the Verdict

ALAMN
A Chapter of the Association of Legal Administrators

October / November 2021
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FINANCE

DON'T MISS:

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Understanding and Preventing Cyber Fraud

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2021 ALAMN BUSINESS PARTNER SPONSORS

SUPERIOR
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Alerus

MINNETONKA
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Fluid Interiors
Loffler Companies Inc.

ITASCA
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ABA Retirement Funds Program
American National Bank
Associated Bank N.A.
Beacon Hill Legal Staffing
Business Essentials
Comcast Business
Coordinated Business Systems
Cushman & Wakefield
DI Recruiting, LLC
DLR Group
Element Technologies
Epiq Global
Gallagher
Gardner Builders
Hays Company
Innovative Office Solutions
iSpace Environments, Inc.
IST Management Services
Minnesota Lawyers Mutual Insurance Company
NELSON
Olsen Thielen CPAs
Promotion Select, Inc.
Robert Half Legal
Special Counsel/Parker+Lynch Legal
SUCCESS Computer Consulting, Inc.
SurePoint Technologies
Thomson Reuters
Verus Corporation

INTRODUCTORY
ALAMN A Chapter of the Association of Legal Administrators

iSolved
Kip Search, LLC
ProCirrus
Thriveon
Tierney

ALAMN TEAMS & SIGs

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

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

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ALAMN ORGANIZATIONAL TABLE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS						
President: Caitlin Niedzwiecki						
President Elect	**Past President**	**Communications Director**	**Membership Director**	**Education Director**	**Administrative Director**	**Finance Director**
Stacy Locsin	Kelly Thaemert	Samantha Tschida	Chong Lee	Vanessa Kahn	Pat Stender	Sarah Duerscherl
SERVICE TEAMS *(ALAMN Membership is required to participate; Regular ALAMN Membership is required to Chair; Service Teams work serves entire chapter)*						
Business Partner Relations	**Diversity & Inclusion**	**Communications**	**Membership Development**	**Education & Conference**		**Compensation & Benefits Survey**
Deb O'Connor Kathy Hubbard	Terri Stewart Bernadette Theis	Gayle Hildahl	TBD	Carrie Patton		Phil Rush Karen Davis
	Community Service					
	Wendy Cornelius Pam Gerads					
SECTION TEAMS *(ALAMN Membership is required to participate; Regular ALAMN Membership is required to Chair; Section Teams work serves sub-section of chapter membership)*						
			Large Firm Chief Officers	**Small and Medium Firm**	**Human Resources**	
			Tracey Skjeveland	Jeff Downes Kim Pepera	Kim Motzko Stephanie Unterberger	
SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS *(Non-members may participate; Regular ALAMN Membership is required to Chair)*						
Corporate & Government					**Facilities Management**	**Financial Management**
(inactive)					Kim Motzko	Suzette Allaire Rebecca Doyle
St. Cloud					**Intellectual Property (IP)**	**Pricing, Legal Project Management (LPM) & Knowledge Management (KM)**
Ann Entenmann					Susan Sutton Val Studer	
ADMINISTRATIVE VOLUNTEERS *(Regular or Associate ALAMN Membership is required)*						
Also serves as:	*Also serves as:*	**Newsletter Editor**	**Emerging Leaders Group**	**CLM Study Group Coordinator**	**Staff & Member Placement Coordinator**	
LPACC Liaison	**Past President Liaison**	Gretchen Luessenheide	Nick Manty	Tracy Overson Tracy Skjeveland	(HR) Laurie Greenberg	
ALA Region 3 Representative	**LPACC Liaison**	**Social Media**		**Bar Liason**		
ALA Region 3 Representative	**Nominating Committee (chair)**	Jaffe Management		Sarah Evenson		

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

*By Caitlin Niedzwiecki, ALA**MN** President*

ALA**MN** – All of us know what those letters stand for: Association of Legal Administrators Minnesota. But what if those letters stood for something else? Something a bit more descriptive of the type of people we are? I don't generally suffer from insomnia, but shortly after our annual education conference I found myself lying awake one night around 3 am. My mind was buzzing, and I found myself thinking back on the keynote speakers from the conference. More specifically, I found myself chuckling at just how many acronyms Coach Fleck used. He had acronyms upon acronyms! It got me thinking about ALA**MN** and what those letters stand for to me. Here's what I came up with: Adaptable Leaders Active in Mentorship and Networking. Kind of fun, right? Perhaps one of you can come up with something better.

I am in awe of how resilient, adaptable, and active we are as an organization. I remember back when the pandemic first started, there was a period of a few months where it felt like everyone was paralyzed. As ALA**MN** leaders, we asked ourselves: How can we provide any of our regular benefits and programming? And then after the initial paralysis wore off, and our resilience kicked in, we asked: How do we adapt our benefits and programming to meet the current challenges? As Coach Fleck described, we put our oars down into the water and we simply started rowing. And the boat moved. We were able to adapt, offering numerous educational and social events virtually when that was the only safe option. We kept rowing. We weighed the pros and cons of offering a virtual annual conference this past winter and ultimately decided to hold off until August when we could be together in person. And what an amazing day it was, summed up by great education and the opportunity to connect with each other in person. Other than the health screenings and face coverings, it felt strangely "normal." Our ALA**MN** culture is one of teamwork and camaraderie, and those were the dominant themes of the conference.

And we keep rowing. Social justice issues have been at the forefront of this past year and a half, right alongside COVID. I'm grateful that we have had the opportunity to bring in several leaders in the field of diversity, equity, and inclusion to speak to our chapter. It began with Ellie Krug and Ritu Bhasin last year, and then continued with Deborah Archer at the conference. Archer challenged us to go beyond the typical diversity and inclusion initiatives, emphasizing that our DEIA work will never have a lasting impact unless we simultaneously are working to dismantle systemic racism. She encouraged all of us to educate ourselves, engage in conversations with friends and coworkers, and continue to push the needle forward, both in our communities and in our companies. Our firms need strong leaders like us who are committed to doing the work of anti-racists. I'm already excited for our next DEIA speaker, Erin Jones, who will be presenting at our October 12 general meeting.

Another speaker I am looking forward to this fall is our November Leadership Event speaker, Debbie Foster. Many of us have had the opportunity to hear Debbie speak at past ALA events, but this time she will be coaching us on how to create a culture of calm and focus. Keeping with the rowing analogy, when the water gets rough, how do we foster a calm environment in our firms? Debbie will enlighten us at the event on November 9.

Hope to see all of you, either virtually or in person, soon. Until then, keep rowing, my friends.

ALAMN CALENDAR OF EVENTS

OCTOBER

SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
26	27	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	2	3	4	5	6

NOVEMBER

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

***PLEASE NOTE:**

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

OCTOBER

3-6 ALA Annual Conference & Expo 2021
Austin, TX

6 Large Law Firm Chief Officers
12:00 – 1:00 pm

12 Diversity & Inclusion Education Event
11:30 am – 1:00 pm
Hellmuth & Johnson

19 Finance SIG Meeting
12:00 – 1:00 pm

21 Coffee and Connect
12:00 – 1:00 pm

27 Fall Social
4:00 – 6:30 pm
Insight Brewing & Taproom

29 Membership Development Team
10:00 – 11:00 am

NOVEMBER

3 Large Law Firm Chief Officers
12:00 – 1:00 pm

9 Law Firm Leaders Networking Event
7:30 – 9:00 am

17 Career Fair

18 Small/Medium Group Meeting
10:00 – 11:00 am

19 Membership Development Team
10:00 – 11:00 am

Save the Date! - November 9, 2021

Law Firm Leaders Networking Event

Don't miss this informative presentation from Debbie Foster of Affinity Consulting.

Creating a Culture of Calm and Focus in Your Legal Organization

Don't let hustle culture and "shiny object syndrome" define your law firm leadership style. Constant change and a breakneck pace make it harder to be successful and rarely lead to sustainable improvement. In this enlightening session, leaders learn why and how to turn down the heat and create the kind of calm, focused environment most conducive to exceptional law firm performance.

Registration and more information to come.

ALAMN MASTER CALENDAR

ALA**MN** leadership has created a master calendar for 2021. This calendar includes the all-member events and special interest group meetings. Service team meetings are not included on the master calendar and will continue to be scheduled by service team chair(s). You will notice fewer events on the ALA**MN** 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 ALA**MN** website for more details about upcoming meetings and events!

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL
• Small/Medium • Facilities	• **New Year Social w/ BPs** • **General Meeting 1** • HR • Finance • Facilities	• **General Meeting 2** • Facilities • IP • Finance • Leadership Orientation	• **ALA National Conference** • **ALAMN Career Fair** • Small/Medium • HR • Facilities • Large Law Firm
MAY	**JUNE**	**JULY**	**AUGUST**
• Facilities • Finance • Large Law Firm	• **General Meeting 3** • Small/Medium • HR • Finance • Large Law Firm	• **ALAMN Summer Social** • Finance • Large Law Firm	• **Annual ALAMN Education Conference** • HR • Finance • Large Law Firm
SEPTEMBER	**OCTOBER**	**NOVEMBER**	**DECEMBER**
• **Salary Survey Results** • Finance • Facilities • Large Law Firm	• **ALAMN Fall Social** • **Diversity & Inclusion Educational Event** • Finance • Large Law Firm	• **Law Firm Leaders Networking Event** • Small/Medium • Large Law Firm	• Facilities • IP • Large Law Firm

ALA**MN** 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.

COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION TRENDS IN THE CORPORATE SPACE

By Max Biegert, Tierney

Although more and more people are returning to the office, there will still be a large contingent of employees who work remotely. The challenge businesses now have in front of them is how to successfully connect their employees who split time between home and the office.

Recently, I have noticed technology trends that I thought would be helpful for ALA**MN** members to help solve this problem and keep employees connected and productive wherever they are.

As I layout a few popular trends that I am seeing in the corporate spaces, keep in mind that there are not "one size fits all" solutions. Each workflow has unique requirements, which makes it important to consult an AV professional partner. Finding an audio/visual professional partner can be helpful in determining a solution path for your firm. Technology continues to evolve, and it is important to think about the long-term investment and the return on the investment a solution has on the firm.

Bring Your Own Device

Bring your own device has become prevalent since people have returned to work. People got used to starting their own meetings on their laptops or personal devices. This type of workflow allows an employee to connect their personal device to the professional AV equipment in a conference room, including a display, camera, microphone, and speakers. This can be done wireless or wired.

The companies attracted to a bring-your-own-device workflow have a certain quality that make it easy to transform a training room, board room, conference room, or huddle room into a professional AV video conference. These companies often are heavy laptop users, have many shared spaces, have people working from both home and the office, have licensing from a platform like Teams or Zoom, and have multiple people presenting on a regular basis.

One-Touch Join

Another popular trend in shared spaces is the One-Touch Join video conferencing room. This type of workflow allows for an easy to use video conferencing experience. The person who wants to start a meeting can send the meeting link to the designated One-Touch Join room. They can then enter that room and touch the button on the panel that says join, and they will be into the video conference call.

The companies that are looking at adopting this type of a workflow often times have heavy, regular conference room use and back-to-back meetings. Those meetings are often consuming content. This is a great option for a company that does not have a lot of technical knowledge and needs something easy to use. Finally, companies who like to adopt a consistent interface across all video conference rooms would find this style of work attractive.

Room Based PC

The third trend is going back to having a PC in the conference room running a video conference meeting. This trend was on its way out of the corporate space prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, but since video conferencing is such an important component in the post-COVID world, it has made its way back onto the corporate scene.

The companies adopting this type of workflow may not have many laptop users. Most are used to providing content from in the room to the call. Often times you will see this workflow work best in training rooms or auditoriums where people can sign into their desktops and access their files.

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COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION TRENDS IN THE CORPORATE SPACE - CONT.

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Digital Signage

The final trend is adding digital signage in office spaces. Companies are looking for ways to separate themselves from competitors. Digital signage can bring a distinctive look to your office space. It can attract new employees and deliver branding messages that keep employees informed.

I hope this helps gives some background information on the different types of setups we are seeing in the corporate space. At the end of the day, the main component is to understand how your employees work and how you would like them to work. With the right AV partner, firms will find that the solution will provide instant value to your employees and the company.

About the Author:

My name is Max Biegert, I'm a communication and collaboration specialist at Tierney. I specifically work with law firms and other professional services to help provide professional AV advice in order to help find them the right solution that fits for their business. Tierney has been in the Twin Cities since 1977. We pride ourselves on taking a consultative approach with our customers. It is important for us to understand how employees work and design solutions that will fit best for the business and contribute to the company's growth. We became a business partner with ALA**MN** in February and are so excited to be able to support this great group.

ALA**MN** OCTOBER GENERAL MEETING

The Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility Team is pleased to welcome and present guest speaker **Erin Jones**, who is presenting on *"The Intersection of Identity and Race: Loving Us Into Our Healing"*. Erin has a way of connecting to her audience by injecting her own personality and humor while teaching and sharing her knowledge and expertise on diversity and equity.

She is an Independent Education and Systems Consultant Public Speaker and has been involved in and around schools for 30 years. She received recognition at the White House in March of 2013 as a "Champion of Change" and was Washington State PTA's "Outstanding Educator" in 2015. After serving as a classroom teacher and instructional coach, Erin worked as an executive for two State Superintendents. Erin left the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction in 2012 to work in college-access at the school district level. She left her job to run as a candidate for State Superintendent and was the first Black woman to run for any state office in Washington state.

There is both an in person and a virtual option for this meeting. A Zoom link will be provided the day before for those who wish to connect virtually. For those who would like to meet in person, Hellmuth & Johnson will host lunch and watch the presentation from one of their conference rooms. Please register using the link below, and indicate whether you plan to view it remotely or join the group at Hellmuth & Johnson.

Program: ALA**MN** October General Meeting
Date: Tuesday, October 12, 2021
Time: 11:30am - 1:00pm
In-Person Location: Hellmuth & Johnson: 8050 W. 78th Street, Minneapolis MN 55439
Virtual Location: Zoom

Register for the October General Meeting today via the link below or on the ALAMN website.

We hope to see you there!

CLICK TO REGISTER NOW

UNDERSTANDING AND PREVENTING CYBER FRAUD

By Sara Ausman, Twin Cities Regional President, Alerus

Cyber fraud has become an everyday occurrence in the business world. While the threat is invisible, the outcomes can be extremely damaging. Major cyberattacks have helped raise awareness about the risks to large companies, but smaller companies are just as, if not more, vulnerable to cyber fraud. Fraudsters know that smaller companies typically have less robust protections in place, making them easy targets to obtain financial information, customer data, and ransoms. In fact, Verizon's 2021 Data Breach Investigations Report found that businesses with 1,000 or fewer employees were attacked more frequently than large companies.

Just as companies protect themselves against physical theft, it is critical that they also take measures to protect against cyber fraud. Educating employees is a key line of defense. It is important they are aware of common types of cyber fraud, how attacks are carried out, and what they can do to help prevent incidents.

Corporate account takeover

In a corporate account takeover, fraudsters gain control of the business' bank account and can initiate fraudulent wire and ACH transactions to accounts they also control.

Account access is gained by stealing employee passwords or other valid credentials through phishing attacks or social engineering techniques used to install malware (viruses or other unwanted software) on the victim's device. Once installed, malware can be used to monitor activity on the device, obtain banking information, and use that information to transfer funds from the victim's account.

To protect against these types of attacks, do not click links in unfamiliar emails or social posts, and never provide online banking credentials or passwords via email.

Business email compromise

This is a sophisticated scam commonly used to target businesses working with foreign suppliers or that regularly perform wire transfer payments. It is also increasingly being used to carry out payroll fraud.

In this method, fraudsters hack or mimic a company email account and submit fake transfer requests to vendors. They may also hack a company executive's email and send the request from their legitimate email account, often after they have monitored the person's activity and know that the "sender" is in a meeting or unavailable to respond immediately.

These requests may initially appear to be valid, but there are often slight discrepancies that indicate something is not quite right. Red flags to look for include an invoice or company logo that looks slightly different than usual, incorrect spelling or grammar, a slightly different email address, changes to the beneficiary's bank or name, a change request with no explanation, or a request to transfer funds quickly.

Fraudsters are increasingly sophisticated in their attacks, so individuals responsible for wire transfers must be diligent in carefully reviewing requests and confirming changes before approving transfers. Additional basic prevention steps to take include using a dedicated computer to conduct financial transactions, maintaining a robust cyber security plan, and making sure employees know how and to whom they should report suspicious activity. Cyber security and ransomware insurance policies may provide an additional layer of protection in the event of an incident.

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UNDERSTANDING AND PREVENTING CYBER FRAUD - CONTINUED

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Banks can provide business accounts with additional protections, such as multi-factor authentication, transaction authentication, and dual control processing to require more than one sign off for transactions such as payroll payments. Financial institutions also use tools to monitor IP addresses, conduct behavioral analytics, and run intrusion detection software to keep further watch on account activity. It may seem counter-intuitive, but mobile banking can provide even more protective measures, such as sending alerts to require payment confirmation before completing transfer requests.

If an incident occurs

If you discover you have been the victim of cyber fraud, contact your bank immediately and do not make further payments to the vendor/beneficiary until the issue has been resolved. Retain all records of contact with the fraudster. If the contact was via email, report it to the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center at www.ic3.gov. Finally, contact your insurance provider if you have a cyber security or ransomware policy.

About the Author:

Sara Ausman has more than 30 years of experience in the financial industry. As regional president at Alerus, she is responsible for strategic planning, business planning, and driving initiatives designed to strengthen Alerus' reach in the Twin Cities. She seeks to deliver value to clients in areas such as commercial banking, private banking, retirement plan administration, and wealth management.

About the Company:

Alerus is a diversified financial services company providing innovative and comprehensive financial solutions to businesses and consumers through four distinct business segments—banking, retirement and benefit services, wealth management, and mortgage. These solutions are delivered through a relationship-oriented primary point of contact, along with responsive and client-friendly technology.

ALA**MN**'s Shining Star: Gayle Hildahl

The ALA**MN** Board is pleased to announce that Gayle Hildahl has been selected as a Shining Star for the Minnesota Chapter! Gayle is currently the Communications Coordinator for our chapter.

Gayle has been in the legal field for 20+ years and has been with Ballard Spahr (fka Lindquist & Vennum) for 19 years, having started as an LAA with several promotions along with way to her current role as the Director of Office Administration for Ballard's Minneapolis and Sioux Falls offices.

In Gayle's role as Communications Coordinator for ALA**MN**, she is responsible for coordinating the bi-weekly ALA**MN** News Blasts that keep all our members aware of ALA**MN** Chapter news and events and highlights articles from *The Verdict* and ALA's Legal Management newsletters. Gayle is also responsible for updating the ALA**MN** website with new photos, bios, and other content. If you need something included in a News Blast or updated on the website, Gayle is the person to contact!

In addition to work and her role in our Chapter, Gayle enjoys long bike rides, quilting, and reading. Gayle and her husband are parents to three adult children and enjoy much of their vacation time visiting them where they live - Mexico, Canada, and Virginia. Gayle's all-time favorite book is *East of Eden* by John Steinbeck, and she is currently reading, and recommends, *Transcendent Kingdom* by Yaa Gyasi. Other recommendations from Gayle: favorite beverage: Aperol Spritz; Binge-worthy TV Series: Yellowstone.

Please join the Board in thanking Gayle for her commitment and contributions to our chapter and the great job she is doing in keeping us all informed!

2021: THE YEAR CYBERSECURITY CAME HOME TO ROOST AKA RANSOMWARE: THE OTHER PANDEMIC

By Ronny Loew, Sales Director, ProCirrus Technologies

Since the first computer worm in the late 1980s, IT professionals have advised their clients about the potential perils of weak security and the available options to protect against them. Unfortunately, many of those recommendations were viewed as unnecessary and inconvenient.

The last few months changed all of that when the evening news carried images of gas lines on the Eastern seaboard and reports of meat shortages due to ransomware attacks. All of a sudden, Wolf Blitzer was talking about IT security, and the whole thing became real.

The American Bar Association's Model Rules of Professional Conduct and ethics opinions state that attorneys have a duty to take reasonable steps to protect their clients' data. Unfortunately, these rules do not include any specific technical requirements that attorneys can reference. This puts attorneys in the difficult position of trying to determine what is necessary to protect your firm when it comes to cybersecurity.

An additional challenge precipitating tougher security standards is the need for cyber liability coverage. In the last few years insurers have been paying claims and suffering losses. They are now publishing much more stringent guidelines. If you want the coverage, you need to tighten up your security policies.

Here are several important measures that should be immediately considered and quickly implemented, if they are not already in place:

1. **Passwords and Password Policies.** Passwords are no longer sufficient for protecting your most sensitive information. The technology to figure them out has become way too sophisticated! A quick visit to your Facebook page gives many bad actors all they need to socially reverse engineer your password. Dog names, kids' names, birthdates, anniversary dates – we publish them all for the world to see! How hard can it be to figure out what you are using? So over the last several years, we have all been told to come up with more complex passwords. Something with a capital letter, a number, a special character, a hieroglyph, and the blood of a small mammal! The problem is that those passwords are so complicated, we have to write them down. Lose the post-it and BREACH. Let's say you can actually commit one of those complex concoctions to memory. The next thing you do is use it on every site you log into! It goes fine until one day your kazoo club's site is hacked and your credentials make it on to the dark web. Say it with me: BREACH!

   It comes down to this: your firm should have a password policy that requires three things: 1. Long passwords – they are better than complex passwords; 2. Do not reuse them anywhere; 3. They need to be used in conjunction with another system. (see #2)

2. **Multi Factor Authentication.** The perfect pairing to a reasonable password policy is Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA). Think of MFA as the new seatbelt. It is there to save your life. When wearing seatbelts was made into law years ago, we all resisted for a while. Now, it is normal, and it does save lives. So just click it. I am told daily that attorneys will complain about having to go through another step to log in. I remind folks that they are already using MFA for online banking and other services. Even U-Haul uses it now for customers! So MFA is here to stay. Remember, that quick, extra step is protecting you from a multi-million dollar ransomware payment. Embrace it.

3. **Disk Encryption.** Years ago in Minnesota, there was a consultant who was doing some work for Fairview hospitals. One day, with 144K patient records on their laptop, they left the laptop in the car while they ran into a coffee shop. When they came back to the car, the laptop was gone. They had to do a breach notification due to HIPAA regulations. As a result, the

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Attorney General barred them from doing business in the state for 6 years! This is a perfect cautionary tale. If they had had their laptop encrypted, the information on the hard drive would have been useless, digital confetti. They would have been out a laptop but not out of business! Get your hard drive encrypted!

4. **Email Encryption.** Sending an email is not too different from mailing a letter. A letter goes into a mailbox. It is picked up by a post office employee who takes it to the post office to be sorted and routed. From there, that letter goes from post office, to truck, to post office, to truck until it reaches your mailbox. Think of all the hands that letter passes through and all the possible points along the way where that letter could be lost, damaged, or even read! Email is not that different. It leaves your computer and goes through servers and switches and data centers until it reaches your inbox. As a rule of thumb, it is not recommended to send anything through email that you would not mail on a postcard. You should be using an email encryption solution for any email that contains sensitive information, such as passwords, account numbers, social security numbers, or anything you would consider sensitive or private information.
5. **Secure File Transfer.** In conjunction with the discussion on email encryption above, secure file transfer solutions are very important for sending or requesting files that are either too large or too sensitive to go through regular email. If unencrypted email is the equivalent of sending a post card through the US Mail, encrypted email and secure file transfer are like sending a private courier. There is tracking, better security, and the item passes through fewer hands. Instead of sending sensitive information through email, only a link is sent, which can be used to download/upload the content. Any file that is larger than 5 MB and/or contains sensitive information, such as social security numbers, financial information, account numbers, or other protected information, should be going through a secure file transfer option.
6. **Mobile Device Security.** Most of us have our email, calendar, and contacts on our cell phones. Emails contain sensitive conversations, documents, and other data. Further, very few firms provide cell phones to their employees and staff. This means you are storing sensitive data on personal devices with no control over how well they are protected or secured. If a phone is lost or stolen and does not have sufficient protection on it, or it has an easily broken pin or password, you are looking at the same breach issues that were described above. Mobile Device Management (MDM) solutions are now common, functional, and easy to use. Implementing MDM bridges the gap between firm security and personal devices. While it may take an extra step to get into your sensitive information, it is protecting you and your firm from disaster.

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KNOW YOUR LEGAL JARGON

Mandamus – Latin for *"we command"*

A writ issued by a higher court to a lower one, ordering that court or related officials to perform some administrative duty. Often used in the context of legal oversight of government agencies.

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7. **Security Awareness Training.** No matter how many security measures your firm implements, there is still a major, weak link. Like the punchline of the 1973 dystopian film, Soylent Green, said, "IT'S PEOPLE!" Yes, we, the people, the users of technology, are the weak link in IT security. Even with all protections implemented, it comes down to us. We need to be cautious and skeptical about the emails we open, the links we click on, and the sites we visit. There are Security Awareness tools that will send out occasional, fake spam messages to monitor how your people react to them. For those who fall for it, the system provides quick remedial tips to help them make better decisions in the future.

If these measures resonate with you, and your firm has some areas for improvement, it is time to look into which products fit your particular needs and preferences. With the right IT partner, these measures are easy to implement and very inexpensive, especially when compared to the cost of a breach or ransomware attack.

Ronny Loew has been the National Sales Director at ProCirrus for 10 years. ProCirrus supports law firms of all sizes from coast to coast in their private cloud. He can be reached at ronny.loew@procirrus.com or 952-674-2015. www.procirrus.com

GET YOUR BILLABLE HOURS BACK: 3 SIGNS YOUR FIRM NEEDS TECHNOLOGY RISK REVIEWS

By Sam Bloedow, Thriveon

It is true that 81% of law firms are unprepared for digitalization, according to Gartner. Still. Now. In 2021. That means that most firms are not ready or not willing to move into the use of modern applications and tools.

But that does not have to be your firm's story. Your law office is no stranger to risk reviews, processes and procedures, and technology reviews are the prime place to start. A technology risk review is a focused look at the current state of technology against a known set of best practices. It keys in on specific outcomes like security, compliance, and even the effectiveness of the IT group. A review provides firm partners with a snapshot of a point in time, indicating what may be out of balance. It is important to note that regular, ongoing reviews of your technology are paramount to staying on top of not only your office's efficiencies, but more importantly, your security.

There are three major signs that you could be losing time and productivity: You are not on the cloud, you do not know if you are cybersecure, and you have no direction, strategy, or guidance when it comes to your IT. If any or all of these signs point to yes, you can know without a shadow of a doubt that your firm could maximize billable hours through technology reviews.

You are (still) not on the Cloud

Incredibly, the idea of "Cloud Computing" was conceptualized as far back as the 1950's, according to IBM, and it is no longer the buzzword that it once was. With remote work solidified as the norm, your team requires the ability to access tools and client information from anywhere, be it a remote workspace, a client meeting site, or while travelling. If you are still running on-premise technology alone, you run the risk of reduced productive time by not having the ability to access crucial files and information from any device while on the go.

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GET YOUR BILLABLE HOURS BACK: 3 SIGNS YOUR FIRM NEEDS TECHNOLOGY RISK REVIEWS

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Modern, web-based applications unlock efficiency, productivity and provide your practice with the best of breed technology – software that is built with your firm and your unique business needs in mind. Change can be hard, but adoption of modern technologies is, in actuality, the easier and more user-friendly option when compared to older methods and platforms.

You do not know if you are cybersecure

With the ever-evolving landscape of technology usage and cybercrime, how can you keep your firm from becoming a target of an attack? Your clients' information and trust are of the utmost importance to you and your firm, so are you able to assure them their data is safe? Multi-layer authentication, password managers, device permissions, and regular data backups are essential to your information technology setup. Mitigate your risk through consistent reviews of your technology systems with Managed IT.

You have no IT direction, strategy, or guidance

If you do not have a Chief Information Officer (CIO) that is taking time to understand your business, seeking to understand where the firm is headed in the next 3-5 years and informing you of opportunities where technology could help you increase billable time, you will want this level of CIO expertise to guide your multi-year roadmap.

Unfortunately, too many managing partners and firm administrators spend more time trying to figure it out on their own and without an outsourced CIO, and they might be investing in business applications that are not right for their business. This setup can create a major issue that reduces efficiencies, so when problems inevitably crop up, a reactive IT service is unavoidably required. An expert CIO from a Proactive Managed IT Services company will be able to effectively manage your internal systems, empowering your team to bill clients more efficiently and accurately.

It's about time

Technology reviews are effective tools that can be used to make well developed, grounded technology decisions for your law firm. Additionally, these reviews come back with a list of problems that now need solving. This sparks healthy dialog, as partners now have better visibility and can oversee how they get solved and who is best to solve them.

Now that you recognize the three signs your firm needs a technology risk review, you can take the steps to get on track with a Managed IT Services partner to lead your office to higher productivity and data security, and ultimately get your billable hours back.

Helpful Links:

Managed IT Service: What Good IT Support Looks Like eBook

Cybersecurity in the Modern Workplace Webinar

Sources:

Gartner Says 81 Percent of Legal Departments Are Unprepared for Digitalization

A Brief History of Cloud Computing | IBM

About the Author:

When Sam Bloedow started Thriveon in 2002, it was born from a love of technology and the needs of small to midsize companies that were not being met by their current IT service. Fascinated by the way businesses could leverage technology to enable growth, Sam founded Thriveon with the purpose of empowering people to create business success with information and technology.

Sam is a sought-after speaker and subject matter expert on the topics of IT strategy, IT management, and Cybersecurity within the business community and among managed IT peers where he chairs a peer group, mentoring other IT leaders.

ALA**MN** BUSINESS PARTNER SPONSORS: AN ENORMOUS VALUE-ADD!

By Stacy Locsin

Partnership is defined as ***"an arrangement by two or more parties to manage and operate business affairs together."***

The strategic alliances formed by ALA**MN** Business Partner Sponsors and our members are just that sort of partnership: *'managing and operating business affairs together.'*

Business Partners offer the benefit of industry insights and trends by providing subject matter expertise in their business area. Members can look to Business Partner Sponsors to provide the latest products and solutions as well as industry specific thought-leadership.

The current portfolio of ALA**MN** Business Partner Sponsors provide representation in the areas of:

- Business Operations & Management
- Facilities
- Finance & Accounting
- Human Resources & Employee Benefits
- Practice Management
- Technology

With such a broad array of products and services provided by ALA**MN** Business Partner Sponsors, they can assist in furthering law firm objectives and have set many of us up for success by helping members grow and improve their own organizations – true partners in business!

While Business Partners are instrumental in keeping ALA**MN** members informed and educated, they also lend time and financial support to the very communities in which we live and work. In fact, more than 85% of sponsorship dollars are used to provide educational opportunities and for charitable/community service efforts!

The value offered to members as a part of joint involvement with ALA**MN** Business Partner Sponsors carries so much worth. ALA**MN** Business Partner Sponsors offer assistance well beyond "the sale of services and goods." Business Partner Sponsors are business contacts we can leverage to assist in sourcing quotes and information. And many (if not all) Business Partner Sponsors are closely tied to corporations and numerous other non-legal businesses in our backyard, too. As such, they can offer the opportunity to introduce and extend our professional networks both inside and outside the legal community.

Members and Business Partner Sponsors have the benefit of working in close cooperation to advance our joint professional interests. In fact, many of the Business Partner Sponsor relationships I have developed during my time as an ALA**MN** member have blossomed into great friendships. They have become people I thoroughly enjoy talking to and spending time with.

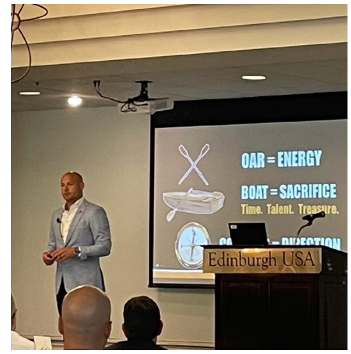
We're all in this together! ALA**MN** Business Partner Sponsors are key to our success in the legal community for all the reasons shared here. They have also become legal industry allies and friends. As such, it would be short-sighted not to acknowledge the true benefit of their financial and industry-specific support and collaboration.

I encourage each of you to extend a much deserved ***Thank You*** to an ALAMN Business Partner Sponsor today!

AND THAT'S WHAT WE CALL A CONFERENCE!
ALA**MN** 31ST ANNUAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE AND BUSINESS PARTNER EXPO

By Carrie Patton

The skies parted, the sun came out and the humidity dropped as Mother Nature gave ALA**MN** the most beautiful day for the 31st Annual Education Conference and Business Partner Expo on August 18, 2021. Edinburgh USA was selected for many reasons, including the award-winning event space and catering, plus the opportunity to try a location outside of Downtown Minneapolis. The biggest draw was the ability to utilize the outdoor space, which did not disappoint. Attendees and Business Partners enjoyed exhibit space and the final networking event in the venue's outside spaces.



The A+ speaker lineup delivered incredibly impactful speeches that got everyone thinking about race and social justice, led by Deborah Archer, President of the ACLU. We ended the day with a high energy (and we mean HIGH ENERGY) speech by University of MN football coach, P.J. Fleck, who taught us the importance of performance and culture in any industry. A special thanks to Alerus, Loffler, and Fluid who hosted the afternoon learning opportunities, educating us on the hot topics today in their respective industries.

This conference could not happen without the hard work of our volunteers and Board of Directors. As a volunteer-run organization, we should be proud of the dedication and the time given by everyone to support our members' professional development and networking. Every chance we get, we should be thanking our Business Partners for their support to ALA**MN**. Their support both financially and by donating their time to attend our events is worth taking a phone call, enjoying a coffee break, and doing what we can to support their businesses the way they support ALA**MN**. Saving the best for last means a huge thank you to Emilie LaBonte! Emilie is the ALA**MN** account representative through Jaffe Management who has the patience of a saint, killer organization skills, and a smile you can see coming a mile away. We are beyond grateful to have Emilie on our team.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS RESPONSIBILITIES

Have you ever thought about getting involved in ALA**MN** leadership? Check out the profiles below to learn about each of the roles on our Board of Directors!

The **Administrative Director** is the chapter's main record keeper and historian. They are tasked with facilitating the day-to-day operations of the organization. Responsibilities include recording the minutes at monthly Board meetings, updating timelines and organizational charts, circulating monthly reports from the members of the Board, and facilitating the annual scholarship drawings and communications. They spend an average of 2-3 hours per month on these tasks, except during scholarship administration and communication time (late spring/early summer), when their time commitment increases to about 10-12 hours per month.

The **Communications Director** is primarily responsible for enhancing ALA**MN**'s visibility. They work closely with the Communications Coordinator and the association management company to ensure that important information, events, awards, and all other relevant news gets communicated via the chapter website, bi-weekly email news blasts to members, the chapter's social media pages, and *The Verdict*. This role requires an average of 5 hours per month. The busiest time of year is during the leadership transition (March/April). During that time, the Communications Director spends about 7-10 hours providing training to the new Communications Coordinator, Board, and other chapter leaders, as well as updating the ALA**MN** website with the information for the new chapter leaders.

The **Education Director** oversees ALA**MN**'s educational programming. They work closely with the Education Team, who is responsible for planning the annual ALA**MN** education conference, quarterly general education meetings, and the fall leadership and networking event. The Education Director puts in an average of 6 hours per month but can expect to put in extra hours in the weeks leading up to the annual Education Conference, including attending weekly team meetings in preparation.

The **Finance Director** is the only Board role with a 2-year term. This person is responsible for ensuring the fiscal soundness of the organization and for monitoring, recording, and reporting financial transactions. Their tasks include making timely payments, overseeing the chapter's banking and credit card services, and processing scholarship reimbursements for the chapter's volunteer leaders. The Finance Director role generally requires about 5 hours per month, with the busiest times of year being budgeting time and membership renewal (March/April), business partner renewal (Nov-Jan), and conference times.

The **Membership Director** focuses on membership recruitment and retention. They oversee the Membership Development Team as they coordinate annual membership renewal, welcome new members, and plan events for new and current members. They also coordinate with ALA headquarters to invite new ALA members to join our chapter. They spend an average of 5-7 hours a month on tasks, a little more during membership renewals and when pulling membership lists to send to business partners.

The President track is a 3-year commitment, beginning with the role of **President-Elect**. The President-Elect's role is to assist the President while learning first-hand all the duties that are to come. They oversee the Business Partner Relations Team, providing guidance and support related to business partner events and communications. The President-Elect also serves on the Nominating Committee, helping to vet and select the next year's Board. During this time, they may spend upwards of 10 hours per month on Nominating Committee tasks, but generally the President-Elect role is a time commitment of about 5-7 hours per month.

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS RESPONSIBILITIES - CONTINUED

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After serving as President-Elect, the **President** term begins. The President is tasked with leading monthly Board meetings, directing the chapter's vision and strategic planning, and engaging in succession planning. The President also plans several events, including the President's Reception at the ALA Annual Conference, the Leadership Orientation, and the Leadership Retreat. The President role averages 10 hours per month, with the busiest times being in advance of major events.

After serving as President, the final year in the 3-year cycle is as the immediate **Past President**. The Past President is one of the most crucial roles on the Board because they usually are the most seasoned Board member and therefore have the most historical knowledge. They are tasked with overseeing the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Team and the Community Service Team. They also lead the Nominating Committee in selecting the new Board of Directors for the following year. Their average time commitment is 5 hours per month, with an increase during Nominating Committee time of year (12-15 hours in Nov – Jan) and when planning the Past Presidents' Dinner.

Unless otherwise noted, each Board role is a one-year term. All Board members are expected to attend monthly Board meetings, chapter social events, the annual ALA**MN** Education Conference, ALA's Chapter Leadership Institute, and the annual ALA Conference. In addition, they are required to write one article per year for *The Verdict*. If you are interested in learning more about any of the Board of Director positions, please reach out to any of the current Board members.

COMMUNITY SERVICE EVENT – YOUTH MENTORING: COOKIE CART 2021

ALAMN COMMUNITY SERVICE

Please consider joining us as we change this year's event with the Cookie Cart from in-bakery help to helping them with their largest annual fundraiser. You will still get a chance to mingle with ALA**MN** Members and Business Partners, and also with some of the Youth in the Program. The set-up for the event is on Friday, October 22nd, 2021, with help needed anywhere between 4:00pm to 8:00pm. We would like to have up to 20 volunteers to help with the set-up, including: filling nametags, filling programs, organizing center pieces, materials, packing supplies, etc.

Where:

The Cookie Cart Minneapolis - 1119 W. Broadway, Minneapolis, MN 55411

BUSINESS PARTNER SPOTLIGHT - TINA DAVIS, FINANCIAL ADVISOR AT ALERUS

Let's talk about the company you work for first. What do you want us to know about Loffler? Any cool, interesting facts?

Alerus is a diversified financial services firm, which means we provide consumer and business financial services as well as wealth management, mortgage, payroll, and retirement and benefits services. We have all the capabilities of a national financial institution, but we are small enough that we know our clients and really care about their success. Each client works with a dedicated advisor who provides guidance based on their long-term, whole picture outlook, and then builds a team of financial experts for each specific need.

Alerus is a publicly traded company, but we have also had an ESOP (employee stock ownership plan) since 1987. As company owners, we are very motivated and focused on doing the right thing for our clients and doing the best job we can every single day, because when our clients succeed, we all succeed.

What is your role at Alerus?
Financial Advisor.

How long have you been involved with ALAMN?

I personally have been involved for almost five years. Our Twin Cities Regional President, Sara Ausman, has been involved with the group for more than 20 years.

What is your favorite tv show of the summer?
Virgin River.

What is the last vacation you took?
Wine country (Napa and Sonoma) and San Francisco. I am looking forward to going to Nashville this fall.

What is your favorite weekend activity?
Spending time with my family boating/jet skiing in the summer, snowmobiling in the winter, or just enjoying a nice walk with my husband and our dog, Aspen.

What is your favorite way to pass 30 mins of free time?
Sit on my back patio in silence – listening to nature – being able to clear my mind to be at peace.

If you could learn to do anything, what would it be?
Fix things … I seem to break everything, and my husband can fix anything. I wish I had that skill.

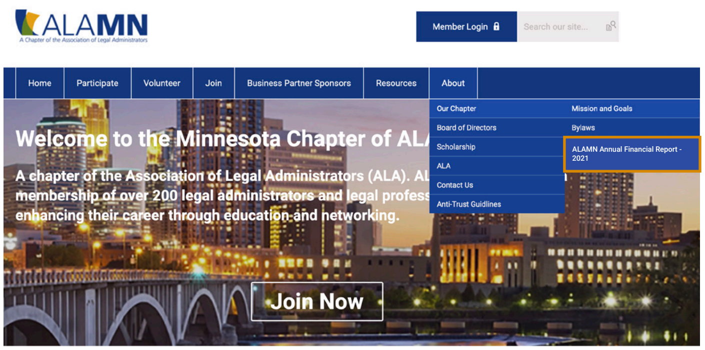
At what age did you become an adult (in your opinion)?
I was 23 years old when I had my first child. I grew up in an instant!

ALA**MN** ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

We have made the ALA**MN** Annual Financial Report available for your viewing on our website! To view this report, please go to www.ala-mn.org and log in to your member profile in the upper right hand corner.

Once you have logged in, if you hover over the "About" tab, and then hover over the "Our Chapter" tab, you will see "ALA**MN** Annual Financial Report – 2021".

*Please note: This report is accessible to current ALA**MN** Members only.



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