the Verdict

ALAMN
A Chapter of the Association of Legal Administrators

Oct / Nov 2016
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FINANCE

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Letters to the Editor of ***The Verdict*** are welcome and can be e-mailed to 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.

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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.

2016 - 2017 ALAMN COMMITTEES & SIGs

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

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ALAMN CALENDAR OF EVENTS

OCTOBER

SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
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	3	4	5

***PLEASE NOTE:**

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP (SIG) attendees need not be ALAMN members

NOVEMBER

SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
30	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	30	1	2	3

OCTOBER

5 Large Firm Administrators Meeting
12:00 p.m.
Location: Zelle Hoffman

6 ALA Webinar: Accounts Receivable Can I Write You A Check?
2:00 p.m.
Location: Best & Flanagan

13 ALAMN Fall Social
4:00 - 6:30 p.m.
Location: Jax Café

14 ALA CLM Study Group
11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Location: Merchant and Gould

18 It is Time to Talk: Forums on Race
11:30 a.m.
Location: Minneapolis Convention Center

18 Facilities SIG Meeting
12:00 p.m.
Location: Gray Plant Mooty

18 Membership Development Committee Meeting
4:00 p.m.
Location: Yost & Baill

19 St. Cloud SIG Meeting
12:00 p.m.

19 ALA Webinar: Tomorrow's Information Governance Understanding the Lifecycle of Information
2:00 p.m.
Location: Best & Flanagan

20 Small/Medium Group Meeting
11:30 a.m.
Location: Town and Country Club

26 Communications Committee Meeting
12:00 p.m.
Location: Nilan Johnson Lewis

27-29 ALA Regional Management Conference - Central
Location: Indianapolis, IN

27 Diversity & Inclusion Committee Meeting
8:30 a.m.
Location: Fredrikson & Byron

28 ALA CLM Study Group
11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Location: Merchant and Gould

NOVEMBER

1 HR Committee Meeting
11:30 a.m.
Location: Fredrikson & Byron

2 Large Firm Administrators Meeting
12:00 p.m.
Location: Fredrikson & Byron

3 ALA Webinar: Communication Strategies for Building Trust in the Workplace
2:00 p.m.
Location: Best & Flanagan

7 Cook for Kids at Ronald McDonald House
3:00 p.m.
Location: Ronald McDonald House, 818 Fulton St SE, Mpls

9 Leadership Happy Hour
4:30 - 7:00 p.m.
Location: Radisson Blu Minneapolis

12 MN Association of Black Lawyers Gala
6:00 p.m.
Location: Marriott City Center

15 Finance SIG Meeting
12:00 p.m.
Location: Winthrop & Weinstine

15 Membership Development Committee Meeting
4:00 p.m.
Location: Yost & Baill

16 Community Service Committee Meeting
11:30 a.m.
Location: Robins Kaplan

16 St. Cloud SIG Meeting
12:00 p.m.

16 ALA Webinar: HR Checklists: Essential in Riding the Firm and Employee Life Cycles
2:00 p.m.
Location: Best & Flanagan

17 Small/Medium Group Meeting
11:30 a.m.
Location: Town and Country Club

18 ALA CLM Study Group
11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Location: Merchant and Gould

23 Communications Committee Meeting
12:00 p.m.
Location: TBD

FROM THE PRESIDENT OF ALAMN

*By Sarah Didrikson, ALA**MN** President*

Thinking strategically is not only something that we do at our firms, but it is also important to our chapter. We need to ensure that we are always looking for ways to improve and grow as an organization in order to be attractive to new members and new generations. The ALA**MN** Board has been working hard to focus more on strategic thinking for the association. We started out this initiative by holding a half-day session in August where we brought in an outside individual to do a SWAT analysis with us in order to determine areas to work through in the next few years. During our Board meetings we are designating an hour to finalize our strategic plan and discuss the status of our tactics. As a Board we have determined to focus on the following areas in the next two years. Within each of the areas we are working to set measurable goals that each have specific tactics to help achieve the goals.

1. **Increase the number of new volunteers**
2. **Better equip our leadership to serve in the chapter**
3. **Increase the engagement of new members**
4. **Refresh communications in order to improve member and business partner engagement**
5. **Distinguish ALA**MN **as the premiere association**

Tied to refreshing our communications, the Communications Committee is working on refreshing our website. The goal of the change is to make the site easier to use for members as well as individuals who are updating the site. If you have any ideas or would be interested in helping out with the project, you can reach out to the Communications Committee Chair, Shannon Bonnett (sbonnett@nilanjohnson.com).

We love to get ideas and feedback! Please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any thoughts.

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Marsh & McLennan Agency LLC
PROSHRED Minnesota
Studio Hive Inc

ALAMN MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEW MEMBERS

Robin Asleson
Office Administrator
Henson & Efron, PA

Stephanie Unterberger
Office Manager
Messerli & Kramer

Elaine Tinker
HR Administrator
Hamre Schumann Mueller & Larson

Amy Howells
Billing and Collections Manager
Briggs & Morgan

Rachel Cobb
Human Resources Administrator
Larson King

Tom Miller
Director of Facilities
Robins Kaplan LLP

Sarah Hooper
Attorney/Legal Administrative Manager
Meyer Njus, PA

RETURNING MEMBERS

Cynthia Trana
Facilities Manager
Briggs & Morgan

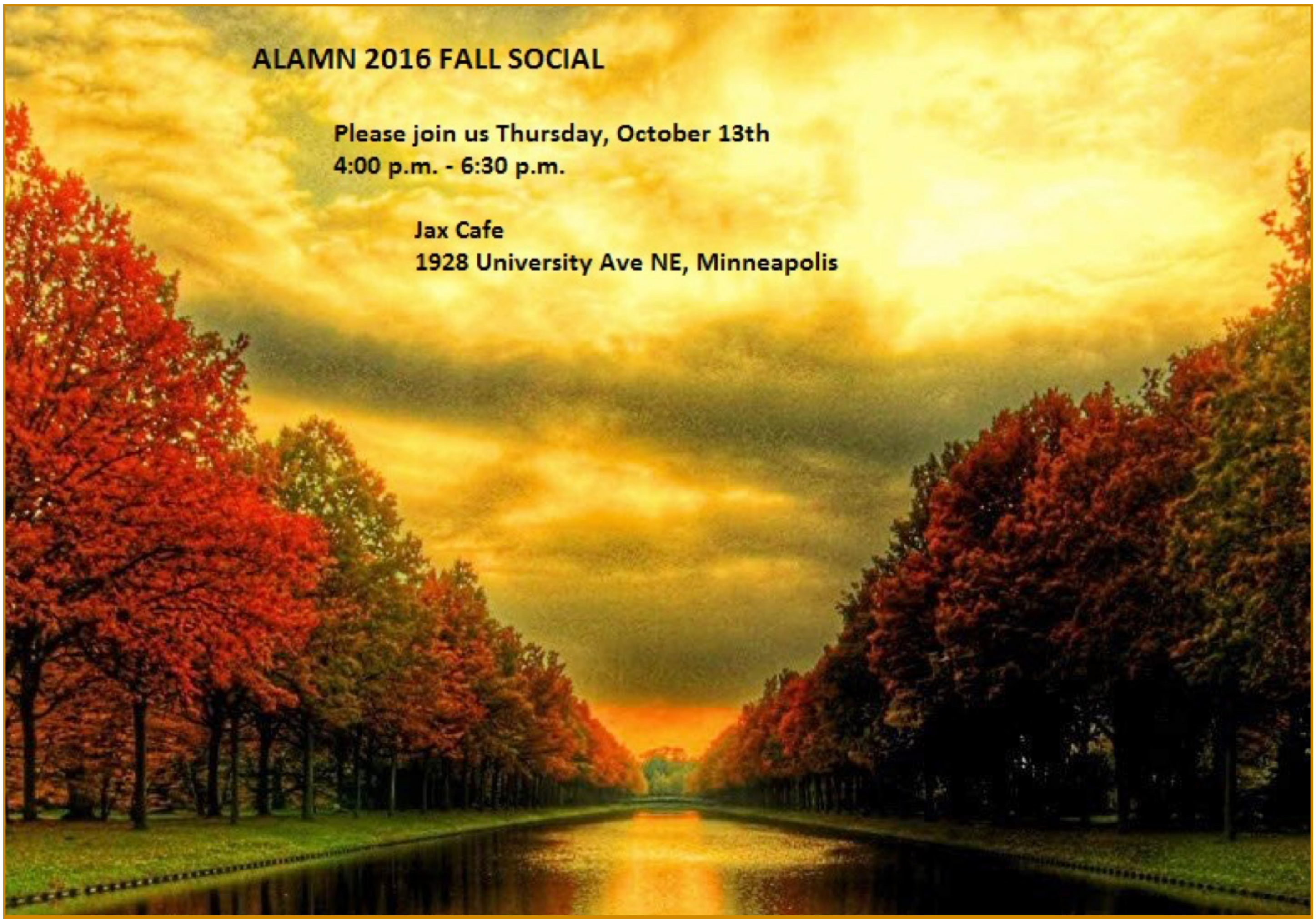
Megan Connolly
Senior HR Generalist
Fish & Richardson

RETIRED MEMBERS

Richard Knutson
7/31/16

Shari Tivy
9/15/16

2016 FALL SOCIAL



CLICK HERE TO REGISTER

Come enjoy networking, delicious food, cold beverages and to hear about ALA**MN**'s 2017 Sponsorship Opportunities.

LEGAL MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE IN BOSTON

The kickoff for ALA's Regional Legal Conferences occurred September 8 - 10 in Boston. While ALA has returned to a regional focus for their fall conferences, there was a group who for varying reasons attended the conference on the East Coast, instead of the Region 3 Conference. Curt Okerson, Laura Broomell, Deb O'Connor, and Dick Nigon are pictured in the Exhibit Hall.

And the next ALA**MN** Shining Star is…

The Board is pleased to announce the selection of the Compensation and Benefits Survey Committee as Shining Stars of our chapter! Members of this Committee are: Karen Davis (Anthony Ostlund Baer & Louwagie), Ellen Drasin (Briggs and Morgan), Jennifer Lind-Sadow (Nilan Johnson Lewis), Gloria Oanes (Robins Kaplan), Jodi Schmidt (Gray Plant Mooty), and Tammy Warren (Fredrikson & Byron). The Compensation and Benefits Survey Committee produces and distributes the annual survey, which provides ALA**MN** member firms with an invaluable resource for salaries and benefits information within the Minnesota legal community. All of these ladies have shared their specialized knowledge and expertise on this Committee for many years. The Committee meets weekly for several months of the year and works many hours to ensure a timely, accurate and useful product is delivered to ALA**MN** members. Thanks to all of you for your contributions and commitment to this important work and to the success of our chapter!

COMMITTEES & SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Community Service Committee

Community Service Meeting Minutes
July 26, 2016 11:30-1:00
Robins Kaplan - 800 LaSalle Ave, 28th floor
Group discussion included:

- Recap of recent events including the June Simpson Shelter BBQ and the Cookie Cart presentation at the June general meeting
- Upcoming events including August Cookie Cart skills event, November Ronald McDonald House meal, and blessing bags to be donated to Avenues for Homeless Youth in December
- Food drive for Peanut Butter and Jelly to be held at the September Survey Results meeting
- Asking for donations for the blessing bags at the Fall Social
- Considering a February event in appreciation of member and partner volunteers throughout this year
- Committee budget
- Next meeting is September 21, 2016 from 11:30-1:00 at Robins Kaplan, 800 LaSalle Ave

HR Committee

The HR Committee met on Tuesday, September 6, 2016 at the offices of Briggs and Morgan. Sarah Carlsen of Carlsen Coaching & Consulting, LLC spoke to the group about Developing Yourself as a Leader. First Sarah had the group make a list of those in our organization whom we think of leaders, both in management and behind the scenes. Then, we had to rate ourselves as a leader on a scale of 1 to 5.

A leader is defined as a person who is responsible for his/her world. How do you respond to situations? Can you be conscious with your response? Can you make a conscious choice?

Sarah gave us three simple concepts to be a better leader.

1. Continue to build self-awareness.
   a. Interview others.
   b. What do they see? What can we do differently?
2. Focus on building relationships while solving issues.
   a. What does it look like from where you sit?
   b. Be more conscious about relationships.
      i. Don't just have relationships with the people you like.
      ii. Talk to the person regardless if they are difficult, mean, etc.
3. Look for ways to continually grow your capacity.
   a. Look for opportunities.
   b. Be aware of weaknesses.
      i. Don't defer so quickly.
      ii. Don't give power away so quickly.
   c. Have hard conversations you aren't normally willing to have.
   d. Be accountable to someone.

Small & Medium Firm SIG

The Small/Medium group meets at Town & Country. At the request of group, at the August meeting we had roundtable discussions on the following topics:

- Legal Administrative Assistants – How they need to evolve to stay relevant for the upcoming leaders.
- Staff Succession – How to deal with back filling for staff likely to retire within the next 10 years.
- Poor response and poor quality of responses to job postings for attorneys and paralegals. Is the issue bigger than what medium is used for posting and more about finding quality applicants?
- On-Boarding/Off-Boarding – Best practices, suggestions for topics, how long should it last, who should do it?
- Employee Counseling – how are firms dealing with this?
- How to manage your desk when you are out and nobody else in the office does what you do or can cover your work. What tips and tricks do others employ to help manage their office commitments while trying to enjoy time out of the office?
- Sue Pearson shared with the group about the great experience they have had with a Word trainer who does webinar training.
- Review of other firm's IT setup and looking into switching IT vendors.

Joan Bibelhausen, Executive Director for Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers, spoke at the September meeting. As many of us know, lawyers have a higher incidence of alcohol use disorder and depression than the rest of the population. Joan's presentation covered:

- What does the data tell us?
- Why is this population at risk while being reluctant to seek help?

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COMMITTEES & SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS - CONTINUED

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- What are the signs and symptoms that impairment may be present?
- How can you reach out to someone to encourage that they get help?
- What options and services are available?
- How can firms support return to work?
- What must be done to protect your firm and its clients?

The next meeting is October 20 at Town & Country.

Large Firm SIG

The Large Firm Administrators group met on September 7th at Winthrop & Weinstine with eight members in attendance. The attendees of the ALA Large Firm Retreat in Napa in August discussed their experience at the conference. This lead into a discussion of firm retreats. The group discussed locations, speakers, format, and invitees. It ranged from firms inviting only partners to firms have a full retreat with attorneys and their families. The locations varied from in town at Windows on 50, to Northern Minnesota to nice resorts in Colorado, Arizona, and Utah. Another topic of discussion revolved around insurance policies and brokers. Most firms had one broker handling all their policies, while few carved out their Professional Liability policy and had a second broker handle that specific line. Holiday schedules for 2017 was the final topic of discussion and if firms had floating holidays. The next meeting will be held at Zelle on October 5th.

Facilites SIG

The Facilities SIG met on September 20. The meeting was hosted by Christy Geldert of Maslon Law Firm. The group had a roundtable discussion about attorney offices. Many firms seem to experience similar situations with office furniture. Each attorney has different preferences so it makes it difficult when attorneys move to different offices. Some want a sit/stand desk, some want the layouts changes, etc. With most firms, it is difficult to grant their requests because of the existing furniture. Some attorneys even request all new furniture. The group also discussed outsourced facilities services. The next Facilities meeting will be held on October 18 at Gray Plant. If you are interested in joining the Facilities SIG please contact Kelly Thaemert or Michele Brauch.

Diversity Events Now on ALAMN Calendar

Have you ever felt like you were missing out on great diversity and inclusion events because you hear about them too late? The ALA**MN** Diversity and Inclusion Committee is now posting major diversity events on the ALA**MN** Website Calendar. These events include bar association galas, dinners, training and seminars with no or low cost expense for CLE credit, and more. These postings include links to the events so you can easily find out the details.

If you have any questions regarding diversity events or would be interested in knowing more about joining the diversity and inclusion committee, please contact Curt Okerson at 612-492-7552.

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE - COOKIE CART: INTERVIEW SKILLS

On Tuesday, August 16, 2016, ALA**MN** members and business partners had a great time working with the teen employees at the Cookie Cart bakery, located at 1119 W. Broadway Ave. in Minneapolis.

Cookie Cart was started in 1988 by Sister Jean as a safe, secure and engaging space for North Minneapolis' youth. She saw the need to engage the neighborhood's young people in educational and empowering activities.

The Cookie Cart provides teens 15 to 18 years old with lasting and meaningful work, life and leaderships skills through experience and training in this urban nonprofit bakery.

This was our second time directly supporting the Cookie Cart with our gift of volunteer hours. Our first experience was in April when we helped in the bakery by scooping cookie dough with the teens.

The bakery is a classroom that teaches essential employment skills; managing their work schedules, taking direction from supervisors, efficient task completion and other problem solving skills.

This time we focused on the other part of their youth program; the classroom learning opportunities. Some of these can include customer service training, employer expectations, resume and cover letter writing, and financial literacy training.

On this trip we brought 13 volunteers, and we sat down with five of the teens to practice job interviewing skills. We all had experiences to share, from both sides of the interviewing desk, and had a lot of fun sharing both the good and the bad!

ALA**MN** CSC provided a pizza lunch for the teens, staff, and volunteers, and afterwards we handed out swag bags to our interviewees.

If you are interested in helping support this great program either in person, or by purchasing their cookies, you can contact them at 612-521-0855 or **info@cookiecart.org**.

Thank-you to those who donated to the swag bags:

Jessica Stoe from *Gardner Builders*
- Pens, Bags, USB/flash

Janet Tschida from *Innovative Office Solutions*
- Pens/Screen wipes

Brandon Stoetzel from *Lurie, LLP*
- Pens/Paper/Magnets

David Haines from *Parameters*
- Gold Sharpie Pens

Jeffrey Bischof from *Randstad*
- Pens & Guides

Stachia Ullmann from *Special Counsel*
- Pens & Notepads

Linda Perlick from *U.S. Bank*
- Gum & Chocolate

Laurie Greenberg from *Briggs and Morgan*
- Tumbler Glasses

Pat Stender from *Cousineau McGuire*
- Post-it notes variety packs

Moira Webster from *Fafinski Mark & Johnson*
- Pad folios & Post-its

Vicki Meyer from *Gislason & Hunter LLP*
- Wallets & Notebooks

Pam Gerads from *Merchant & Gould, P.C.*
- Pens

Wendy Cornelius from *MAC*
- Pins, Luggage Tags, Hot/cold packs

and Many Thanks to our Wonderful Volunteers!

Wendy Cornelius from *Metropolitan Airports Commission*

Tracy Smith from *Smith, Gendler, Shiell, Sheff, Ford & Maher*

Cheryl Nelson from *Robins Kaplan LLP*

Laurie Greenberg from *Briggs and Morgan, P.A.*

Alexandra Tseffos from *CBRE*

Jessica Ahern from *Robert Half Legal*

Emily Wilichowski, Dilip Patel, Blake Cardinal, Nathan Petersen, Lindsey Gonzales, Kate Godwin, and John Deziel from *Staples Advantage*

SEVEN COST-EFFECTIVE WAYS TO REWARD YOUR EMPLOYEES

By Beacon Hill Legal

Rewarding your staff for a job well done is an important strategy not only for demonstrating appreciation, but also for boosting office morale and keeping everyone focused on meeting goals. While many reward or incentive programs are centered on monetary bonuses, there are a number of other, more cost-effective rewards that can be used, especially if you run a smaller operation and the company budget for non-essential programs is limited.

"Rewarding employees for a job truly well-done is essential," says Ann Eisenreich, Division Director of Beacon Hill Legal in Chicago. "Who doesn't appreciate a pat on the back? Giving rewards and recognition builds and maintains morale, adds to group cohesiveness, and fosters a positive work environment. Whether it be an individual or group email, a shortened work day and celebration outside the office, or something as simple as a 'Congrats' and a high-five, even small gestures make such a tremendous difference." Here are some options for those looking to break out the streamers without breaking the bank:

1. **Lunch once a month.**
   If your team reaches set goals or performs particularly well, consider rewarding the team with lunch once a month. A great way to do this without breaking the bank is to order food to the office, as opposed to taking everyone to a restaurant. Grab pizza or sandwiches or Chinese food, Forbes advised. Few people will turn away a free meal, and it's also a great opportunity for team bonding. However, if you do decide to buy the office lunch, avoid alienating anyone by checking with them on dietary restrictions beforehand.
2. **Offer a paid day off.**
   One great way to reward employees without handing over a lump sum cash bonus is to offer a day or two of paid time off, ERE Media suggested. Staff members will likely value this highly. In today's hectic culture, securing enough time off to be spent with family and friends can be difficult. This is especially true when one considers that most U.S. employers tend to offer the bare minimum in terms of paid vacation time.
3. **Send out an email.**
   An effective and completely free way to keep your staff members feeling valued is to send a company-wide email, praising their hard work, Forbes stated. In addition to boosting the employee's confidence and morale, he or she can keep the email for their records, and present it at any future meetings concerning promotion.
4. **Tickets for an event.**
   Offer your workers an experience by rewarding them with tickets to the movies. If your budget allows, you could even stretch further to tickets to a sporting event or concert. Make it extra special by researching their favorite team or band beforehand. Such a move will demonstrate generosity as well as thoughtfulness – two things that will enhance staff morale and consolidate loyalty.
5. **Set up an employee of the month scheme**
   According to the website You Earned It, employee of the month programs, whereby a team will nominate a candidate to win a prize, are a great way to bestow praise. The prize could be a small bonus, gift card, or paid day off. This system is particularly cost-effective, as it requires rewarding one employee per month, but involves and engages the entire office.
6. **Send a gift basket**
   This strategy is effective because it carries an element of surprise and demonstrates thoughtfulness. Send over a gift basket complete with a thank you note, Forbes stated. The thank-you note is important, especially if it refers to a specific achievement, because it demonstrates attentiveness to the employee's work. Combine this with a thoughtfully selected gift basket to show that you care about them as a person, not only as a worker.

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SEVEN COST-EFFECTIVE WAYS TO REWARD YOUR EMPLOYEES - CONT.

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7. **Let them choose their next project**
   This suggestion will only work in certain organizations and departments, but it certainly bears mentioning, as it is cheap and guaranteed to work. Reward a hard working employee by allowing him or her to decide the next project that they will be involved with, You Earned It advised. The technique is beneficial for both parties: The employee determines a project that s/he wants to work on, and you receive more impassioned and motivated work as a result.

About Beacon Hill:
Beacon Hill Legal consults with law firms and corporations delivering top quality legal staffing solutions, document review services, and direct-hire search and consulting capabilities with the very best attorneys, paralegals, and legal support professionals.

As a full service staffing resource, Beacon Hill Legal offers customized staffing solutions across the broad and diverse legal marketplace. From small boutique practices to regional and national law firms, from broad in-house positions to full scale group mergers, from complex document reviews to legal translation services, Beacon Hill Legal utilizes a talented temporary and contract workforce along with contingency and retained search services to deliver excellent candidates to meet the diverse needs of our clients.

BREATHING NEW LIFE INTO AGEING RECEIVABLES

By Jake Krocheski, Client Connection

Behind most receivables more than 90 days past due is a story about why the account has not been paid – cash flow problems, complicated transactions, and many more. Understand those stories, get to the bottom of them – and you will have a better understanding of how to get paid.

Firms find themselves facing a dilemma. On one hand, they truly want to embrace institutional thinking and run as a business, putting structures and procedures in place and holding people accountable. On the other, they are reluctant to hold the individual attorneys accountable and deprive them of their autonomy because of the different circumstances that impact payment from clients.

It is hard to have clear-cut procedures while poking holes in them with plenty of exceptions. The truth, though, is that your firm must. You need to make it clear to our attorneys and staff – as well as your clients – what your policies and your expectations are. Yet there needs to be a fair amount of latitude for decisions based on individual client relationships.

To ensure that your receivables are not enjoying a ripe old age, take these steps:

1. Start on the older, harder-to-collect backlog of receivables. It may be necessary to dig deep to understand just how old they are. Many firms do not differentiate between receivables that are 90 days past due and those that are much older. Look to see if there is any recent billing activity on the account, when the last payment was received and for how much. It is surprising how firms continue to do work for clients without considering whether they are paying their bills.
2. When managing the backlog of receivables, look first at your oldest receivables and work your way back to those that are newer.
3. Ask all attorneys to review their clients with outstanding balances and ask them to be truthful. Have them take decisive action: make the collection themselves, get help from the firm's accounts receivable management team or clear the books. The attorneys are best able to assess whether a receivable should be kept on the active list or written off. However, they are often reluctant to follow through with the write-off process.
4. Evaluate each account and determine the likelihood of payment if the firm invests more time and effort to collect. But recognize that when a receivable exceeds 180 days past due, there is only a 50% chance that it will be collected, and the likelihood drops off dramatically after that point. There may be a logical reason why it has not been paid. Perhaps the client does not have the ability to pay. Maybe the attorney has worked out an arrangement with the client whereby he can pay after the matter has been completed. Make sure the responsible attorney communicates what arrangements have been made with each client.
5. Urge firm leadership to be decisive and step in to take action. Management must work through receivable issues and not just take the attorney's word for it. Get your arms around the prolem by creating – and empowering – a committee.
6. Evaluate the firm's overall collection efforts. Ask yourselves: Did we do the job right, or did our processes and procedures allow receivables to age far longer than they should have? Review the firm's policies and procedures concerning receivables that go beyond 90 days. Determine if policies exist only on paper. Implementation is the key. Do you have the right people in place to move the ball forward, and are they empowered to do so? Many firms receive their older receivables with the goal of determining why accounts have not paid and if they have collection problems. Often they learn they have long had problems, but did not detect them earlier in the ageing process.

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BREATHING NEW LIFE INTO AGEING RECEIVABLES - CONTINUED

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7. Make the most of staff whose job is to focus exclusively on receivables. Ensure they have the skills and talents that can help attorneys reduce the backlog of receivables. Also, measure the staff's performance to ensure progress is being made and sufficient time is being devoted to working directly with accounts receivable, as opposed to other administrative duties.
8. Write off the account after all efforts have been exhausted. If efforts have been made to collect that do not bear fruit, accept the fact that there is little chance of getting paid and write it off. If the attorney continues to hold up the write-off process, firm leadership needs to step in and get the account written off.

About Jake Krocheski:

Jake Krocheski is President of Client Connections. He has more than 25 years of experience as a management consultant working with law firms. Client Connection assists law firms of all sizes throughout the United States by furnishing accounts receivable management services and developing practical receivable programs. He can be reached at jakek@clientci.com.

BUDGETING AND COMPENSATION

By Philip Rush

As the weather turns cooler and we head toward fall, I am sure you are like most of us, and your thoughts turn toward budgeting. Since one of the major components in a law firm budget is compensation, which along with benefits generally accounts for just under half of the costs that support each attorney, this topic warrants close attention.

You know what you are currently paying your people, but what do you pay them next year? And what is the market rate for a particular position or what do you need to pay them to keep the people you want and attract the best talent for the dollar?

These are all questions that are behind an effective budgeting process. Fortunately, there are benchmarking tools to help with these decisions. One of them is the ALA**MN** Salary Survey that was published last month. That survey will give you year over year salary increases plus compensation by position for legal positions in the region.

After you have determined how much to increase the total salary pool, you will need to decide how much to increase each individual's salary, if at all. This decision, while one of the hardest, will provide the most benefits in the long run.

If you decide to give everyone the same percentage increase it makes the job easier today, but may cause problems in the future. For example, one of these problems could be that an underperforming individual needs some coaching. If this individual has been getting increases that are commensurate with everyone else, a mixed message has been relayed and dilutes the effectiveness of the coaching. Conversely, if your high performers also get an increase similar to everyone else, they may feel under-appreciated and therefore perform below their capability. That is, average pay equals average work.

Spreading your total budgeted increase around evenly is like spreading peanut butter around. It all gets covered, but may be a mess.

The alternative is to focus on those you want to keep and those who perform better than the average. Doing this is the more difficult process, but is absolutely necessary in a tight labor market such as we are currently experiencing. You have to keep those whom you could not live without happy, and one way to do that is with compensation.

All of this adds up to a more productive and engaged workforce with better team results in the long run.

DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION BUT DON'T KNOW WHOM TO ASK?

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