

June / July 2024
Vol. 2024, No. 3



HUMAN RESOURCES

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President's Column

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The Role of HR in a
Law Firm

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2024 ALAMN Diversity
Scholarship Winner

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2024 - 2025 ALAMN OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

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Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor of *the Verdict* are welcome and can be e-mailed to Gretchen Luessenheide at gluessenheide@bgs.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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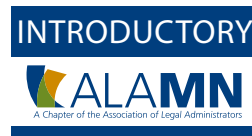
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ALAMN Has Adopted ALA's Mission Statement

ALA is the premier professional association connecting leaders and managers within the legal industry. We provide extensive professional development, collaborative peer communities, strategic operational solutions, and business partner connections empowering our members to lead the business of law.

ALAMN TEAMS & SIGS

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

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HUMAN RESOURCES

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ALAMN SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGs) are educational forums specific to functional specialty.

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If you are interested in serving as a co-chair for a Team or SIG, please contact Deb O'Connor (deboconnor12@outlook.com).



ALA's Career Center is a place to find a variety of articles and resources to help you develop your skills and enhance your career. Check out the featured article from Robert Half, "2022 Forecast: In Demand Practice Areas and Jobs," found [HERE](#).

ALAMN ORGANIZATIONAL TABLE FOR 2024

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Vanessa Kahn

President Elect	Past President	Communications Director	Membership Director	Education Director	Administrative Director	Finance Director
Bernie Theis	Deb O'Connor	Jessica Johnson	Gayle Hildahl	Kim Motzko	Rebecca Doyle	Suzette Allaire

SERVICE TEAMS

(ALAMN Membership is required to participate; Regular ALAMN Membership is required to Chair; Service Teams work serves entire chapter)

Business Partner Relations & Conference	Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Access	Communications & Social Media	Membership Development	General Education Meetings	Compensation & Benefits Survey
Catherine Gorr Kelly Thaumert	Kathy Hubbard Marie Harvat	Melissa Johnson	Joey Monson Chong Lee	Lisa Hellum Pete Tass	Laurie Greenberg Laurie Pearcy Phil Rush
	Community Service				
	Sarah Ptacek Nancy Lewer				

SECTION TEAMS

(ALAMN Membership is required to participate; Regular ALAMN Membership is required to Chair; Section Teams work serves sub-section of chapter membership)

	Large Firm Chief Officers	Small and Medium Firm	Human Resources
	Abby Rooney	Jeff Downes Tracy Smith	open

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

(Non-members may participate; ALAMN Membership is required to Chair)

	Branch Manager	Facilities Management	Financial Management
	Jessica Johnson Samantha Tschida	open	open
Greater MN (formerly St. Cloud)		Intellectual Property (IP)	
Ann Entenmann		Val Studer Lisa Gentry	

ADMINISTRATIVE VOLUNTEERS

(Regular or Associate ALAMN Membership is required)

Also serves as:	Also serves as:	Newsletter Editor	Emerging Leaders Group	CLM Education Coordinator	Staff & Member Placement Coordinator (HR)
LPACC Liaison	Past President Liaison	Gretchen Luessenheide	Samantha Tschida	Tracy Overson	Tracy Smith
	Nominating Committee (chair)	Social Media			
		Melissa Johnson Jaffe Management			

8 Board Members; 7 Service Teams; 3 Section Team, 5 Special Interest Groups; 7 Administrative Volunteer Positions

By Vanessa Kahn, ALAMN President



Spring is upon us, and summer is just around the corner. I enjoy this time of year in Minnesota because the plants and trees change every day. We can literally see the changes happening right in front of our eyes. The transition from spring to summer also brings the reminder of rebirth and renewal.

As chapter president, my focus this year is increasing membership engagement. If you take a moment and think about engagement, it is a broad topic with many possibilities and challenges. There can be room for new and fresh ideas as well as our tried-and-true tactics. Either way, we all understand the importance of having a diverse membership, and we know we are better off when we are exposed to different people, new ideas, and the perspectives that come from our diverse businesses.

Every year in April, the chapter's leaders meet for a leadership chair orientation meeting. This meeting introduces any new chair volunteer to their role, as well as an overview of how the chapter is organized and managed. This year we also discussed ways to increase member participation and engagement in our association.

Our leadership group understands that it's hard to be everything to everyone. Given that our association has both seasoned professionals as well as people just beginning their legal careers, we need to be thoughtful about balancing our programming and opportunities. We believe this is one effective way to increase member engagement. Additionally, we monitor what works for other chapters and try and incorporate those ideas whenever possible.

Providing fun and new situations for networking can also attract different people to our annual events.

Our membership development team is focused on reaching out to members one-on-one to provide information about the chapter and the benefits of membership. This year, we will host two membership luncheons, giving new members access to the chapter's board of directors, other individuals in leadership roles, as well as an overview of our chapter's website and how to access certain benefits through the online MemberClicks profile pages.

I have come to believe that the more I put into something, the more I get back in return. The same has been true with my experience in ALAMN. Being involved with the chapter will increase your knowledge of the legal industry, how law firms operate, and give you endless perspectives and new ways to look at common issues that arise in all our businesses. If you are new to the legal profession and ALAMN, I challenge you to step out of your comfort zone and attend an ALAMN event where you will be surrounded by people that inevitably know more than you do (about the business of law). If you are a seasoned professional, I encourage you to reach out to a new ALAMN member or young professional and bring them to an ALAMN event.

Our association and group of leaders is committed to building lasting and meaningful relationships with each other and our business partners. We enjoy our work and have fun discussing our various law firm problems and the solutions that go along with them. If you haven't connected with anyone in ALAMN in a fulfilling and meaningful way, I encourage you to put more effort into it!



THE ROLE OF HR IN A LAW FIRM

By Kim Motzko

Human resources management plays a crucial role in the success of any organization, and law firms are no exception. In a sector characterized by its unique challenges and demands, effective HR practices are essential for attracting, retaining, and developing top legal talent. Here are some key strategies for navigating this complex landscape.

Understanding the Role of HR in Law Firms:

In the context of law firms, HR serves a multifaceted role that extends beyond traditional administrative functions. While payroll, benefits administration, and compliance remain vital responsibilities, HR also plays a strategic role in talent acquisition, performance management, and fostering a positive workplace culture. Given the competitive nature of the legal industry, attracting and retaining skilled professionals is a top priority for law firms, making HR an indispensable partner in achieving organizational objectives.

Recruitment and Talent Acquisition:

Recruiting top legal talent is a perpetual challenge for law firms. HR professionals must develop effective recruitment strategies to identify candidates with the requisite skills and cultural fit. This involves leveraging various channels, including job boards, professional networks, and recruitment agencies, while also proactively engaging with passive candidates. Additionally, HR plays a crucial role in ensuring a fair and unbiased selection process, promoting diversity and inclusion within the firm.

Onboarding and Integration:

The onboarding process is a critical juncture in the employee lifecycle, setting the tone for the individual's experience within the firm. HR teams in law firms must design comprehensive onboarding programs that provide new hires with the necessary resources, training, and support to acclimate to their roles effectively. This includes introducing them to the firm's culture, policies,

and procedures, as well as facilitating connections with colleagues and mentors.

Performance Management and Professional Development:

Effective performance management is essential for maximizing the potential of legal professionals and driving organizational success. HR plays a central role in establishing performance metrics, conducting regular evaluations, and providing constructive feedback to employees. Moreover, HR facilitates professional development initiatives, such as training programs, mentoring relationships, and continuing education opportunities, to nurture talent and promote career advancement within the firm.

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THE ROLE OF HR IN A LAW FIRM - CONT.

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Employee Engagement and Retention:

Maintaining high levels of employee engagement is paramount in a competitive industry like law, where burnout and attrition are prevalent concerns. HR professionals in law firms must actively seek to understand the unique needs and motivations of their workforce, implementing strategies to foster a supportive and inclusive work environment. This may involve initiatives such as wellness programs, flexible work arrangements, and recognition schemes designed to boost morale and enhance retention.

Navigating Legal and Regulatory Compliance:

Compliance with legal and regulatory requirements is a fundamental responsibility of HR in law firms. Given the highly regulated nature of the legal profession, HR teams must stay abreast of evolving labor laws, employment regulations, and industry standards to ensure the firm's practices remain compliant. This involves overseeing matters such as employment contracts, workplace safety, data privacy, and anti-discrimination policies, while also mitigating legal risks and liabilities.

In the dynamic and fast-paced world of law firms, effective HR management is essential for driving organizational performance and fostering a positive workplace culture. By prioritizing recruitment, onboarding, performance management, employee engagement, and compliance, HR professionals can contribute significantly to the success and sustainability of their firms. Embracing innovation, leveraging technology, and adopting best practices will enable HR to navigate the complexities of the legal landscape and support the growth and development of legal talent for years to come.



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TRANSFORMING YOUR FIRM'S CULTURE: FROM BUZZWORDS TO REAL IMPACT

By Affinity Consulting Group

Many law firms aspire to epitomize success. But many also strive for the title of "best" without fully crafting a vision for what they are trying to build. Merely chasing this lofty label isn't the key to transforming a firm's culture. Similarly, tossing around promises of a happy team won't magically overhaul your firm's atmosphere. The real transformation lies in asking the right questions, establishing genuine core values, and actively caring for and coaching your team.

THE TRUE COST OF A POOR CULTURE

A toxic culture isn't just a matter of buzzwords or warm and fuzzy feelings—it translates into tangible losses for a business. Consider the following areas where a poor culture can take a toll:

- **Lost Employees:** High turnover rates due to dissatisfaction or disengagement. The cost of replacing lost employees can be as high as 50 – 60% of overall costs.
- **Unengaged Employees:** Being present in body but not in spirit can lead to diminished productivity and creativity. Unengaged employees use more sick leave, quit quietly (or just quit!), and disengage those around them.
- **Lost Clients:** A negative culture can seep into client interactions, impacting retention and new business opportunities. More engaged team members build better rapport with clients.

THE ART OF CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

Create Your Vision: Dig into what your firm's vision for success is beyond "being the best." Define what success means for your team. Embrace core values that resonate with your employees and let them guide your actions, your goals, and your KPIs.

Ask the Right Questions: Engage your team consistently. Do they find meaning in their work? Are they connected with their colleagues? Do they feel valued and heard? These questions unveil the pulse of your culture. Don't assume you know the answers. As leaders, you have to ask the hard questions to be able to transform current challenges into future solutions.

Intentional Coaching and Care: Move beyond managerial roles to become mentors and advocates for your team. Understand their aspirations, connect their work to the bigger picture, and foster an environment of trust and collaboration. This takes intentionality. You can't fake it. It takes a genuine connection to build trust over time.

Transformation isn't just about surface-level changes or quick fixes. It's about delving deep into the soul of your organization and nurturing a culture that inspires, empowers, and retains talent. It's about moving from buzzwords to real, impactful actions that breathe life into your firm's shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices. So, take the leap—transform your culture, and watch your firm thrive like never before.

At Affinity Consulting Group, we work hand in hand with our clients to help them build a healthier firm. We help you to think differently about your processes and how you get your work done. We help you find solutions that fit your firm to help you work smarter and increase productivity. In the end, the things we help you implement will increase your firm's overall profitability.

[Request a consultation](#) to learn more.

ALAMN CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JUNE

SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
26	27	28	29	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	4	5	6

- 13 Community Service Meeting**
2:00 pm – 3:00 pm
- 19 Facilities SIG Meeting**
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
- 25 Branch Manager SIG Meeting**
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
- 26 Education Meeting**
11:30 am – 1:00 pm
- 26 Finance SIG Meeting**
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

JULY

SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
30	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	3

- 18 Small/Medium Firm Meeting**
11:30 am – 1:00 pm
- 24 2024 ALAMN Summer Social**
4:30 pm – 7:00 pm
Elsie's

***PLEASE NOTE:**
ALAMN MEMBERSHIP IS REQUIRED to attend Team and SIG meetings.



ALA was founded in 1971 to provide support to professionals involved in the management of law firms, corporate legal departments, and government legal agencies. [Learn more about ALA HERE.](#)

ALAMN ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Save the date for the ALAMN Conference on September 19, 2024. We are returning to downtown Minneapolis and the beautiful Hilton Hotel. Last year's conference attracted over 130 members and business partners, and we can't wait to see everyone again.

We are thrilled to announce that Jason Matheson, host of *The Jason Show*, will be our dynamic keynote lunch speaker. Jason will share his positive energy and engaging life story. Our breakout sessions will include:

- **Shayla Reaves** – WCCO TV anchor/reporter and author of *Echo in the Distance*, a children's book.
- **Penelope J. Phillips**, attorney at Felhaber Larson, will discuss new MN employment laws, including cannabis legalization and Earned Sick and Safe Time.
- **Spencer Smith** will present two breakout sessions on artificial intelligence and how it will impact all law firms.

Of course we will have time to engage with our valued business partner sponsors, participate in a group community service project, network with peers, and win prizes.

Additionally, stay tuned for an announcement of our morning keynote speaker in the next month. You won't want to miss it!

2024 ALAMN DIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP WINNER



ALAMN's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Team is honored to announce the 2024 Diversity Scholarship recipient is Cosette Mua. Cosette lives in White Bear Lake, MN and attends North High School in North St. Paul. In addition to maintaining an excellent GPA, Cosette is involved in her school's yearbook, National Honor Society, and dance. She works at a senior home as the concierge and hopes to find a similar job on the U of M Twin Cities campus next year.

Cosette will be majoring in Marketing at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. She is most looking forward to

meeting new people and exploring the campus. Cosette is happy she will be near her family while attending the U of M. She cannot wait to see where her future will take her!

We at ALAMN are excited to be able to support this future superstar as she begins her college career. We hope someday she will work alongside our ALAMN members as a part of the thriving legal industry in Minnesota.

Congratulations, Cosette, and Ski-U-Mah!



SAVE THE DATE!

ALAMN 34th

Annual Conference

Thursday, September 19th 2024

Hilton Minneapolis
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ALAMN DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND ACCESSIBILITY TEAM (DEIA)

The ALAMN Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Team is pleased to spark conversation and action that improves diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in our communities.

Community Presentations

ALAMN and DEI&A speakers, Jeff Downes, Vanessa Kahn, and Bernadette Theis, held an in-person presentation for students majoring in Individualized Studies at Dakota County Technical College on April 24, 2024. This immersive introduction to the many legal administrative roles and intricacies of our profession and working in a law firm was a great way to start off "Administrative Professionals Day!"

On April 29, 2024, Kathy Hubbard and Sarah Ptacek spoke to 10-12th grade students at Blaine High School, sharing a broader picture of all the careers the legal industry has to offer.

During the Fall 2024 term at North Hennepin Community College the ALAMN DEIA Team will be doing a legal career presentation. Keep your eyes open for updates on this opportunity.

If you have any questions regarding the DEIA Team or suggestions for speakers for DEIA presentations or otherwise want to get involved, please email DEIA co-chairs, Kathy Hubbard (hubbard@mdh-law.com) or Marie Harvat (mharvat@solotofflaw.com).

June Observances, Holidays, Celebrations, and Commemorations

In June, we recognize and highlight the following. This list is not exhaustive; let us know who you are celebrating.

LGBTQ+ Month

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ+) Pride Month recognizes the impact that LGBTQ+ individuals have had on the world.

Immigrant Heritage Month

Established in 2014, Immigrant Heritage Month celebrates immigrants across the United States and their contributions to their local communities and economies.

- June 2 — American Indian Citizenship Day
Commemorates the day in 1924 when the U.S. Congress passed legislation recognizing the citizenship of Native Americans.
- June 14 — Flag Day
- June 16-17 — Eid al-Adha
- June 19 — Juneteenth / Freedom Day
Honors the day in 1865 when enslaved people in Texas and Louisiana finally heard that they were free — two full months after the end of the Civil War.
- June 20 — World Refugee Day
- June 16 — Anniversary of Legalization of Same-Sex Marriages in the U.S.

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ALAMN DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND ACCESSIBILITY TEAM (DEIA)

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July Observances, Holidays, Celebrations, and Commemorations

In July, we recognize and highlight the following. This list is not exhaustive; let us know who you are celebrating.

French-American Heritage Month

French-American Heritage Month honors and recognizes the significant contributions made to the United States by people of French descent.

- July 4 — Independence Day / Fourth of July
- July 11 — World Population Day
- July 18 — Nelson Mandela International Day
- June 26 — National Disability Independence Day
Celebrates the anniversary of the 1990 signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Check out these DEIA-related resources from ALA:

[Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility Statement](#)

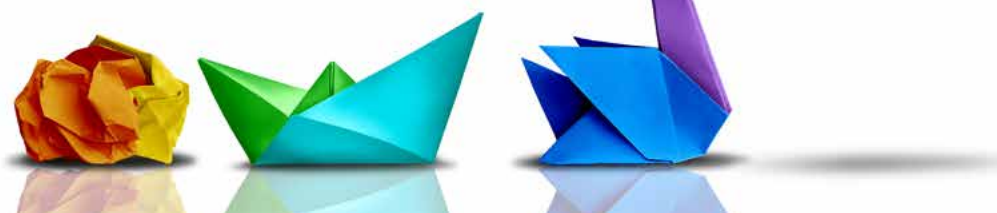
[Becoming an Advocate for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility](#)

[Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility Educational Presentations](#)

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COMPANY INFO

Tell us any cool/interesting facts about your company

Since our beginning in 1953 as Dayton's Commercial Interiors, our roots have been deeply embedded in Minneapolis. Throughout the years, our headquarters location has remained in Minneapolis as our scope and capabilities grew nationally to become a leading Steelcase dealer. Today, Atmosphere delivers spaces to clients ranging from small businesses to international law firms that are collaborative, meaningful, and human-centric through the integration of architecture, furniture, and technology.

What is your role in the company?

Workplace Consultant

How long have you been involved with ALAMN?

This is our 2nd year

How can we spotlight your business the best?

Help us grow awareness to the importance of supporting, meaningful spaces for all! Our passion for purposeful spaces is contagious, and we leverage research & insights to build more inclusive, flexible workplaces for people to thrive in.

PERSONAL INFO

What is your favorite movie?

Moneyball

What are you currently reading?

The Lost Bookshop

What is the last vacation you took?

Tour of Asia from Hong Kong to Singapore

What is your favorite way to spend free time?

Working in my yard

If you could learn a new skill, what would it be?

Speak French



What fashion trend do you wish would come back?

Vanessa Kahn, President

I'm Sporty Spice all the way, all the time. I'm not sure if that was ever a fashion trend but it's one of my favorite looks.

Deb O'Connor, Past President

The Rachel!

Bernie Theis, President-Elect

I would welcome back any fashion trends from the 90s and the big hair of the 80s.

Kim Motzko, Education Director

Layering tees and tanks. I believe it's making a comeback!

Rebecca Doyle, Administrative Director

I can't think of any trends that I necessarily want back (that haven't already boomeranged or are presently trending), but I hope wearing athleisure clothes never stops being out of style 😊

Suzette Allaire, Finance Director

Dress hats!

Gayle Hildahl, Membership Director

I love all the fashion which took place in the 1960s from "Swinging Sixties" to hippie aesthetic.

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