

June / July 2020
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HUMAN RESOURCES



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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By Kelly Thaumert, CLM, ALAMN President



When I started to think about writing the President's Column for this edition of *The Verdict*, I was thinking this year was so different than years past. I was quickly corrected when I went back to this edition last year. I was reminded

that April 2019, well at least the ALA Conference in April, started out a little turbulent. Many flights were cancelled due to the bad weather in Texas. I remember being in Texas already when I learned that many of the Minnesota Chapter members, and many other members from around the country, were delayed by hours, if not days. The ALAMN fiscal year did not start out so well in 2019.

Let's fast forward one year. Here we are in 2020 using #AllInThisTogether because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Who would have predicted that most of us would be working from home, coming up with plans to return employees back to the office, disinfecting the office every two hours, re-learning how to wash our hands for at least 20 seconds, covering our cough and sneezes, and staying at least 6 feet from one another? Even though we never expected things to get like this, haven't we been planning for this throughout our careers?

In my position as firm administrator, I wear many hats. I know so many of you wear just as many hats. With this current pandemic we are writing or updating our business continuity and disaster recovery plans. We are worrying about our employees and how to keep them safe. We are working with vendors to clean our office spaces. We are searching for places to purchase hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes. We are watching webinar after webinar after webinar to stay up-to-date with everything. I don't know about you, but I have a standing appointment with Governor Walz every weekday at 2 p.m. We are going one direction, and we are quickly rerouted to go a different direction. (In my mind I am replaying the *Friends* episode ... "PIVOT!" I realize they were moving a couch, and we are dealing with COVID, but this still came to mind. While we hoped this would never happen, we are living it today.

During a time like this it makes me feel very lucky to be part of this great organization called ALA. I learn so much from my fellow members ... whether I am watching an ALA Hangout on Zoom, answering an e-mail that came through our list serve, or reaching out to other members to ask them what they are doing. I feel like I am able to stay on top of everything that is happening because I have a virtual team of thousands, and not just my team of one. I have always known how important this association is to me and my job, but at times like this, I realize how much more important it is to be part of ALA and ALAMN.

We may not be meeting in person, or attending the annual conference, but we are still here. Since my time started with ALAMN, I got used to going downtown for many meetings. Sometimes I would go downtown as many as eight times each month. At times this was taxing, but now I miss it. I miss attending meetings. I miss attending roundtable discussions. But, more than anything, I miss seeing all of our members. Sure, I have spoken to them on conference calls, or I have seen them on Zoom calls, but it just is not the same as being in the same room. I know I am not alone in this.

When this pandemic is over and we go back to "normal," let's all plan to attend general meetings, committee meetings, SIG meetings, community service events, socials, etc. (By the way, our summer social is planned for July 16.) After all, we are #AllInThisTogether.



ALAMN MASTER CALENDAR

ALAMN leadership has created a master calendar for 2020. This calendar includes the all-member events and special interest group meetings. Service committee meetings are not included on the master calendar and will continue to be scheduled by service committee chair(s). You will notice fewer events on the ALAMN master calendar. Our goal is to elevate the quality of and attract more attendees to each event.

Be sure to check out the Full Calendar on our ALAMN website for more details about upcoming meetings and events!

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALAMN Post-Holiday Party • Small/Medium • Facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual ALAMN Education Conference • HR • Finance • Facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Meeting 1 • Facilities • IP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership Orientation • Large Law Firm Chief Officers
MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large Law Firm Chief Officers • Community Service Event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Meeting 2 • Large Law Firm Chief Officers • Facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALAMN Summer Social • Large Law Firm Chief Officers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Meeting 3 • HR • IP
SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salary Survey Results • Finance • Facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALAMN Fall Social • Diversity & Inclusion Educational Event • HR • Facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law Firm Leaders Networking Event • Finance • Small/Medium • Facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities • IP

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.

HOW ARE YOUR EMPLOYEES?

By Jessica Johnson, Communications Director



Life has changed drastically during the pandemic for all of us. It seems overnight we became a remote workforce, whether we were prepared or not. This sent many employers scrambling for appropriate equipment and implementing new policies and procedures to situate employees for remote work. Employees are the backbones of our firms, and the need to take care of them, be flexible, and remain positive is of utmost importance.

While working remotely may be the norm for many of us, it's a new experience for many of our employees. This brought the question of what we can do to make sure it is a smooth transition and keep our employees motivated and productive. The following are a few ideas to keep your employees engaged and motivated as we navigate through these odd times.

Communicate. Communicate, communicate, and ... communicate. This is the most important tool in your toolbelt. When you aren't seeing your employees face-to-face daily, communicating is especially important. These are tough times for employees and employers alike, and touching base with employees is crucial. Communicating clear expectations and goals is vital. Checking in on your employees or simply saying hi is powerful.

Flexibility. Employees appreciate the added flexibility while juggling kids at home, distance learning, household chores, and any other personal commitments. Having additional flexibility motivates employees.

Collaboration. Include your employees in different ways. Technology has opened the doors for collaboration while working remotely. Give your employees quick, easy communication tools to collaborate internally. Make it fun!

Team Building. Host team building activities. Anything that brings your team together: a Zoom happy hour, a trivia game, a dance party, get-to-know your team icebreakers, scavenger hunt, find your doppelganger ... the options are endless. Put on your creativity cap and come up with something fun to engage and bring your team together.

Recognition. When we aren't seeing each other in the hallways or common areas, it's easy to let that recognition of a job well done slide by without notice. Send a handwritten note to the employee's house or a firm-wide email when recognition is warranted. This goes a long way in making employees feel valued and appreciated.

Work/Life Balance. It can be difficult to differentiate work life from home life when "going to work" consists of setting up at the dining room table or your home office down the hall. The short commute is nice, but where are we drawing the line of working and not working? Creating boundaries is helpful. Encourage employees to work their normal hours, if possible. Make sure employees know it's still okay to take time off.

Make sure working remotely is a positive experience for your employees. Ask them what is working and what is not. Learn and improve on things that aren't working. When employees have the appropriate tools, they are empowered and engaged.

ALAMN CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JUNE 2020

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

JUNE

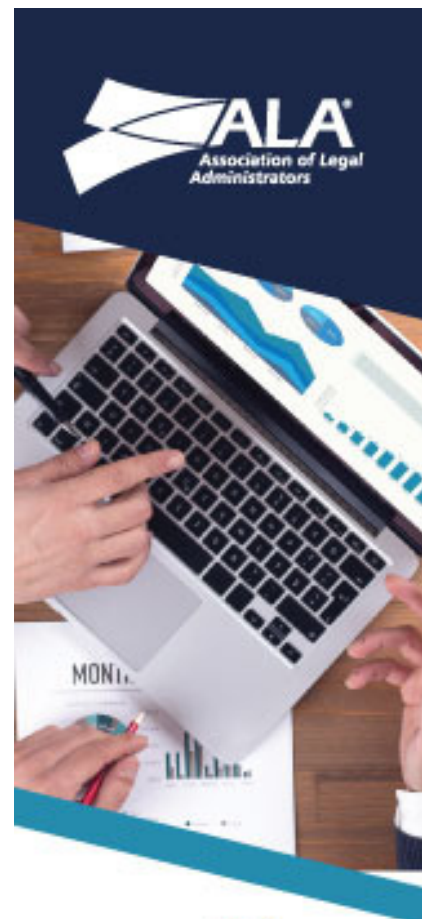
- 3 Large Law Firm Chief Officers Meeting**
11:00 am – 1:00 pm
Location: Virtual
- 9 General Meeting**
11:30 am – 1:00 pm
Location: Virtual
- 10 Community Service – Simpson House**
5:00 pm – 8:00 pm
Location: Simpson Shelter
- 16 Facilities SIG Meeting**
12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Location: Virtual

JULY 2020

SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
28	29	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

JULY

- 1 Large Law Firm Chief Officers Meeting**
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
Location: Virtual
- 16 ALAMN Summer Social**
4:00 pm
Location: Brit's Pub
- 22 Community Service – Hope Lodge Bags**
11:30 pm – 1:30 pm
Location: Hope Lodge



Tune in to Enhance Your Knowledge and Earn CE Credits

***PLEASE NOTE:**
SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP (SIG) ATTENDEES NEED NOT BE ALAMN MEMBERS

alanet.org/webinars

TOP TIPS TO BOOST EMPLOYEE MORALE DURING A PANDEMIC

By Kathy Knipp

Most of us, I could assume, have heard of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs at one time or another. For those of you who have not, Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a theory by Abraham Maslow, which puts forward that people are motivated by five basic categories of needs: physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization. In this theory, higher needs in the hierarchy begin to emerge when people feel they have sufficiently satisfied the previous need.

In a webinar hosted by Namely, Blueboard, and OneWorkplace, they suggested that employees' needs have changed a bit due to the current pandemic situation. The updated hierarchy of needs are as follows:

- Health and Wellness
- Safety and Security
- Social Belonging and Connectedness
- Confidence and Contribution
- Inspiration and Transformation

Many companies these days want to know how to boost employee morale; however, if they do not take care of employees' health and wellness as well as their safety and security first, nothing they do from a morale standpoint will matter.

From a health and wellness standpoint, employers need to ensure that employees' physical and psychological health are taken care of. As employers, taking time to tend to this area shows that you truly care about and value your employees. Employees who feel supported and trust their leaders are more engaged and motivated.

Offering mental health resources and encouraging employees to take Mental Health Days are key to helping employees through this challenging time. Other unique ways that employers can contribute to employees' health and wellbeing include offering regular online yoga and meditation classes or allowing employees to lead fitness classes for other groups of employees through online platforms, such as Zoom.

When employees are struggling with fear and uncertainty, their psychological state suffers. People want to know that their organizations are actively thinking about a clear path forward that keeps them safe, productive, and connected. The more employers can be transparent with their plans and the financial health of the company, the better employees will feel about their safety and security.

If they are not already doing this, employers need to be consistently communicating with their employees on a weekly basis. Employers can use websites such as Slido to allow employees to ask questions as they arise, and leadership can address these questions during All Employee Meetings. If you have an Employee Assistance Program, make sure that employees are aware of it and how to access it. Leadership should also comment on the financial health of the company during All Employee Meetings. They can address any key client adds or team successes, current revenue numbers, and long-term financial plans.

Once these key areas are taken care of, employers can focus on the fun stuff – the stuff that connects employees together. It is human nature to need and want to develop deep human relationships. In the current work-from-home environment, employers need to be creative and purposeful in how they approach this area.

If you utilize technology such as Slack or Microsoft Teams, you can publicly recognize employee birthdays, anniversaries, and key accomplishments for employees. Some employers have created a #Sanity slack channel where they encourage employees to share tips and tricks on things that have been successful to keep them sane. For employees who love music, allow an employee to create a Spotify play list with their favorite songs from their favorite genre. You can send this playlist to your employee base and encourage interested employees to listen to the playlist on the same day. To exhibit cultural

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TOP TIPS TO BOOST EMPLOYEE MORALE DURING A PANDEMIC CONT.

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differences or personalities in your employee base, allow employees to host cooking classes with other employees through Zoom or the company's Instagram page. That employee would send out the recipe and supplies list, lead the class, and your employees will be cooking and sharing a meal together at the same time. Finally, there are several online games that can be played with groups, such as bingo, trivia, and scavenger hunts.

There is an old saying that states, "People don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care... about them." By implementing even a few of these ideas into your workplace, you will have a team that is productive, connected, and safe.



About the Author:

Kathy Knipp is the Human Resources Manager for BGM Group and all its affiliated entities. In this role, she oversees all internal Human Resource activities as well as the HR Outsourcing services. Kathy received her Bachelor's Degree in Human Resource Management from Metropolitan State University in 2000 and completed coursework towards a Master of Art degree in Human Resource Management from St. Mary's University. She is a member of the Society of Human Resource Management and the Twin Cities SHRM organization and holds both PHR and SHRM-CP certifications.

Kathy has over 24 years of overall Human Resource experience in the Secondary Education, Hospitality, Dental and Healthcare, and Professional Services industries. She has significant experience in recruitment and talent management, employee relations, employment law, training and development, compensation and benefits, conflict resolution, mergers and acquisitions, HRIS and technology, and overall HR strategy and compliance.



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IMPROVING THE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE – AT WORK AND AT HOME

By Megan Duffy Sananidone and Jennifer Somers

A workspace is much more than a container for people. And it's much more than a tool used to perform a task.

How can companies support employees' wellbeing, maintain culture, and encourage productivity during the changing work landscape? As companies prepare for some staff to return to the workplace, they will be managing a partially occupied office and the variety of home offices their staff also occupy.

Through extensive research, Haworth developed a framework called, Affordances. At its core, the Affordances use science to suggest environmental changes to encourage desired behaviors. It is comprised of three main areas: Cognitive, Physical, and Emotional. Cognitive relates to doing your "mind's best work" through supporting information recall, stimulus control, and communication. Physical comfort of workers is affected by anthropometrics, lighting, and temperature, but also ergonomics and activity. Authenticity, wellbeing, and affinity drive the emotional aspects. A well-designed workplace can contribute to human performance optimization. Right now, employers have lost much of the ability to provide a supportive work environment, forcing employees to manipulate their homes to accommodate full-time work.

Supporting employees' ability to do their best work starts with managing stimuli that is irrelevant. At home, people may not have the luxury of moving to a quieter spot, as they might in the office. They can identify which tasks need true focus without noise or interruptions and which tasks would benefit from creating a "coffee shop" energy. With workers dispersed into their own homes, employers will have to foster collaboration through virtual platforms, encouraging use of video to better facilitate intentional interaction. Empower employees to control their schedules so they can carve out time for focus work and collaborative efforts and recognize they may have to balance the demands of children or other family members at home.

- Staff at home could develop a visual cue so other family members know when not to interrupt.
- Use DND function on computer programs so digital messages don't pop up during focus time.
- Schedule focus time on your calendar to discourage meeting requests during that time.
- Use live chat functions where team members can ask the quick questions they would normally have asked their desk neighbor.
- Utilize virtual space such as Bluescape or Microsoft Whiteboard for brainstorming between staff in the office and at home.

A majority of employees' work is done on the computer while sitting. At the office, having a variety of work settings gives people choice and variety. This option is likely limited at home. Connect employees with resources to purchase good ergonomic seating, height adjustable desks, a second monitor, or other ergonomic tools. Offer a "Work from Home" allowance towards these purchases. Movement from visiting common areas for re-filling coffee or water, making a copy, or walking to the different meeting spaces will be greatly diminished at home. Encourage activity breaks throughout the day to replicate that movement through the office. Once people start returning to the workplace, it will likely be not at full capacity, thus even the movement there will be less than before.

- For calls where you don't need to view content, walk instead of sitting.
- Position your computer on a high dresser or counter to stand during a video call.
- Employees at the office could still take a video call in a meeting room by themselves to allow a change in environment and movement away from their desks.

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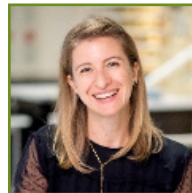
IMPROVING THE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE – AT WORK AND AT HOME CONT.

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Recognize this change in people’s lives causes additional stress. It is even more important to give employees a sense of belonging. Ask managers to have weekly 1-on-1 calls with their staff. Provide a sense of security through regular, live communication from leadership, even if there is not new information to share. Offer opportunities for fun and wellness-inspired activities and ways employees can connect to their community by giving back. Give employees permission throughout the day to take breaks from work and family obligations. If their home office does not have access to natural daylight or views to nature, suggest breaks where they can view the horizon outdoors. These mental breaks are more likely to be taken if they are scheduled as well.

- Hold virtual wellness chats and staff happy hours or trivia sessions.
- Post resources to EAP programs or community resources.
- Send staff a small plant to locate near their work area.
- Start a fitness challenge people at home and in the office can participate in.

A Preparedness Plan is important to facilitate the logistics of returning to work, ensuring employees that you have their safety in mind. Taking it further by including aspects to the plan that cover the Cognitive, Physical, and Emotional impacts on the workplace and home office is equally important. Open a feedback loop for employees to share what’s working and what’s not working. Employee engagement in your return to workplace strategy will safeguard their sense of safety, ensure plan adoption, and position your organization for success.



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RECOVERY READINESS IN THE WORKPLACE

By Paul Donovan and Jaclyn May

Cushman & Wakefield leads the development of best practices, products and partnerships to prepare organizations for post-COVID-19 recovery and the eventual return to the workplace. As areas stabilize from the COVID-19 pandemic and stay-at-home restrictions are lifted, organizations will begin to bring workers back into the physical workplace. It's already begun in some parts of the world. In fact, as of April 2020, C&W helped move our own employees, and those of our clients, back into more than 800 million square feet of properties in China.

How can employers make sure they are prepared to receive their workforce—and make sure their employees are prepared? Faced with many of the same challenges, owners and occupiers have a unique opportunity to come together, following a handful of operational guiding principles to help navigate the return to the workplace.

The “Recovery Readiness: A How-to Guide for Reopening your Workplace,” outlines some of the best thinking and practices that Cushman & Wakefield’s more than 53,000 professionals have compiled across the globe and also includes insights from key partners. The recommended practices and protocols already have been implemented at locations across the globe with tremendous success. In addition, C&W published a succinct checklist “The Safe Six: Workplace Readiness Essentials.” Both documents can be downloaded by accessing the [this link](#).

The 6 Feet Model: Helping you Adjust to a New Normal

Certain phrases surrounding the [COVID-19](#) pandemic have sparked global conversations, the most notable being social distancing – the entire world now understands the importance of staying six feet away. Across the globe, we’re in different stages of experiencing the pandemic. But, as we begin visualizing life after COVID-19, we must begin to think about the new normal and how we will adjust.

“The 6 feet rule” isn’t going away any time soon and we at Cushman & Wakefield understand how critical it is to

normalize this guideline into everyday life. Eventually, we will all return to work, but we must not forget this golden rule. *6 Feet Office* is Cushman & Wakefield’s conceptual idea to help our clients prepare for their employees to return to the office.

The 6 Feet Office Concept Consists of Six Elements:

- 1. 6 Feet Quick Scan:** A concise but thorough analysis of the current working environment in the field of virus safety and any other opportunities for improvement.
- 2. 6 Feet Rules:** A set of simple and clear workable agreements and rules of conduct that put the safety of everyone first.
- 3. 6 Feet Routing:** A visually displayed and unique routing for each office, making traffic flows completely safe.
- 4. 6 Feet Workstation:** An adapted and fully equipped workplace at which the user can work safely.
- 5. 6 Feet Facility:** A trained employee who advises on and operationally ensures an optimally functioning and safe facility environment.
- 6. 6 Feet Certificate:** A certificate stating that measures have been taken to implement a virus-safe working environment.



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AND THE NEXT ALAMN SHINING STAR IS...

Jeff Downes

The Board is pleased to announce the selection of Jeff Downes as a Shining Star for the Minnesota Chapter! Jeff, the Legal Administrator at Cousineau Waldhauser & Kieselbach P.A., joined ALAMN in 2016. Jeff serves as a Co-Chair of the Small and Medium Firm Committee and is a member of the Human Resources Section Committee and Community Service Committee. Jeff is always willing to pitch in and help out as an active member of ALAMN. Jeff brings enthusiasm and humor to the Chapter. His fun and pride-filled stories about the grandkids are also great to hear! Jeff's commitment and contributions to ALAMN are truly above and beyond.

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GET TO KNOW YOUR ALAMN BOARD

Do you collect anything?

Kelly Thaemert, CLM, President

I used to collect things. Now, I know I do not have the space so I do not collect anything.

Caitlin Niedzwiecki, PHR, President Elect

I would not say that I'm much of a collector. However, this spring my family has been taking lots of walks to the creek by our house and every time we go we pick up a few small rocks. When we get home, we clean the rocks and the kids like to paint them. Quarantine fun!

Jessica Gerhardson, Past President

My husband would say I collect coffee mugs, and that may or may not be true! I had started collecting the "Goodnight" series of books to read to my son whenever I would travel or we would travel as a family. He loves reading about the different cities and the fun things to do! For those who may not remember, we used to be able to fly on these things called airplanes to distant lands with exotic names such as Denver, Charlotte, or Orlando.

Jessica Johnson, Communications Director

I collect rocks. I love to put them through the rock tumbler and shine them up!

Nick Manty, Membership Director

I collect queer memorabilia. I have magazines, books, records, pins and posters from the 70s, 80s, and 90s. During the AIDS crisis a lot of queer culture was lost, and I find it fascinating to learn about the queer community at that time.

Kim Pepera, Education Director

I don't collect one specific item but when we travel I try to buy something authentic to the region we are in so when we get home it brings memories back to region we traveled to.

Stacy Locsin, Administrative Director

Bibs. As in race bibs – I enjoy participating in a variety of running events from 5ks to road races like Ragnar. I'm not fast. I'm not even remotely good. But, running keeps me accountable and is a great stress relief so ... I collect race bibs.

Sarah Duerscherl, Finance Director

I might be considered whatever the opposite of a collector is at this point in my life. But as a kid, I did spend all my money on Barbies and Barbie accessories and compiled quite the collection. Thankfully my mom hung onto it for years and my daughters have started playing with it since we've been home during the pandemic. It's been a great way for them to stay busy and so fun to hear them play nicely together!

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