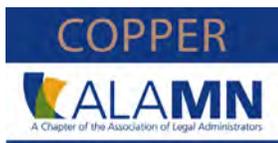
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## KNOW YOUR LEGAL JARGON - *SPONSORED BY HCBA*

### **Ex Parte** Latin for "for one party."

When one party to a case speaks or meets with a judge without the presence of the other party or party's attorney. This type of communication is highly inappropriate and not allowed except in unusual and emergency circumstances.



### And the next ALAMN Shining Star is...

The Board is proud to present Gretchen Luessenheide as the next Shining Star of our chapter. Gretchen is the Director of Firm Administration at Daniels & Kibort Law, PLLC. Gretchen has been a member of ALAMN since 2013. Her roles in ALAMN are as editor of *The Verdict* and participating in the Small and Medium Firms group. As editor, Gretchen gathers the articles, news stories, advertising, and calendar events that make up each issue of *The Verdict* and ensures the bi-monthly publication is distributed on time. As you know, *The Verdict* provides a vast array of vital information to our membership and sponsors, and Gretchen, as editor of the publication, is integral in keeping ALAMN "in the know." She is another example of the many ALAMN members who make our chapter strong. Thank you, Gretchen!



Gretchen Luessenheide



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## LEADERSHIP FOR FIRM ADMINISTRATORS

By: Sarah Carlsen, CPCC

Whether you are the firm administrator, a department director, or a team manager, providing effective leadership in a law firm can feel impossible at times:

- *Your title doesn't necessarily give you the authority or respect that it might in a more hierarchal organization. If you have been promoted from within, you are likely to remain identified with your former role rather than your new one.*
- *If you are coming from a corporate environment, you may feel like you have landed in a foreign country and you don't understand the local customs.*
- *While you may only have one direct boss according to the org chart, the partnership model requires that you be responsive to many owners.*

What does effective leadership even mean in this relationally complex environment? How do you lead from where you are to support the firm's mission, create a vision and strategic direction for your team, and make proactive decisions? The default route is often to keep your head down and work hard, focusing on immediate crises with no time left to think or act strategically. While working hard is important; knowing what is the right work is even more important.

Leading in a law firm takes intention and commitment. Here are some insights that I have learned through my own and my clients' experiences:

### Take time to "get up on the balcony"

It is difficult to lead when you can't see beyond the next task. You need to be able to look out 12-18 months and to see as much of the big picture as possible. Set aside time to ask yourself some key questions such as:

- Do we have the right people in the right roles?
- Whose expectations do I need to meet? How clear am I on those expectations? What could I do to get the clarity I need?
- What do my team members need from me?
- What is most critical to our success in the next 12-18 months? What is both urgent AND important?

### Be intentional about motivating your team

In his book, *Drive*, Dan Pink argues true motivation comes when individuals find meaning of their work, have some level of autonomy to do it well, and have the opportunity to continually improve. When your team understands why their work matters to the firm, has the support they need to do it well, and clear priorities, they are more likely to do their best work. Whether or not you are getting that same level of support, you can create it for your team.

### Developing your people will make your job easier – but not right away

Initially it will feel more efficient to do the work rather than to delegate it to someone you want to develop. It is essential to break this habit. Look at this as an investment in your people, the group's future and your ability to be an effective leader. Empowering your team is key to your long-term success.

### Listen more than you talk

The better you understand your team's (and the partners') motivations, strengths, and challenges, the more effectively you can respond to what is needed. In Steven Covey's words, "Seek first to understand, then to be understood."

### Be vulnerable and get out of your comfort zone

People who thrive in law firms solve problems. When you see a problem (whether new or well-ingrained in the culture), consider how you or someone you work with might contribute to a solution. Volunteer. Be curious and invested in learning about areas outside your job responsibilities. Be seen as solution-oriented and someone who is invested in bringing about positive change.

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## LEADERSHIP FOR FIRM ADMINISTRATORS - CONTINUED

*continued from page 12*

When you are ready to develop yourself as a leader, there are multiple strategies to employ. Becoming a member in a professional association such as ALAMN and taking advantage of their content resources is a great start. Finding a mentor who understands your world and can help you grow your skills is effective, but often challenging to find. Connecting with colleagues who may share the same challenges can provide opportunity for brainstorming and support. Investing in your own growth, either through hiring a coach or joining a mastermind group designed for your industry, may be the fastest way to create traction in having the impact you want to have.



**Author Bio:**

Sarah Carlsen, CPCC, is a Leadership & Change Coach. She founded Carlsen Coaching and Consulting, LLC after nearly a decade at Preston Gates Ellis, LLP (now K & L Gates, LLP) in Seattle, WA. Having led hundreds of change initiatives as a project manager then IT manager, Sarah brings unique understanding of what it takes to provide leadership in complex relational environments. She is certified through the International Coach Federation.

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## ON MEMBERSHIP

*Bv: James Fowler*

"Americans of all ages, all stations of life and all types of disposition are forever forming associations."

- Alexis de Tocqueville

There had to be an association; there just had to be. It was late summer 2012. Three years into my role as office manager and sole administrator at a small law firm, I could no longer tolerate the isolation. As I abruptly abandoned whatever Word document, e-mail message, or spreadsheet I had been staring at in favor of a Google search, no doubt a memory of that de Tocqueville quote had rung out from some distant high school civics lesson. There had to be an association; there just had to be. Google didn't disappoint. The Association of Legal Administrators. The Association of Legal Administrators – Minnesota Chapter. The dues were reasonable, and the resources trended from vast and national to hyper local. A few clicks later, I was a member, but what did that mean?

I had grown tired of ad hoc crisis management and learning on the fly. I needed resources to learn and grow, to introduce a stronger sense of proactive management into my professional purview. While I have not yet even come close to eliminating surprises, I have found a better balance. Much of that is due to the opportunities membership provides across the array of seminars, publications, and other resources. Most if it is due to my fellow members.

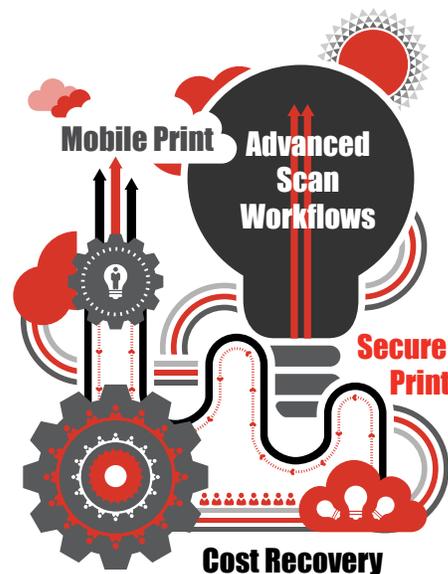
Many of us have come to chapter membership from many different places. Small firms, large firms, and plenty of non-firms. Some of us were career professionals in our administrative niches already and others just starting out. Ironically, though, we all share some sense of isolation. Surrounded by lawyers and other legal professionals, we operate somewhat invisibly in the background, tending to the business behind legal services. At small firms, the distinction can seem more extreme. I have heard it commented that we relate to support staff as managers while simultaneously serving attorneys as clients. We are left without peers, without comrades. Even in larger firms, chapter members might be the only individuals in their particular niches – the only HR professional, the only Practice Management professional, the only IT professional. It

is a hard place to be. I will also openly admit, I was not looking to join the association for the other members, but fellow members are why I stay.

I snoozed on chapter membership my first year. I was busy. I didn't know anybody. I read the articles and news blasts. I surfed the research studies and reference links. It was good enough, I thought. Then, I won a scholarship at a summer social to attend a fall conference. Before I even boarded that plane to Cleveland, I had four or five new friends. Don't ask me to count how many I had by the time I got back. The sense of community and common purpose was infectious. I returned home empowered. I joined committees. I attended more chapter meetings. Every piece of information I learned from an article or a presentation more than doubled in usefulness because of

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## ON MEMBERSHIP - CONTINUED

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fellow members. I had a network of support. Yes, we could gripe with one another, but it was more than that. Their perspectives and experiences formed a great catalyst for further growth. I was surrounded by a community of people who had turned the ever-evolving legal landscape into successful careers. They hadn't just survived law firm life. They had succeeded. They had thrived.

As current Co-Chair of the ALA-MN Membership Development Committee, I am very happy to highlight the following list of chapter members. Each of the names on this list will have spent 20 years or longer with the chapter in 2016. If you so happen to recognize any names, be sure to congratulate them on the impact they have made on so many of us. If you do not yet know them, I strongly encourage you to rectify that. Likewise, if you are looking for a way to branch out in the chapter or get more involved, do not hesitate to contact any of us over at the Membership Development Committee.



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# HOW TO MANAGE UNDERPERFORMING EMPLOYEES

By: *Beacon Hill Staffing Group*

Let's face it - despite your best intentions and most concerted efforts on the recruiting front, it is inevitable that sometimes you will run into difficulties with an employee who isn't quite pulling his or her own weight. Whether it is a usually stellar worker who seems to be going through a rough patch or a staff member who has exhibited a trend of declining productivity over a period of time, identifying and re-motivating these employees is a key part of effective management.

But it can be a sensitive issue, to say the least. Even though it is part of the job, few managers relish the confrontation associated with chatting with an employee about unmet expectations. Fortunately, there are ways you can efficiently address any issues while still being tactful and respectful. Here are four things to keep in mind:

## 1. Quantify your concerns

Chances are, if an employee has been underperforming, he or she will be aware of it. However, from a management perspective, that does not mean that you are off the hook in addressing the issue. For starters, the staff member's perception of his or her performance, as well as the impact it is having on company-wide productivity, may vary drastically from your outside perspective.

That is why it is important to be clear, concise, and most importantly, quantitative when you bring up concerns with an employee. Ensure that your workers know what the source of concern is, how it is affecting the rest of the company, and what needs to be done to improve performance so minimum expectations are met.

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# HOW TO MANAGE UNDERPERFORMING EMPLOYEES - CONTINUED

*continued from page 17*

It may even be helpful to have your employee explain to you what he or she thinks the issue is first, so you can get a better idea of where you diverge in your individual assessments of the situation.

Sit down with your employees to clearly outline issues and plans for improvement.

## 2. Listen as well as talk

As with any communication between manager and employee, this is a conversation that should definitely be a two-way street. It is understandable that your employee will have something to say – and he or she may even be defensive. But the important thing as a manager is to make it clear that you are not putting anybody on the defensive. You can further shore up this impression by inviting your staff member to voice any concerns, explanations or any other important information that is relevant to the discussion. Perhaps you will learn of an area in which improvement can be made within the company to better support employee productivity. You may even be made aware of a medical condition you might not have known about before. While it may not change the fact that adjustments need to be made, it can help contextualize the issue and show your staff members that their concerns are valued and considered.

## 3. Set clear goals

You cannot expect to see any measurable improvement if you do not establish what goals your employees should be striving to meet, so it makes sense that that should be the next part of the process. Keep in mind that this employee has been struggling, so establish the source of the difficulty and then work together to mutually set goals to help overcome those obstacles.

Be sure to include a timeline as part of your plan so that everyone has a rough schedule as far as when these improvement metrics should be met. You may also want to include regular or semiregular check-ins during the course of the improvement so that any emerging concerns can be addressed.

## 4. Recognize achievement

Even though your employee may be struggling, it is not always effective to play the role of the firm disciplinarian. In fact, recognizing achievement – even small goals along

the way – can be important for providing encouragement and setting a positive example. Even worse, discussing shortcomings with an employee while failing to recognize areas in which he or she excels can look one-sided and unfair, and can be a great way to alienate a worker and make him or her less engaged.



### Author Bio:

Beth Sullivan is a Senior Consultant with Beacon Hill Legal. Beacon Hill Legal consults with law firms and corporations to help find staff, including attorneys, paralegals, and legal support professionals. Prior to joining Beacon Hill, Beth was the Program Director of the Minnesota Paralegal Institute. Beth is an active member of the Hamline University Paralegal Program Advisory Board, where she shares her expertise on the legal job market and industry trends; the Minnesota Paralegal Association (MPA); and Women in eDiscovery, where she serves on the Community Service Committee.



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**Robin Getman**

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## 2016 ALAMN ANNUAL CONFERENCE - CONTINUED

### PROGRAM SCHEDULE:

8:00 – 8:30	Registration & Breakfast
8:30 – 9:45	Welcome & Keynote <b>Keynote:</b> "Don't Talk About it, Be About It!" – Calvin Stovall
9:45 – 11:00	Exhibit Hall & Refreshments
11:00 – 12:15	AM Breakout Sessions "Using Legal Lean Sigma and Project Management to Drive Innovation and Create Competitive Advantages" – Catherine Alman MacDonagh, JD "Diversity Today – More Inclusive Law Firms Tomorrow" – Mauricio Valasquez "A Call to Action: 911 Drill" – Peter Johnson, Archway Defense
12:15 – 12:45	Lunch
12:45 – 2:00	Lunch Keynote "Ready, Set, Laugh! Creating and Sustaining a Positive Environment for Action" – Robin Getman
2:00 – 3:30	Exhibit Hall & Refreshments
3:30 – 4:45	PM Breakout Sessions "What Clients Want: How to Price Work and Get Hired." – Catherine Alman MacDonagh, JD "Engagement, Trust and Higher-Performance in law Firms" – Mauricio Valasquez "Cyber Security" – Jake DeWoskin
4:45 – 5:30	Reception

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## GET TO KNOW YOUR BOARD

### Who do you think will win an Oscar?

#### **Katherine Hubbard, President:**

I think the Oscars for best movie and best actor will go to *The Revenant* and Leonardo DiCaprio. I also think Leo should win an Oscar for most honest expression of what it feels like when Lady Gaga touches you.

#### **Sara Didrikson, President-Elect:**

I personally have not seen any of the movies on the list for Oscars this year. I know – pretty lame! We did try watching the *Mad Max* movie over the weekend but only lasted about 15 minutes before turning it off. *Bridges of Spies* and *The Martian* are on my short list of movies that I want to see. I was recently impressed with an interview by DiCaprio concerning decisions that he made in order to make his character more realistic in *The Revenant*. The decision demonstrated his commitment to giving 100% to his job, which is a great lesson for all of this. My Oscar pick is for Leonard DiCaprio as the Best Actor in *The Revenant*.

#### **Deborah O'Connor, CLM, Past President:**

Sylvester Stallone for *Creed*. His performance in that movie was better than any of the *Rocky* series.

#### **Philip Rush, Communications Director:**

Having seen only two of the Best Picture nominees I will have to choose one of the movies I have not seen: *The Revenant*. I believe it has enough drama and quality acting to win the award. Plus, it is loosely based on a true story.

#### **Abby Rooney, PHR, SHRM-CP, Administrative Director**

Matt Damon for *The Martian*.



#### **Pamela Gerads, Education Director:**

My thought is Jennifer Lawrence for her role in *Joy*.



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## GET TO KNOW YOUR BOARD - CONTINUED

### Who do you think will win an Oscar?

*continued from page 22*

#### **Sarah Evenson, JD, MBA, Finance Director, and Apparently Our Resident Movie Expert:**

<b>Best Picture</b>	<i>The Revenant</i> – Bear attacking Leo scene was AWESOME!
<b>Best Actor</b>	Matt Damon
<b>Best Actress</b>	Brie Larson
<b>Best Supporting Actress</b>	Kate Winslet
<b>Directing</b>	Alejandro Inarritu
<b>Animated Film</b>	<i>Shaun the Sheep Movie</i> - Only one I saw in this category. Was forced to watch this movie on my long flight home from Hawaii.
<b>Costume Design</b>	<i>Mad Max</i> – that was some freaky costumes. Even Charlize Theron looked scary.
<b>Documentary Short</b>	<i>Body Team</i>
<b>Makeup &amp; Hair</b>	<i>Mad Max</i> – again freaky stuff. The guy with the guitar creeped me out.
<b>Original Song</b>	<i>Writings on the Wall</i> – Sam Smith, not quite as good as Adele, but enough to win an Oscar I think.
<b>Animated Short</b>	<i>Bear Story</i>
<b>Sound Editing</b>	<i>Star Wars</i> – why not, no one cares about this category anyway
<b>Foreign Language Film</b>	<i>Mustang</i> – American title for a foreign film????
<b>Original Score</b>	<i>Carol</i>
<b>Production Design</b>	<i>The Martian</i>
<b>Visual Effects</b>	<i>Star Wars</i>
<b>Adapted Screenplay</b>	<i>The Martian</i>
<b>Original Screenplay</b>	<i>Spotlight</i>
<b>Best Cinematography</b>	<i>The Revenant</i>

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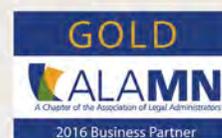
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