

# LEGAL MANAGEMENT

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## 4 Strategies for Associate Retention

In a competitive legal market, firms look to create an environment where associates can grow.





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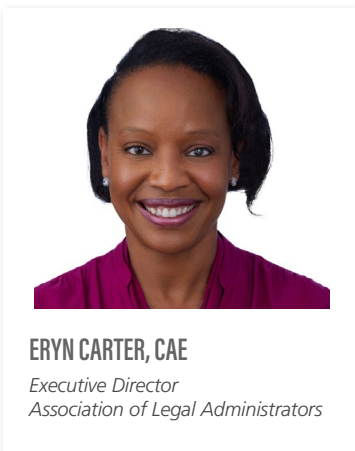
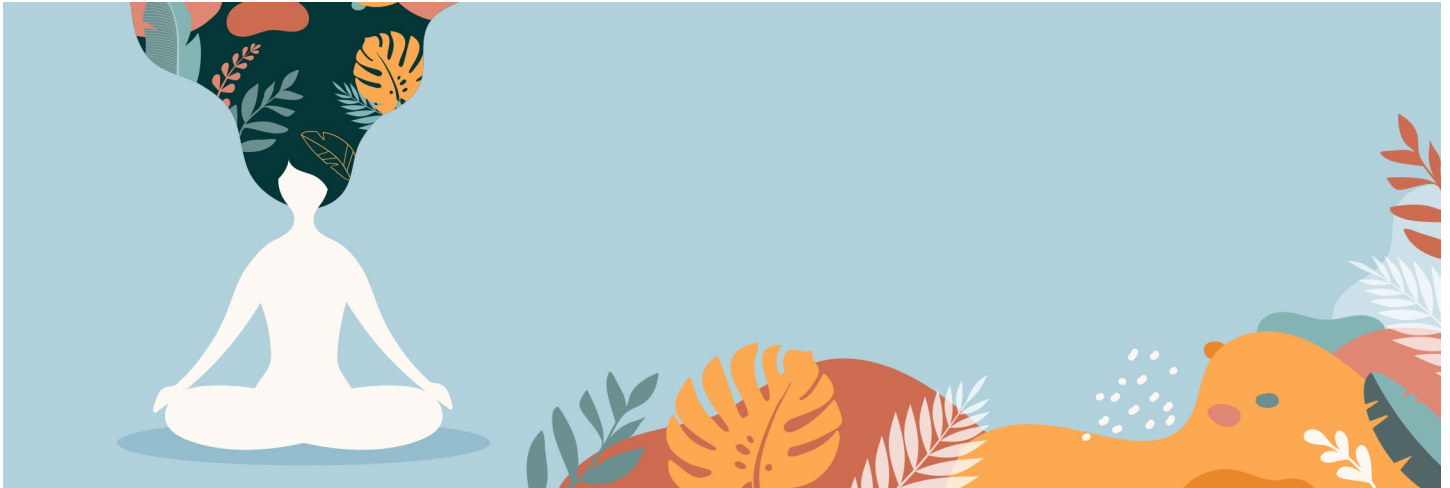
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## Making Mental Well-Being a Priority

**As the parent to two daughters who are entering the initial stages of adulthood, I am answering questions and offering advice to them about topics that are teaching me more about myself than I expected. What subjects to study, how to prepare for a career and managing relationships are often topics at the top of the list. The conclusion to our conversations is usually reminding them to identify, prioritize and take care of their needs.**

“ I once heard someone say, “The word ‘no’ is a complete sentence.” Saying ‘no’ when I know I’ve reached my limit and need to recharge is something I try to practice with kindness and often with humor.”

Then comes the hard part: I have to “show and prove,” as the saying goes. Society’s growing acceptance of the need to recognize mental health care as an important and necessary part of our overall health and well-being is positive overall. But what is being done to make this a reality, particularly in our work lives?

In the *Harvard Business Review* article, “How to Fix Your Company’s Culture of Overwork,” Malissa Clark, Associate Professor and Head of the Healthy Work Lab at the University of Georgia, argues that the boundaries of professionalism and personal lives have been blurred — alarmingly so since the pandemic. Clark’s book, *Never Not Working: Why the Always-On Culture Is Bad for Business and How to Fix It*, also describes how a generation of employees have unknowingly let their work consume them.

I must confess, on many occasions, I have found myself in the camp of professionals who have allowed work obligations to bleed into my personal space. Turning off has become more challenging when my laptop and mobile devices are always nearby. For me, the physical act of unplugging must happen in order for my brain to follow. I once heard someone say, “The word ‘no’ is a complete sentence.” Saying “no” when I know I’ve reached my limit and need to recharge is something I try to practice with kindness and often with humor. And, alongside giving more attention to self-care by exercising, eating healthy and improving sleep habits, I also have recently adopted the tenets of soul care, which emphasizes the importance of maintaining a healthy soul by incorporating activities like meditation, prayer and counseling.


ALA ensures its staff feels supported in their mental well-being by offering comprehensive health care benefits, a flexible work environment, training programs designed to help us identify and affirm individual working styles, and activities that promote well-being across different dimensions to emphasize our staff core values.


In recent years, more spotlights have been shined on the issues surrounding well-being in the legal industry. In fact, the mission of the Institute for Well-Being in Law (IWIL) is to transform the legal profession's approach to well-being. Evolving from the National Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being, the IWIL is now an independent charitable organization and organizes the annual Well-Being Week in Law that will take place May 6–10 this year.

The American Bar Association (ABA) also launched the Well-Being Campaign to improve the substance use and mental health landscape of the legal profession, with an emphasis on helping legal employers support a healthy and sustainable work environment. While the focus of the ABA is

on the lawyers, many law firms' programming has expanded to all positions within the firm. At ALA, we are partnering with the National Council for Mental Wellbeing to offer the Mental Health First Aid certification program. Since the program's inception, nearly 700 people have participated. ALA's Middle Tennessee Chapter has also formed a Mental Health Task Force after losing one of their own to suicide. It's clear how top of mind well-being is within our industry.

In a world where work is always at our fingertips, finding ways to take breaks and care for our mental wellness must be a top priority. I encourage you to use the resources above or discover your own methods to remain grounded amid the stress of the legal industry. As leaders, we often talk about the importance of mental well-being. Now, it is time to show our employees and prove it can be done.

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The flyer features a group photo of diverse professionals in the top left. The main title is "MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID Certification Program" in white text on a purple background. Below the title, it describes the program as self-paced content plus a 6.5-hour Zoom session. Three course dates are listed: Friday, April 19; Friday, April 26; and Friday, May 10. A purple button at the bottom right contains the URL [alanet.org/mhfa](https://alanet.org/mhfa). The logo for the National Council for Mental Wellbeing is in the top right, and a "SPRING 2024 REGISTER TODAY" banner is also present.



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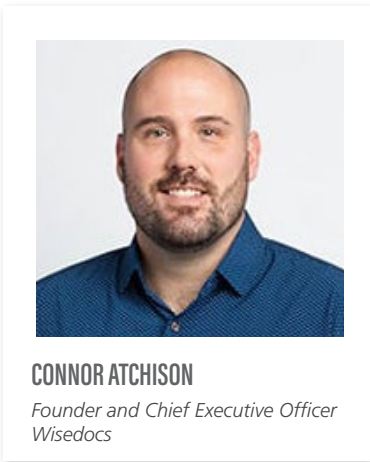
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## AI Is the Latest Tool in Workflow Automation

**Law firm managers and administrators deal with a flood of information — possibly even more than lawyers themselves. While lawyers use volumes of prior judgements and supporting documents for a case, it's law firm administrators who are responsible for storing, retrieving and maintaining files for cases all across the firm.**

A recent survey done by e-discovery specialists showed the average case had 6.5 million pages, 10-15 custodians and 130 GB of data — that's a lot to file. Why so much? The spread of data comes across tools like Microsoft Teams, Slack, cloud tools and social media apps. These hold the conversations and documents used to support a case. Unstructured data makes up 80% or more of these items.

To handle this flow of information, firm administrators need established workflows and attention to detail. While automating structured documents (like a tax form) is common, the same isn't true for unstructured data. Unstructured data administration is typically done by hand — or at least it used to be. Modern artificial intelligence (AI) has made it so that more manual tasks in law firms are becoming automated, including handling unstructured data that would have been near impossible before.

This use of technology helps — not hurts — legal jobs. And admins will need to be efficient when assigning workload if they want to optimize their time (and the billable potential of the firm). So how can you automate your law firm's workflows? Here are four steps to consider.

### 1. ASSESS THE SCOPE

How big is your firm? Automation can benefit administrators and managers for law firms of every size. However, the administrative team of a major LLP and an administrative manager of a solo law office will face dramatically different volumes of data.

“ Firm associates and administrators can only handle so many files at a time, and admins will need to be efficient when assigning workload if they want to optimize their time (and the billable potential of the firm).”

The explosion of AI into legal technology means there are options available for all types of firms. To use them, you'll need an understanding of where the bulk of your workload lies. For example, onboarding, discovery or document review might all be areas where your admin team is short on time.

You should also consider the resources (such as IT support or infrastructure) you already have in place, and what areas can get you the best return. Some law firms have schedule optimization software, client onboarding portals, or time-tracking that will help you find this time.

## 2. FIND BOTTLENECKS AND REPETITIVE TASKS

Automation needs to complement your existing workflows — and be inserted at the right part of the path. For example, if you have an assistant collect client data through an onboarding checklist, and then have your paralegal team handle processing and requesting the paper files, you might need to digitize your documents first.

Then, your administrators can automate the process by uploading them to a medical summary platform to index and store. To skip a step and streamline this process, the administrator might upload client documents immediately into the digital portal, collect discovery documents electronically or have an AI tool request and pull them via email. Like a chain, each step of the process will depend on the previous stage — so it's important to visualize all the steps and identify where automation can improve the process.

## 3. OPTIMIZE HUMAN TIME

Automating workflows in your law firm can not only save you money — it can also free up managers' and administrative staff's time. Reducing manual tasks and repetitive work can lead to processing documents 83% faster.

In addition, part of the legal management workflow is work allocation. Associates and lawyers can only handle a certain amount of work. This is also true for a legal admin team. Client portals are often part of the legal process, and the documents that clients upload will all need to be reviewed, filed and stored. Optimizing work allocation between managers and administrators — especially if your firm is large — is another task best suited for a machine rather than placing this burden on legal administrators. Even purely administrative tasks like invoicing can eat at your bottom line and impact the efficiency of the team.



## 4. LET MACHINES DO THE HEAVY LIFTING

Billable time is the most important factor for your law firm's profitability. This is still important for the admin team, who may not always be directly billing time. Associates and lawyers are billed out for these skills, and administrators provide crucial support in collecting and preparing the information. Unfortunately, these administrative tasks can often take up more time than the firm can spare. Document review, legal research or proofreading can all be frustrating and lengthen processing time, especially when these documents are long, unstructured medical reports.

AI platforms are able to generate medical summaries, chronologies and indexed medical records for each file, meaning associates, paralegals and administration can get the info they need in minutes. Machine learning-powered platforms can remove duplicates, index files related to a case, summarize long texts, and custom-sort your documents by keyword or by rules your firm defines.

The result is a clean, easy to use document — and that perfectly complements your human tasks. All this means your operations can move more than 80% faster. It won't eliminate legal jobs, but it will take some of the stress out of paperwork and speed up the process for clients, benefiting everyone involved.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Connor Atchison** is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Wisedocs. He founded Wisedocs to reimagine claims through bringing automation and intelligent medical record processing and reviews to the insurance ecosystem and their claimants.

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SHIELA MIE LEGASPI

President  
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## Navigating Implicit Bias in Remote Work

**Discrimination in the workplace can lead to costly lawsuits, settlements and fines. Yet the era of remote work has made eliminating bias more complicated. How can today's business and organizational leaders protect their enterprises and ensure a fair and healthy workplace for all? The answer is to foster a healthy, inclusive culture.**

As legal administrators and professionals already know, workplaces of all kinds continue to struggle with implicit bias. According to a 2023 survey, 91% of workers report having experienced discrimination at work.

The remote work environment can aggravate these problems. Studies show that leaders harbor a "proximity bias" — not valuing remote workers' contributions as highly as those from in-office employees. As a result, remote workers receive 31% fewer promotions. "Out of sight, out of mind," as the saying goes.

Meanwhile, research has shown that the U.S. remote workforce attracts women, who often have the advanced education required for remote positions and appreciate the flexibility of working from home. In fact, many remote workers are already members of at least one traditionally marginalized group in the paid workforce.

Therefore, addressing bias in the remote workplace often necessitates addressing multiple layers of discrimination. The good news is that creating an inclusive workplace can address them all simultaneously.

The first step to addressing implicit bias in the workplace is to build awareness. A problem can't be solved if it can't be seen.

Given the statistics cited above, it's wise for business leaders to assume their company has an implicit bias problem rather than hoping to be the exception to the rule. This

“Shifting from a noninclusive workplace to an inclusive one requires leadership to pause, stop fixating on productivity and turn their focus to nurturing the human beings on their team. It means putting people first.”

mindset will help you look for where implicit bias may play out instead of focusing on where it isn't. While this outlook may seem negative, it's actually pragmatic — wounds continue to fester if not treated. If no one wants to see the wounds, they just fester longer. Denial doesn't make them disappear.

## FOSTERING INCLUSIVITY

Inclusivity isn't just a buzzword. It's a lived experience of a healthy workplace. To create an inclusive work environment, legal administrators and other business leaders must prioritize employees' sense of psychological safety, meaning team members must feel free to be themselves and speak their minds without fear of retaliation or other negative consequences.

In my experience, leaders of toxic teams often believe their work environment is already inclusive. They have made statements to their teams about how inclusive they want their workplace to be and asked for people's honest opinions, so obviously, if they aren't receiving negative feedback from their staff, everything must be perfect already.

Savvy employees don't believe in mere talk, however, and watch to see if leadership's deeds align with their words. If there's a gap, they will smile, nod and stay silent.

Ironically, the presence of negative feedback from staff is an essential sign of a healthy, inclusive workplace. If your employees tell you their concerns directly, it means they trust you. Conversely, if you have retention issues but no one on staff is willing to explain what's wrong, it means they don't trust you — which is a big problem.

Shifting from a noninclusive workplace to an inclusive one requires leadership to pause, stop fixating on productivity and turn their focus to nurturing the human beings on their team. It means putting people first.

## MAKING REMOTE TEAMS INCLUSIVE

For remote workers, fostering inclusivity means ensuring they understand that you will make time for them whenever they need it and hop on a video call. It also means ensuring they get the same perks as the people in the office.

Every time in-office employees get a benefit that remote workers don't — from the little things like free coffee to the big stuff like 401(k)s — remote workers notice. These discrepancies add up, eventually forming a narrative in their minds that your organization does not appreciate them the way it should.



Do your utmost to treat everyone the same. If you're buying brunch for everyone at headquarters, then tell your remote workers to go out for a meal on your dime as well. If your in-office workers get a 401(k), figure out an alternative solution to help your remote workers save for their retirement, too.

Addressing implicit biases in remote work environments requires time and energy, but it's more than worth the effort. This work boils down to making your company culture healthy and safe throughout. The more you succeed in doing this, the more you will not only reduce your organization's legal jeopardy but also boost its retention rate and productivity.

### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Shiela Mie Legaspi** is the President of Cyberbacker, a provider of administrative support and virtual assistant services. Legaspi is an expert on career coaching in the remote workplace, and she leads the company to organizational excellence through her work centered around workforce experience. She excels in people management and teaches others how to lead with integrity, purpose and passion.

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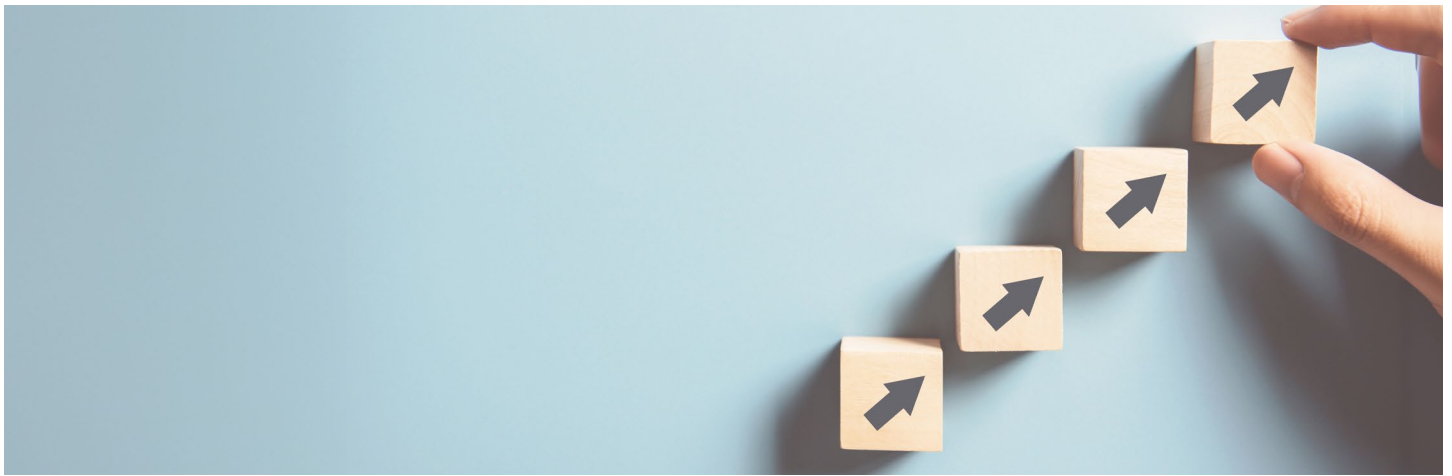


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 an HCM system must be fully  
 integrated and embraced  
 throughout the firm as a critical  
 tool for improving outcomes.  
 And it must seamlessly work  
 with other platforms to ensure  
 continuity and interoperability.”

## Human Capital Management Can Be a Strategic Value Driver

**The rise of the knowledge economy has placed a premium on human capital. As technology continues to evolve, employees’ ability to learn, collaborate and solve problems creatively becomes increasingly important. Law firms that can attract, retain and develop top talent are better positioned to innovate, adapt and thrive in an ever-changing marketplace.**

Historically, human resources has been a necessary but costly back-office function. But today, HR’s ability to drive value in professional services industries — including legal — should not be underestimated. To harness the critical skills and key capabilities needed for the future, firms that recognize their people as strategic assets can optimize operations, elevate employee and client experiences, and deliver competitive advantages.

Firms committed to making employees valued assets are investing in strategic HR programs and technology platforms supporting advancements. These programs focus on developing employee skills, fostering a positive work environment and promoting employee well-being. They also leverage tools functioning as a conduit between key people, financial, experiential and operational data that are not a burden to use. This is the essence of human capital management (HCM).

Successful law firm HCM programs have several things in common, starting with a clear alignment between HCM strategy and overall business strategy. HCM programs should be designed to support the firm’s overall goals and objectives and include:

- » A commitment to a positive and inclusive work environment valuing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI).
- » A strong focus on employee development, including investment in training employees in new skills to grow their careers.
- » Tools that facilitate connectivity with the broader firm technology landscape.



HCM systems are becoming increasingly important in professional services. Law firms can leverage them as value drivers, rather than mere line items within a technology budget.

## BUSINESS PROCESSES AND STANDARDIZATION

Law firms operate within a complex ecosystem of projects, teams and clients with success hinging on efficient processes, which can be a challenge given the variety of projects and personnel in the legal environment. HCM systems offer a methodical approach to streamlining HR processes such as recruitment, onboarding, performance management and resource allocation.

By automating and standardizing these processes across the organization, firms can achieve several benefits, including scalability as the firm grows or takes on more complex projects; efficiency, as reduced administrative overheads will allow an HR team to focus on more strategic initiatives; and more straightforward compliance with regulatory requirements.

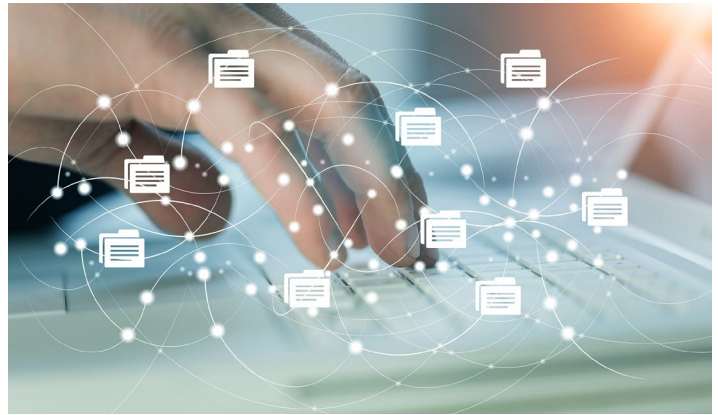
## DATA: YOUR STRATEGIC ASSET

In today's world, data can be a gold mine. But for it to be truly valuable, data must be accessible, robust and cleanly gathered. Leveraging HCM systems to collect, analyze and utilize data can lead to more informed decision-making, optimizing both talent management and project outcomes. For example, progressive firms are using DEI statistics as well as current resource allocation data to determine the best fit when applying resources to a particular client or matter.

Good data produced by HCM can be leveraged in other practical ways, including talent development and project performance. With access to data on employee skills, performance and training needs, firms can tailor development programs, fostering employee growth and expertise. And linking HCM data to project outcomes allows firms to identify high-performing teams and replicate their success, driving project efficiency and client satisfaction.

## LEVERAGING HCM AS A VALUE DRIVER

The modern professional services ecosystem is highly interconnected, with firms relying on various platforms for project management, client communication, financials and more. To deliver return on investment, an HCM system must be fully integrated and embraced throughout the firm as a critical tool for improving outcomes. And it must seamlessly work with other platforms to ensure continuity and interoperability.



Modern, cloud-based platforms with robust analytics capabilities, mobile access and scalability are best suited to support evolving needs. Once they are in place, lawyers, support staff and other employees should be empowered with self-service functionality to manage their information and development plans, fostering a sense of ownership and engagement. Collaborative leadership is required for any HCM initiative to be truly successful. Firm management must not only champion the endeavor, but also encourage real partnerships between HR and each department and practice area to align talent management with the firm's core business goals.

HCM systems are no longer mere administrative tools but have evolved into strategic assets. By optimizing processes, harnessing data and ensuring connectivity with other platforms, firms can unlock their full potential, transforming HCM systems from cost centers into value drivers.

As law firms continue to focus on operating more like businesses, more sophisticated HCM systems will become invaluable for maintaining a competitive edge and improving employee retention and satisfaction. Those who embrace this transformation will be better positioned to thrive in the dynamic landscape of legal services.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Drew Blazaitis** is Senior Vice President of Product and Strategy at Fulcrum GT. He leads the company's corporate and product strategy teams, focusing on the overall business platform, emerging technologies, go-to-market activities, partnerships and value engineering practices. Blazaitis has deep experience with cloud platforms and expertise in leveraging modern technologies like machine learning to optimize law firm operations.

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PAULA TSURUTANI

Freelance Writer and Editor

“Leaders seeking to engage young generations of employees need to create an environment that allows employees to take ownership of their career paths, make decisions and contribute ideas that foster a sense of autonomy.”

## 4 Strategies for Associate Retention

*In a competitive legal market, firms look to create an environment where associates can grow.*

**Although forward-looking law firms have often focused attention on developing formal retention initiatives, a recent survey reveals that associates are largely unimpressed by these programs.**

The survey, conducted by Major, Lindsey & Africa (MLA), revealed that 60% of associates do not feel that firms are actively trying to retain them. Of note, only 15% planned to stay for at least three years, and 25% said they did not plan to stay for more than a year.

Considering the time, money and resources needed to recruit, onboard and train new lawyers, these findings are discouraging and eye-opening. But they also present the legal industry with opportunities: In response to these findings, many firms may want to begin an honest reevaluation of their recruitment and retention strategies and firm values — especially since 90% of survey respondents said that they would definitely stay if they believed the firm was trying to retain them.

So, how can firms create an environment or culture that inspires associates to join, stay, contribute and thrive? It starts with the recruitment process.

### 1. DON'T OVERLOOK THE POWER OF THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

During the recruitment phase, firms can set the tone and make a positive first impression about their culture, expectations and willingness to support attorney career goals and advancement.

“A good recruiting endeavor starts with strong communication between the candidate and the practice group,” says Deverie Hart, Senior Manager, Lawyer Talent Acquisition

## “Hands-on participation by top firm leaders makes a strong impression especially when recruiting and retaining elite talent.”

at Davis Wright Tremaine, LLP. “We work to understand the needs and the motivation of the candidate, and make sure that their needs match ours, and that the candidate understands the [Davis Wright Tremaine] value proposition. We work hard to present an accurate picture of what it’s like to work here and share information on the specifics of working in the practice group, as well as firm policies, [diversity, equity and inclusion] efforts, pro bono and social impact, initiatives, professional development opportunities, and firm economics.”

The communication efforts continue after the attorney’s start date, when Davis Wright Tremaine activates its formal lateral integration plan. The plan, which is customized for every new attorney, is designed to ensure continuous connection and communication. Internal teams of attorneys and key staff regularly check in, respond to random questions, and offer feedback to help demystify firm protocols and ensure new attorneys get the support needed for a successful transition.

The involvement of top management signals the importance of recruitment and retention and sends a clear message to prospective hires, too. Hands-on participation by top firm leaders makes a strong impression especially when recruiting and retaining elite talent.

“Recruiting that has the support and attention of firm leadership results in the most successful recruiting,” says Ameer R. McKim, Director of Legal Recruitment and Development at Duane Morris. “Our Chairman views recruiting as a priority in his job and he spends a considerable amount of time on recruiting. The same is true of our Vice Chairman and our [Chief Operating Officer]. We want candidates to meet our team and get a sense of the firm’s culture and community. Candidates need to see how they can contribute to the firm, how they will be supported, and understand that their views and approaches will be respected. In short, they need to feel that they belong.”

## 2. FLEXIBILITY MATTERS

Availability of remote work and flexible hours are often requirements among attorney job seekers. But as pandemic concerns fade, many firms have mandated return-to-office policies, requiring a minimum three or four days in-person per week, citing the benefits of in office attendance in mentoring, team building and training.

Flexibility is key in making these policies work because hybrid schedules are highly sought after as a benefit and provide a clear recruitment advantage.

“Lawyering is hard and demanding work and hybrid schedules allow flexibility, autonomy and contribute to lawyer and staff well-being,” says McKim. “We trust our lawyers and staff to know when they can comfortably work remotely, be in the office when circumstances call for it and to be responsive no matter where they are working.”

Although Davis Wright Tremaine does not have a forced mandate, the firm encourages attorneys to be in the office two to three days each week. In office connections build community within practice groups and strengthen a strong firm culture that is a point of pride.

“Each practice group plans their own in office days in order to capitalize on in-person time together in practice group meetings; we call it ‘intentional connections,’” says Hart.

McKim emphasized that Duane Morris’ in office policy “allows for flexibility among attorneys and staff without sacrificing the importance of in office collaboration and in-person community.” She adds that the firm encourages a three-day in office schedule, so “junior lawyers can learn through observation, impromptu brainstorming sessions, and other spur of the moment opportunities that don’t exist with remote-only work.” They also expect senior lawyers to actively involve remote workers in meetings and discussions, and when assigning work.





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## “Demonstrating respect is also critical in retaining talent. Recruits want employers who allow and accept candidates as they are.”

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Some law firms have gone a step further and have taken a dramatic position regarding in office expectations. Quinn Emanuel’s website declares: “Talent mandatory. Office optional.” All U.S.-based litigators at Quinn Emanuel are “eligible to work from anywhere in the U.S. indefinitely,” including first-year associates to partners. John Quinn, the firm’s Founder and Chair, says: “Other firms can force everyone back into office towers. We’re going to focus on continuing to get the best litigators in the country to join our firm, without regard to where they live.”

### 3. GIVE PATHWAYS FOR CAREER ADVANCEMENT

Senior partners sometimes grumble about young associates who want to accelerate their advancement and career goals and seem unwilling to put in long hours and “pay their dues.”

“Leaders seeking to engage young generations of employees need to create an environment that allows employees to take ownership of their career paths, make decisions, and contribute ideas that foster a sense of autonomy,” says Lauren Winans, Chief Executive Officer of Next Level Benefits. “They need to encourage a culture where individuals feel empowered to drive their career progression.”

They also need to provide a clear rationale for project expectations. “This generation is willing to pay their dues, but they want sound reasoning behind what is asked of them,” says McKim. “If there are more efficient ways to work, they will take that path. But that doesn’t mean they aren’t willing to work hard to earn their stripes.”

Duane Morris has always supported lawyers with an entrepreneurial spirit, says McKim. To that end, associates are given early responsibility and client contact, and the firm fully supports their involvement with bar associations, firm committees and industry groups.

Offering professional development, comprehensive training and real-life experience are baseline requirements that foster and deepen engagement. Instituting recognition programs and providing timely feedback also are retention drivers. Management needs to “prioritize robust career development programs, offer continuous learning opportunities

and mentorship to empower younger employees,” says Winans. “Instant feedback and acknowledgment also motivate younger employees and contribute to a sense of accomplishment.”

### 4. TRANSPARENCY AND RESPECT GO A LONG WAY

Long-term retention also hinges on honesty about firm policies, practices and performance.

“Transparency is a key factor to our success in retaining and developing talent,” says Aglaia Galimanis, New York Manager, Lawyer Talent Acquisition at Davis Wright Tremaine, LLP. “Our firm culture prioritizes transparency of information — from an open compensation system to an open door for communication with firm leadership.” Notably, that includes sharing information about firm financials. When presenting firm updates to the entire firm, leadership will discuss performance with quantitative data that, historically, had not been shared with associates or staff.

Demonstrating respect is also critical in retaining talent. Recruits want employers who allow and accept candidates as they are.

“We have seen more candidates seek out employers who allow them to be themselves, so they don’t need to hide tattoos or identify with the expected norms,” says Galimanis. If firms tout their diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility (DEIA) initiatives, prospective hires want to see evidence about specific efforts that demonstrate tolerance. If firms say they support the advancement of women in leadership roles, they need to provide data and examples. And because law firms are notoriously hierarchical, more candidates are seeking firms that treat all employees well — and that means administrative staff, exempt and nonexempt employees, too.



Just extending some basic common courtesies can go a long way in improving retention. To that point, MLA's survey gathered a number of comments that underscored the need for firms to polish their interpersonal skills.

Helping associates feel more valued, the survey reported, could be as easy as "people saying thanks" and just "being treated like a person." As one lawyer said, "Treating associates like grown adults does more for retention than any mentorship program."

Another factor in retention? Simply listening.

"One way that law firms can boost overall associate satisfaction and retention is by listening to their concerns and addressing them as best they can," says Tina Cohen Nicol, Partner with MLA's Associate Practice Group. "(F)irms might be surprised how impactful soliciting feedback and active listening can be ... as the data shows, associates who feel their firm is making a genuine effort to keep them are more likely to stay."



### Continue the Conversation with *Legal Management Talk*

On a recent episode of *Legal Management Talk*, we chatted about the parts of leadership that can impact an employee's connection and experience at your firm. Christine Wilbur, MBA, Associate Executive Director, Orange County Bar Association and a member of ALA's Professional Development Advisory Committee, discusses what prospective or existing employees really need. From support and resources to intangible parts of good leadership, we cover how to get your staff showing up as their best selves each day so they can feel connected to their work and see how it fits into the firm's overall purpose. Tune in today at [alanet.org/podcast](http://alanet.org/podcast).

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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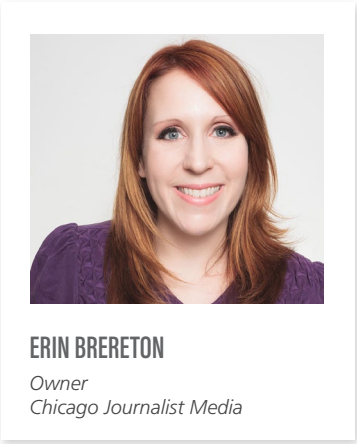
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Owner  
Chicago Journalist Media

“Adding a new practice area or location may position a law firm to better serve existing clients — and help attract new ones. Pursuing those rewards, however, can involve sizable expenses and other risks.”

# Is Your Firm Missing Out on Potential Location- or Service-Based Revenue?

*Determining the market for new offerings can be challenging — but also potentially lucrative.*

**Following the 2020 ratification of the United States-Mexico-Canada trade agreement and other developments that increased the demand for Fisher Phillips’ international labor and employment services, the firm opened three offices in Mexico in mid-2023 — its first locations outside of the United States.**

“We were working with local counsel we really liked [and] trusted, and eventually just thought it makes a lot more sense for us to be on the ground in Mexico,” says Chairman and Managing Partner John Polson. “We’ve had a lot of interest [in] some cross-border work. Over half of our largest manufacturing clients have facilities in Mexico, and we’re hoping to work with a lot more of them now.”

In the decades since its 1943 founding, Fisher Phillips has also expanded the services it provides to include resources such as an artificial intelligence (AI)-focused team that two firm members launched a couple of years ago.

“Not all of our clients have an immediate need for help,” Polson says. “But at least one watched my team speak about AI and said, ‘I’m so impressed about how robust your team is that we’d like to switch all of our [labor and employment] legal services to you.’ It’s remarkable how it gives people a vision into what we can do for them, in terms of being forward-thinking.”

Adding a new practice area or location may position a law firm to better serve existing clients — and help attract new ones. Pursuing those rewards, however, can involve sizable expenses and other risks.



If you're considering offering new operational elements, take the following factors into account to ensure you are successful.

## ADJACENT SERVICE AREAS

Pacific Cascade Legal, which initially was based in Portland, Oregon, and focused solely on family law cases, has since established other offices throughout the state and Washington — and incorporated estate planning capabilities in 2016, bankruptcy representation in 2021 and personal injury services in 2022.

"Personal injury and bankruptcy can both dovetail into family law," Founding Partner Lewis Landerholm says. "Estate planning started organically because we had family law clients with the need. Our ultimate goal was to create a dynamic where clients could come to one place for many of their legal needs, rather than having to get involved with multiple firms."

Referrals can sometimes indicate new types of work that may be profitable for a firm.

US Legal Groups, the parent company of a trio of divorce and family law firms in New Mexico, Nebraska and Colorado, hired an estate planning attorney after noticing a considerable amount of business was being handed off to other providers, says Brent Harkins, the company's Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) — who also serves as CMO for Cardinal Concepts, the law firm consulting service he co-founded with US Legal Groups' Chief Executive Officer.

"The riches are in the niches," Harkins says. "At a certain point, if your growth plan is successful, you will reach market saturation. To continue to grow and scale at an effective rate, looking at new practice areas that complement your existing services is a super easy way to acquire clients at a much lower cost per acquisition."

## INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RESOURCES

Bringing a new attorney or practice group in with specific legal experience can help a firm quickly offer new services, but it may not automatically equate to significant business growth.

Securities law firm Sichenzia Ross Ference Carmel LLP brought a team on board years ago it hoped would help build an urban commercial real estate practice. The group's work,

however, ultimately focused more on residential closings in the suburbs, according to SRFC Founding Member and Partner Gregory Sichenzia.

"Even though we do, because of our core business, have a lot of opportunities to refer commercial real estate [work], that [didn't happen]," Sichenzia says. "So that lasted a couple of years and faded away."

Creating subsets within existing practice groups — such as the blockchain and crypto specialty attorneys within SRFC's corporate finance group originated several years ago — may require less of an upfront investment.

That type of structure, Sichenzia says, can work well for emerging and in-demand business areas that may turn out to be more of a trend than a long-term legal need.

"A lot of what you see is existing practice groups developing new expertise they can try to market," he says. "[You] attend some seminars, do a few deals, call yourself an expert and put it on the website."

Partnering with providers in other locations can be a potential way to cost-effectively expand geographically. SRFC, for instance, refers business to a group of lawyers in Israel it's affiliated with, and they suggest the firm for U.S.-based work.



“People do look at us more as an international firm,” Sichenzia says. “A lot has changed since COVID. Real estate, in general, people don’t want; it’s just a cost you don’t need.”

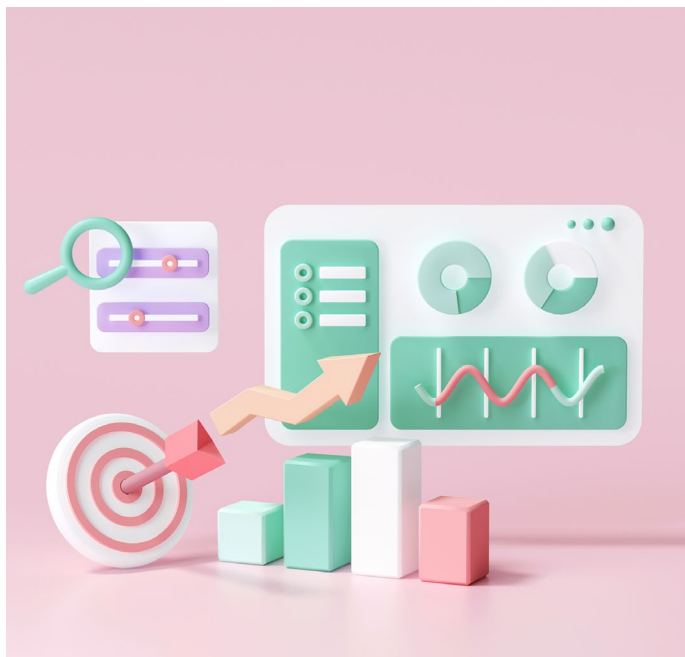
## DATA ANALYSIS

Market research can help you determine whether a certain city or state might be a good place to open an office, according to Harkins.

“If you are a higher-end legal service provider, cost is a key consideration,” he says. “[That can involve] looking into things like what is the household income of an area? How many active attorneys are currently servicing that population base? In addition to that, you can look at public court filings to get a sense of how many cases are being tried in that area.”

To estimate how many attorneys a given office can support, Harkins works backward from the number of new matters an attorney needs to add per month to maintain a full-scale roster of active cases.

“We know 50% of paid consultations convert into clients,” he says. “About 20% of our total leads turn into booked paid consults. If the average cost per lead is \$70, and we need to generate 40 per attorney, that gives us a baseline number, from a budgeting and spend perspective. We can also look at the total search volume to figure out how much of the piece of the pie are we getting. That gives us visibility into what we believe we can scale to.”



“When entering a new community, a family and divorce lawyer could potentially expand his reach by building a relationship with a local therapist or counselor and generating a two-way referral stream.”

## MULTIPLE MARKETING APPROACHES

When entering a new community, a family and divorce lawyer could potentially expand their reach by building a relationship with a local therapist or counselor and generating a two-way referral stream, Harkins says.

While US Legal Groups has employed conventional advertising methods like bus displays, the firm has found paid search advertising can be the fastest way to connect with clients as an unrecognized brand in a new market, Harkins says.

“You can work on your search engine optimization efforts by having a keyword strategy that focuses on that market,” he says. “You use a geo-modifier keyword such as Fort Collins, and [a term involving] your service; Fort Collins divorce attorney, for example — creating web content that is focused on that. That has a longer runway to getting you ranked and in front of potential prospects.”

## OPERATIONAL IMPACT

New practice groups and locations can introduce additional tasks. Pacific Cascade Legal carved out time to go over the associated workload requirements as it moved toward entering new practice areas.

“We made sure to schedule as many meetings as was needed in those early days so our bankruptcy and personal injury attorneys could work with our staff to ensure everyone felt prepared, supported and trained,” Landerholm says. “This was especially important for our intake team, so that they felt confident in what types of questions to ask new callers and how to field potential clients.”

US Legal Groups’ attorneys share client needs, deliverables and other information with leadership, which is typically conveyed to staff during a half-day training session, Harkins says.

Even with attentive preparation, though, firms may still need to tweak processes.

“We do our best to set up a best-in-class user experience, both for our internal and external team,” Harkins says. “We usually do a lunch and learn, and then do some demo trainings. From there, you have to be adaptive and make changes as you gather feedback.”

## THE CAPACITY FOR EXPANSION

Adding new services or markets can help law firms boost revenue; yet the benefits, Sichenzia says, can extend far beyond that.

“It also increases your profile and ability to become a full-service law firm, and not just a boutique firm with a couple of specialties,” he says. “The more well-rounded you can become, you have a better chance of retaining larger clients as their needs increase.”

However, when opening an office or instituting a new practice group, timing can be everything.

Harkins recommends only embarking on a new business opportunity, no matter how enticing it may seem, if you’re absolutely certain the additional service will complement — and not compete with — your current offerings.

“You can’t diminish the expertise you provide just to chase a shiny new object,” he says. “Having a pragmatic point of view is important before opening up a new practice vertical or office location. Both items will require capital investments — you want to make sure you’re not putting your core business at risk.”

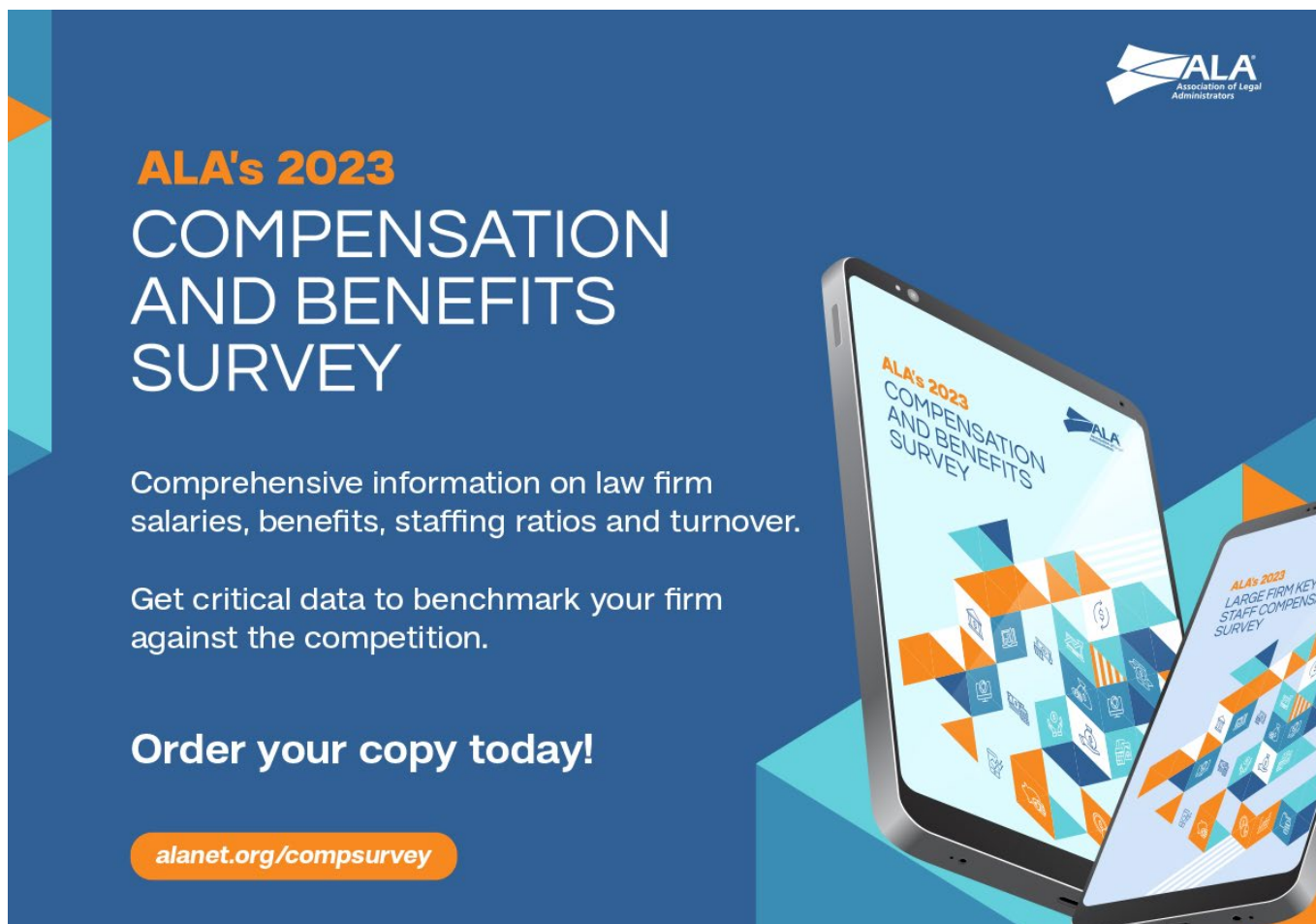
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**Erin Brereton** is a freelance writer, editor and content strategist who has written about the legal industry, business, technology and other topics for 20 years.

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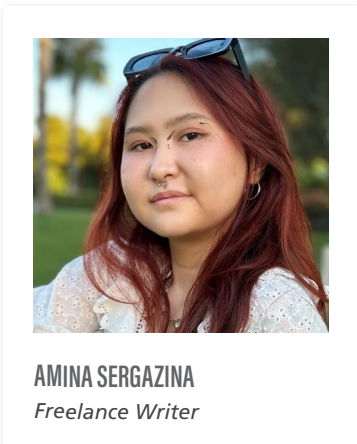
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AMINA SERGAZINA  
Freelance Writer

## Confronting Burnout's Grip on the Legal Profession

*Recognizing the signs of burnout can help spark cultural change in firms.*

**In the high-pressure world of the legal industry, where success often comes at a cost, burnout is an all-too-familiar companion.**

Coco Soodek, a seasoned corporate lawyer with 24 years of experience, shared a story that likely sounds familiar. Back in 2006, when she achieved the desired position of partner at a prestigious law firm, she found herself grappling with an unexpected adversary — burnout. However, back then she had no idea about this terminology.

"I was waking up in the middle of the night saying, 'Gosh, if I died today would that be so bad?'"

Only 18 years later did Soodek realize that her persistent fatigue was a classic symptom of burnout.

She quit the law firm and started to try herself out in all types of different fields as a writer, speaker, business coach and author. "The problem when you make partner in a big firm [is] you have to do exactly what you've been doing for so long, but you just got to do more of it. And I couldn't see the point," Soodek says.

Burnout is sneaky, and negatively impacts and amplifies preexisting issues in your life.

"[It] can open the door to other things," says Paula Davis, the Founder of Stress & Resilience Institute and a mental health specialist. "Burnout can coincide with depression; for other people, they may start to notice 'that glass of wine that I was drinking at night to just blow off steam has turned into two glasses of wine, which is now three glasses of wine, and oh no — I have found myself ... unsuspectingly potentially developing a substance use disorder.'"

“If you are experiencing ... significant problems in your relationships because of your stress, I think you then have to really step back and ask yourself some very tough questions. 'Is this the place for me? Is this the team for me? Is this industry for me? Is this what I should be doing?'”

“Leaders are notoriously well known to have psychological burnout from things like imposter syndrome or the burden of making sure they’re making the right decisions.”

## BURNOUT — NOT JUST FOR LAWYERS

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines burnout as an occupational phenomenon resulting from chronic workplace stress that remains unsuccessfully managed.

Davis, who also was a lawyer for seven years, has hosted more than 400 workshops to help people to deal with burnout. She says burnout consists of three elements:

1. Chronic physical and emotional exhaustion
2. Chronic cynicism
3. “Why bother? Who cares?” mentality

She also highlights the importance of differentiating burnout and stress: The feeling of all three is what causes burnout. Someone who is stressed can feel these symptoms as well, but burnout is different by the chronicity of these symptoms.

It’s not just the lawyers experiencing it. Stressed leadership trickles down to all staff, making for an environment ripe for burnout.

“Leaders are notoriously well known to have psychological burnout from things like imposter syndrome or the burden of making sure they’re making the right decisions,” says Nancy Morris, a certified business psychologist with more than 25 years of experience.

In 2023, a report titled the State of Wellbeing in Law surveyed 3,814 attorneys and professionals from six large firms in the United States. Of that sample, 17% said they don’t have the energy to pursue what’s important to them by the end of the work week. Furthermore, 52% of employees reported taking at least one day off in the last three months due to mental health difficulties.

“The research is telling us right now that burnout at the leader level is the highest and fastest rising group right now,” Davis says. She says potential reasons for the fast-rising numbers can be the last several years that were particularly challenging with COVID-19, lockdown, economic uncertainty and artificial intelligence putting strains on a person’s mental health.

## ANTIDOTES FOR BURNOUT

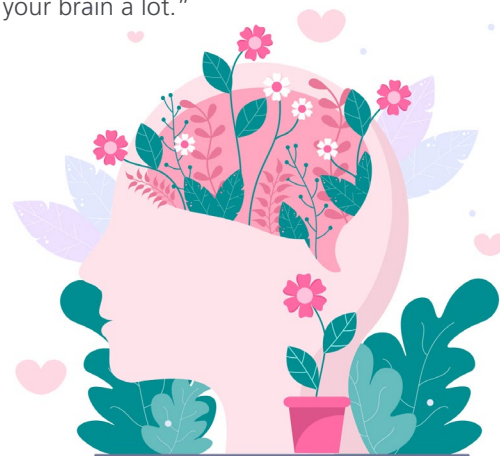
Experiencing these feelings doesn’t necessarily mean you need a career change. Davis notes that burnout exists on a spectrum. But it does indicate it’s time to evaluate the source of the burnout.

“If you are experiencing ... significant problems in your relationships because of your stress, I think you then have to really step back and ask yourself some very tough questions. ‘Is this the place for me? Is this the team for me? Is this industry for me? Is this what I should be doing?’” Davis says.

Morris identifies five types of rest that are necessary for a person:

1. **Creative Rest:** This involves using creativity, like painting or writing, to induce a sense of calmness.
2. **Physical Rest:** This is about taking breaks and ensuring good sleep for physical recovery.
3. **Spiritual Rest:** This involves finding calm and peace through spiritual or religious beliefs.
4. **Performance Rest:** This is about taking a complete break from work and electronics to relieve performance pressure.
5. **Sensory Rest:** This involves reducing external noise and sensory input to help the system relax.

“The most important is psychological rest,” Morris says. “The idea that you’ve got too many mental tasks going on, you’re constantly thinking about work or you’re constantly disrupted thinking about family matters, or you’re constantly really using your brain a lot.”



Morris also cites self-awareness as an antidote for burnout — being able to identify and release what parts of work can be reduced. And while it might be tempting to quit, it might help to step away from work to evaluate what you need first.

“I’m a big believer in sabbaticals. I don’t think quitting is always the right solution,” Morris says.

For the short-term, Morris suggests firm leadership needs to measure its ability to provide all five types of the rest mentioned above. The long-term solution is to create access to these five types of rest — and not just as a policy on paper, but as a culture that prioritizes it.

After decades marked by burnout, Soodek ventured into a different career realm, only to find her way back to the legal landscape with renewed vigor. Reflecting on her professional evolution, she says that a friend’s inquiry about art law became the spark that reignited her passion.

Leveraging her enthusiasm for business law and her extensive contacts in the art industry, Soodek reengaged with clients, ultimately founding Seasongood Law in 2017. Her success in the legal arena now hinges on a mindful alignment with personal values, a discerning client selection process and a deliberate detachment from profit-induced stress.

“I do the same work now. I just do it in a different way, and I love it,” Soodek says.



## Get Certified with Mental Health First Aid

Conversations about mental health can be difficult to start. But just as CPR helps even those without clinical training to assist an individual having a heart attack, Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) prepares participants to interact with a person experiencing a mental health challenge or crisis. Mental Health First Aiders learn a five-step action plan that guides them through the process of reaching out and offering appropriate support. ALA is offering this training from the National Council for Mental Wellbeing in 2024. Learn more: [alanet.org/mhfa](http://alanet.org/mhfa).

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Amina Sergazina** (they/she) is an immigrant from Kazakhstan who is passionate about justice. They believe in power of journalism and view it not just as a tool for awareness but also as one to change the world for the better. In 2018 they, along with their mother and little brother, immigrated to the United States in Chicago. Sergazina grew up on American movies and always dreamed of living in the U.S. They were granted a full ride scholarship to Columbia College Chicago and graduated in May of 2023 with a bachelor’s in journalism.

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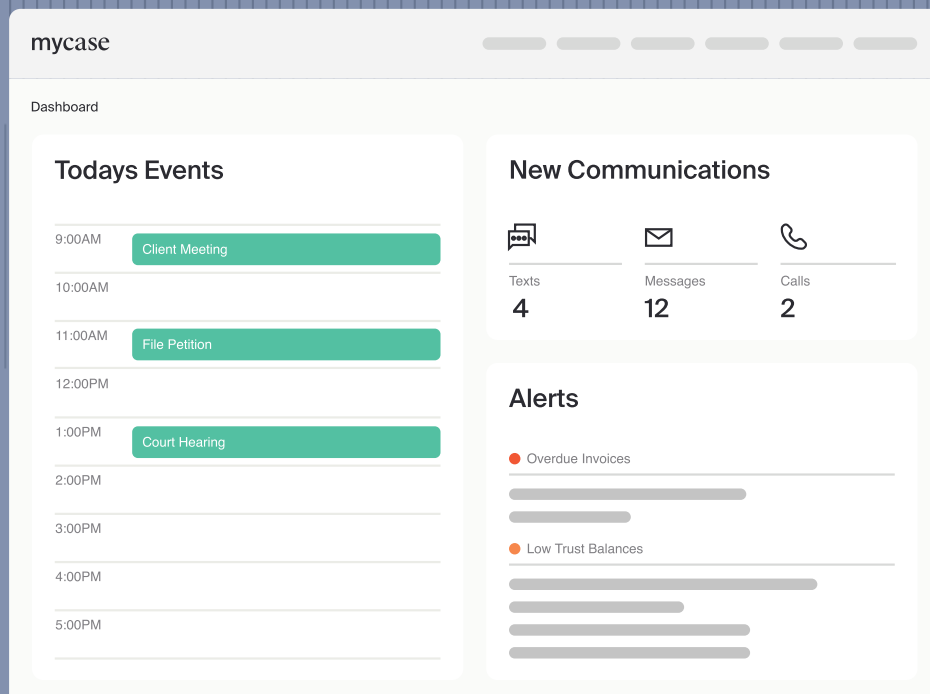


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## Invoice to Cash: The Billing Innovation Saving Firms Millions

**In 2023, collection cycles lengthened by 5% and, in fact, this was the second consecutive year firms have experienced this trend in collections.**

Should this trend be treated as a cause for alarm or a mere cost of doing business?

The majority of firms (80%) and industry analysts (including Citi Hildebrandt Client Advisory and Thomson Reuters and Georgetown Law State of the Legal Market) find the business impact of lengthening collections cycles to be so significant that fixing this problem is uniformly cited as a top strategic priority for firms of all sizes in 2024.

“  
But more and more, firms are understanding that it's the firm's ability to convert its agreed rates through billing and collections to collection realization that really counts. So why is it such a challenge for firms to solve it?”

Here's why this is so important for law firms. For starters, collection cycle length correlates directly with write-offs: As the collection duration increases, the greater likelihood a write-off will occur and at a greater rate. That is because as the length of the collection delay increases, firms' main go-to resource to accelerate payment is to offer the client a write-off in return for speedier payment; 80%-plus of something now is better than 100% of nothing, goes the logic.

This means that — through the well-used mechanism of write offs — there is a direct equation connecting the length of the collection cycle to realization. And here's what keeps chief financial officers and managing and equity partners awake at night: A mere 0.1% improvement in realization in a 100-attorney firm can result in \$900,000 in additional collections. This significant revenue quickly becomes even more significant as it multiplies exponentially with the number of attorneys.

These quick calculations shine a light on the weakening strategy of just focusing on raising rates to impact firm profitability, which has been the case for most of the past decade. In fact, when applying the classic RULES (rates, utilization, leverage, expenses and speed of billing) framework for professional services firms, it is rates — more

broadly their impact on driving revenue — which have been the most highly functional lever for law firms to positively influence their profit outlook.

But more and more, firms are understanding that it's the firm's ability to convert its agreed rates through billing and collections to collection realization that really counts. So why is it such a challenge for firms to solve it?

## THE PROBLEM WITH LAW FIRM BILLING AND COLLECTIONS

Law firms face tremendous challenges efficiently managing the bill-to-collections lifecycle. It's a process mired in manual effort, driven by multiple single-point technology solutions that were built to solve only incremental pieces of this lifecycle.

These point solutions are often inconsistent and disaggregated, which causes significant disruption of the billing or collections lifecycle, rather than facilitating or accelerating. In fact, if the law firm does not use integrated tools, data flows, workflow execution or reporting, the overall process is typically far from optimized and efficient. This means that the technology spend is often wasted, with low return on investment (ROI).

To wit, preparing bills is simply painful for firms. Typically generating multiple bill formats, firms rely heavily on the manual efforts of diligent internal staff. These teams work hard, and have critical knowledge and understanding, but the overall process can be inefficient.

It doesn't get better at bill delivery. With most firms relying on paper and PDF bills, delivery is a cumbersome, manual, email-driven exercise — with no visibility of what's happening on the client side. It's a proverbial black box where billing professionals have no insights or information as to whether the bill was even received or viewed by the client — the only option is to wait.

And wait they do, which is how we get to collection cycles lengthening. To manage it, firms rely on manual tracking, review, escalation and follow up from finance staff — and those reminder emails could be clients' least favorite part of the relationship as well.

Until, finally, there's reconciliations. Clients sending paper checks or unlabeled direct electronic transfers creates more overhead for finance teams responsible for tracking collections in the firm financial management system, and firm management asking for real-time updates on cash flow doesn't help stress levels.

## A POTENTIAL SOLUTION: INVOICE TO CASH

Gartner defines the invoice-to-cash applications market as cloud-based applications that “enable corporate controllers to automatically manage collections and apply customer payments to invoices.” What invoice-to-cash applications solved is to put the entire billing and collections cycle under a single pane of glass to typically gather, disseminate, track and analyze data from and to internal and external sources and make invoice-to-cash processes “more efficient and effective, including managing and monitoring deductions, disputes and credit risk. They also typically can ensure invoices are delivered to customers and that customers have options to pay them.”

In a law firm, this would mean providing lawyers and operational leaders with reports and data on key metrics, including billing and collections activity, status, forecasts and more. It would enable firms to report in near real time on key metrics, and even develop benchmarks and standards to manage escalations, and/or identify areas for policy and process improvement, all while eliminating accounts receivable leakages through deep automation and predictive insights.

Firms are writing off \$100 billion in revenue every year across 120 million invoices processed at the top 1,000 firms. The business case couldn't be clearer as to why firms across the board are prioritizing modernizing the billing and collections cycle in 2024. As the pace of business accelerates, law firm billing and collections need to catch up to other verticals. When was the last time an organization (outside of legal) did an activity this frequently with this much at stake and had zero learnings from it? It's simply a position firms cannot afford to keep moving forward.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Milan Bobde** is Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Oddr, an AI-powered invoice-to-cash platform. Bobde has nearly two decades of experience working with law firms and helping them transform and streamline their financial, risk and operational processes. He is passionate about elevating customer experience through an innovative and transformative product approach. Bobde has a proven track record of launching new products and delivering aggressive revenue growth for a diverse product portfolio. He successfully translates corporate vision into products that have helped many law firms grow their business while substantially lowering their operating costs..



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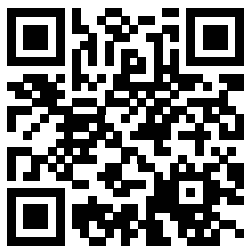


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**DAWN ANDERSON, CLM, JD, PHR, SPHR**

*Chief Human Resources Officer  
Butler Snow*

“  
The first step is to figure out what you need. As we grow older, that gets harder. Our needs become more complex, and we stop listening to our bodies.”

## When It Comes to Taking Care of Our Wellness, We Can Learn a Lot from Toddlers

**I should have paid more attention to my son as a toddler. I could have learned some tricks that saved me time and possibly a pharmacy bill for ulcer and high blood pressure medicine.**

Think about it: Toddlers are generally very transparent about their needs. When they are hungry, they let you know. When they are sleepy, they get cranky. When they are tired, they stop. They can surrender themselves to an exclusive focus on what brings them joy. When something does not carry joy, they abandon it. Maybe we could apply some of these same principles to our lives.

The first step is to figure out what you need. As we grow older, that gets harder. Our needs become more complex, and we stop listening to our bodies.

Self-awareness, then, is critical. Evaluate how you are feeling and responding to situations several times each day. Pay attention to the signals from your body. Are your shoulders tense? Do you have stomach pain or a headache? Now, identify what is contributing to that visceral response. You can take some defensive moves once you know what triggers that natural reaction. It might be as simple as blocking time on your calendar to focus on work assignments without interruptions. Maybe it is setting a reminder on your calendar to take a short walk or breathe.

Yes, I said breathe. Breathing exercises can actually help you pause from an emotional response to a situation to review it objectively and make a reasoned, logical decision about your response. The technique of using focused breathing to invoke a relaxation response was first identified and explained by cardiologist Dr. Herbert Benson in the 1970s to manage stress and improve personal health.



Slow, deep breathing stimulates activity in the vagus nerve, decreasing blood pressure, relaxing muscles and slowing the heart rate. There are free apps and YouTube videos available to help you practice focused breathing.

Your attitude often drives outcome. Each day I deliberately choose gratitude and positivity. I still get frustrated, discouraged and even angry. But when I pause to step back from those feelings, I can decide how to respond more effectively.

It may be how I am wired, but I recognize if I give into my feelings and wallow in them, that decision does not move me forward or help the situation. It often makes it worse. Choosing positivity and practicing gratitude have helped me to respond better and manage my life more effectively.

## A WELL-BALANCED LIFE

The Gallup Organization identified five categories that contribute to a well-balanced life.

### 1. Career

Does your current job or career bring personal satisfaction and a sense of purpose? In your job, when do you feel most satisfied and challenged? What are you doing? What aspects of your work do you struggle with or not like? When do you feel most anxious? What is contributing to that feeling? Is it the environment or the workflow?

Once you've identified areas to better meet your needs, try out some methods that you have control over. For instance, if you're most engaged working on a team, identify how to connect more — either by going into the office or using virtual meetings. If instead constant interruptions create frustration, establish a dedicated workspace at home or work at the office.

Be flexible as you figure out what works for you. You may need to tweak your plan, so take a pulse check weekly to see what is and is not working and adjust as needed.

### 2. Social

We lead hectic lives, which creates a high need for flexibility. For me, daily group texts among my core friends keep me connected. Meeting over breakfast or lunch combine practical with social. Whatever it is, build your social network and nurture those relationships. Be willing to be the connector and most importantly, be available.

### 3. Financial

Debt and other financial concerns can significantly impact your overall well-being in mental and physical ways. Take positive steps to understand your financial situation. Establish a reasonable budget, stick to it and set financial goals. Sources such as the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau offer free resources to help you understand finances and make better decisions.

### 4. Physical

Exercise, sleep and diet significantly impact your overall wellness and your ability to handle stress. Schedule time to get active, replace poor eating habits with healthy ones, and learn how much sleep you need.

We all know that lack of sleep can lead to disastrous results in adults (and toddlers). While the adult version of a meltdown may not include a tantrum, sleep and mental health are intertwined.

### 5. Community Engagement

Also correlates to the overall well-being of an individual. This may manifest in volunteer work in your community or attending local events or festivals. Community involvement fosters a sense of belonging and offers ways to give back to society.

While my two-year-old son may not have articulated it clearly, he taught me some core essentials. Do what makes you happy. Make friends. Be a friend. Get enough sleep. Rest when you are tired. Eat what is good for you. Do for others. And most importantly — stop for a minute and take care of yourself.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Dawn Anderson, CLM, JD, PHR, SPHR**, is the Chief Human Resources Officer at Butler Snow, a national law firm that offers a full range of business law and litigation services. After 20+ years of leadership at large corporations, she embarked on overhauling the human resources function in the legal industry into a strategic role. As a licensed attorney with a corporate background, she brings a unique combination of experience and perspective and is passionate about developing people by leveraging talent, creating accountability and building resources to deliver long-term results for an organization. Anderson is a member of the Atlanta chapter, and her certifications include lean six sigma, Strategic Human Resources Profession, Certified Legal Manager, Organizational Development and Design, and most recently, Mental Health First Aid.

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# Time Kettle’s T1 Mini Ushers in the Future of Language Translation

In the ever-evolving world of tech gadgets, where each new release promises to revolutionize our lives, Bill and Phil recently laid their tech-savvy hands on the T1 Mini handheld translator from Time Kettle. Known for pushing the boundaries of communication technology, Time Kettle’s latest offering aims to shrink the world a bit more, making language barriers as obsolete as last year’s smartphone model. But does it deliver? Or is it destined to join the graveyard of promising but ultimately underwhelming tech toys?

“Whether you’re a globetrotting adventurer, a business traveler or just a tech enthusiast eager to try the latest gadgets, the T1 Mini is a worthy addition to your tech arsenal.”

Right out of the box, the T1 Mini strikes you as a gadget that James Bond might use if he needed to negotiate with Q in multiple languages. Compact, sleek and with a design that screams “I belong in the future,” the T1 Mini fits comfortably in the palm of your hand or pocket, ready to be whipped out at a moment’s notice to dazzle friends or foes with its language recognition prowess.

## WHAT WE LOVE

**Ease of Use:** The T1 Mini is as intuitive as it gets. With a simple setup process that even the tech-challenged can navigate with ease, it’s ready to go in minutes. Bill, with his notorious impatience for lengthy setups, was particularly pleased.

**Accuracy:** The accuracy of translations is where the T1 Mini truly shines. Conversations flow smoothly, with minimal lag. It’s not perfect, but it’s close enough to work magic in real-world scenarios.

**Portability:** Its diminutive size makes the T1 Mini the perfect travel companion. Phil, who once tried to use a bulky, first-generation translation device in a crowded Berlin subway (to comical effect), appreciates the discreet nature of the T1 Mini.

## QUIBBLES

**Battery Life:** While not a dealbreaker, the battery life leaves a bit to be desired. During extended testing, we found ourselves reaching for the charger more often than we'd like, a minor inconvenience that feels a bit old school in the era of all-day battery life.

**Connectivity:** In areas with spotty Wi-Fi or cellular data, the T1 Mini can stumble, struggling to maintain the seamless translation it promises. While it's a common issue among similar devices, it's a reminder that we're not quite in the utopian future of universal, uninterrupted communication — yet.

## BEYOND THE T1 MINI: EXPLORING TIME KETTLE'S ARSENAL

Time Kettle doesn't put all its eggs in one basket. Their product lineup is as diverse as the languages their devices translate. The WT2 Edge, with its earpiece design, offers an immersive translation experience that feels like having a UN interpreter whispering in your ear.

Meanwhile, the M3 Translator Earbuds double as a high-quality audio device, proving that utility and entertainment can

coexist harmoniously. For those who prefer a more traditional approach, the Zero Translator is a card-sized wonder that works wonders in a pinch.

## VERDICT: TO BUY OR NOT TO BUY?

The T1 Mini from Time Kettle is a testament to how far we've come in breaking down language barriers. While it's not without its flaws, the sheer magic of facilitating real-time conversations across languages outweighs the minor grievances. Whether you're a globetrotting adventurer, a business traveler or just a tech enthusiast eager to try the latest gadgets, the T1 Mini is a worthy addition to your tech arsenal.

In the end, Bill and Phil agree: The T1 Mini is not just another gadget — it's a glimpse into a future where language no longer divides us. And that's a future we're excited to be a part of, one translated conversation at a time.

### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**William Ramsey**, Partner at Neal & Harwell, and **Phil Hampton**, Consulting President of LogicForce, are best known for *The Bill and Phil Show*.

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



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# Anniversaries, Awards and Appointments

## Members on the Move »



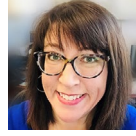
**Rachel M. Alm, CCLS, PHRca, SHRM**, a member of the Orange County Chapter, is now Director of Operations at PlagerSchack LLP in Huntington Beach, California.



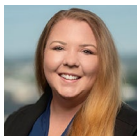
**Laura L. Cassaro**, a member of the Kentucky Chapter, is now Office Administrator at Stites & Harbison, PLLC, in Louisville, Kentucky.



**Rebecca McNew, SHRM-CP**, a member of the Greater Los Angeles Chapter, is now Office Manager at Holland & Knight LLP in Newport Beach, California.



**Christine R. Procnuiar**, a member of the Iowa Chapter, is now Office Administrator at Fredrikson & Byron, PA, in Des Moines, Iowa.



**Mindy L. Rawls**, a member of the Middle Tennessee Chapter, is now Office Administrator at Bradley Arant Boult Cummings LLP in Nashville, Tennessee.



**Lora Wegman**, a member of the Gateway Chapter, is now Marketing and Communications Director at Thompson Coburn, LLP, in St. Louis, Missouri.



## Sending Our Condolences

ALA mourns the passing in March of Past President Jack Kaufman, who was ALA's second President, serving from 1975–1977. During his career, Jack was a lawyer, credit analyst and firm administrator before co-founding a legal management consulting company that he ran for more than 20 years. He was also a member of the Cleveland and American Bar Associations and a fellow at the College of Law Practice Management. To read more about Jack, check out the *LM Extra* about his contributions to ALA. His funeral was also live-streamed and can be found on YouTube. ALA extends our deep appreciation for Jack's many years of service to the Association and our condolences to his family, friends and former colleagues.

## Congrats Are in Order

In honor of Women's History Month last month, Steptoe & Johnson, PLLC, recognized women attorneys and staff members at their firm who demonstrate leadership, determination, advocacy and other core values. The list includes Jennifer Trippett, the firm's Director of Professional and Staff Development and also a member of ALA's Professional Development Advisory Committee. Congratulations to Jennifer and her recognized colleagues!





# What's Happening at Headquarters

## Focus on Wellness at ALA's Annual Conference

By now, you've seen the agenda of educational offerings and exciting networking events at ALA's Annual Conference & Expo, May 19–22, in Aurora, Colorado. Here's some of the wellness events you may want to check out to start your day right or take a breather from the busy conference schedule. Check out the full list at [alaannualconf.org](http://alaannualconf.org).

- » **Yoga:** Start your day with the restorative benefits of Vinyasa yoga led by fellow ALA member and an AFAA-certified fitness professional, Andrea Everage, CLM, MHR, PHR, SHRM-CP.
- » **Morning Run:** Start your conference day on the right foot with an invigorating morning run. Lace up your sneakers and join fellow attendees to breathe in the morning air and explore the scenic surroundings. There is a 5K and 1 mile running route available.
- » **Quiet Room:** Take the time to decompress from the hustle and bustle in the Quiet Room, offering comfortable seating, low lighting, and healthy snacks and drinks.
- » **Silent Book Club:** This nontraditional "book club" has no required reading or book discussion. Instead, it's the perfect opportunity to enjoy the company of others without the pressure of conversation. Simply bring a book settle in for some uninterrupted reading while in the presence of others.



## Support a Good Cause by Donating to the Foundation's 2024 Silent Auction

The Foundation of ALA is now accepting donations through **May 6** for the 2024 Silent Auction, taking place at ALA's Annual Conference! If you are interested in donating, you must submit a donation form with a description of the item or professional service, along with a photo or scanned image of the item. The donor will hold the item until the conclusion of the Silent Auction and send it directly to the auction winner using the details provided by the Foundation. Learn more info by going to [alanet.org/foundation/silent-auction](http://alanet.org/foundation/silent-auction).





## Mental Health First Aid Is Back!

ALA is pleased to once again offer the Mental Health First Aid Certification Program (MHFA) in 2024. MHFA is an interactive training course comprised of 2 hours of self-paced content (to be completed online independently prior to the live session) and one 6.5-hour instructor-led session over Zoom. The one-day training program will be offered on several Fridays in the **spring and summer only!** Due to the interactive nature of this course, there is a maximum of 30 participants per offering. Check out the dates at [alanet.org/mhfa](http://alanet.org/mhfa).

## Unlock Your Firm's Potential Through Cash Flow

Managing cash flow effectively is not just about maintaining financial health; it's about unlocking growth and opportunity. This webinar — led by CollBox's Matt Darnier — is designed for legal professionals seeking to transform their financial operations and presents a comprehensive approach to improving law firm cash flow by implementing accounts receivable best practices and leveraging the latest technology to effectively reduce collections lockup, take administrative burden off your team and set your firm up for financial success. Register now to join on **April 24 at 2 p.m. Central** by going to [alanet.org/upcoming-webinars](http://alanet.org/upcoming-webinars).



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