

The NETWORK

INTEGRATING KNOWLEDGE AND CONNECTIONS

The Corner Office Reimagined

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Attracting Top Talent



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2016 ALA Annual
Conference in LA



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Member Milestones

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THE NETWORK

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE ARE YOU WORTH IT? YES YOU ARE!

MARIE COLÓN, LITTLER MENDELSON

Hello my fellow chapter members! I'm very excited to begin my term as your president. I knew I would have to write my first president's message for The Network, so I kept contemplating on what my message should be. I wanted my message to make an impact, but it was very important that it be real and meaningful. So I decided my message should be about what value we put into ourselves. A question I've asked myself over the years is, "Am I really worth it?" I've had to constantly remind myself that, "Yes, I am so worth it!"

When leading an organization, everyone else's needs seem to come first. The same can be said within our personal lives. So when do you take the time to think of yourself? While I can't tell you what to do with your personal needs, I can encourage you to think about your professional growth. When was the last time you attended one of the chapter's education programs? Did you know they're scheduled the second Wednesday and Thursday of each month in downtown Miami and downtown Fort Lauderdale, respectively? Your memberships in the ALA and the ALASOFLA are designed to enrich your professional life. Our programs and events are carefully and thoughtfully created for you and your professional needs.

Speaking from personal experience, I finally decided to invest in myself so I made a commitment to attend the chapter's monthly education events. Not only did I get to listen to speakers who had a direct impact on providing solutions for my firm, I also networked with our amazing Business Partners and made incredible connections, along with fellow chapter members who I've ultimately become great friends with.

Another part of your professional growth are the relationships you make within this industry. I'm constantly amazed when I contact a Business Partner with a last minute need; they have always come through for me. Or when I have that challenging situation in my firm and need to vent it out, I can easily contact a chapter member because of that relationship – you know who you are! These connections/relationships only happened because I attended the chapter's events.

What is preventing you from investing in your professional development? I think we can all agree that time is sometimes our biggest enemy. We make time for family, friends, work but what about time for you? I challenge each of you to go to the chapter's website <http://www.alasofla.org/> and under "Events" calendar all the events you would like to attend.

Isn't it time to enhance who you are professionally? Aren't You Worth It? YES YOU ARE!

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THE CORNER OFFICE REIMAGINED

By: Lilly Torres

Office Administrator, Pathman Lewis, LLP

Editor-In-Chief, *The Network*

For decades, the corner office of the workplace has always been revered as a sacred and powerful space, occupied by the highest ranking members of the firm. Breathtaking views, spacious seating area and other “essentials”, and so much window space that the occupant can’t help but complain about the emanating heat or abundance of light seeping in (cue the blinds or solar shades) – so ironic!

In today’s economy, law firms are working harder than ever to increase efficiency of office space and design. It’s no surprise that we’re breaking the barriers from the past and innovating an entirely new way of thinking about how our offices can benefit the employees and the bottom line.

Little Mendelson, an employment and labor law firm with 55 national locations, 20 international locations and 1,000+ total attorneys, is trailblazing an office layout concept that may make your managing partner shake in his/her boots or prompt a chin stroke of interest – the Collaboration Corner.

I was lucky enough to see what this Collaboration Corner was all about when I was given a tour of Little Mendelson’s Miami location by their Office Administrator and South Florida ALA

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COLLABORATION CORNERS

The collaboration corner is a multi-functional area open to all employees and visitors, giving everyone access to their own corner office experience.

Chapter President, Marie Colòn. Three years ago, the Miami office of Littler

Mendelson decided to move to the centrally located and well-appointed Wells Fargo



building in downtown Miami, with the intention of doing a full build-out. Given the number of employees at LM Miami, the design team needed to come up with an idea to avoid paying the high costs of leasing the entire 27th floor, while keeping an aesthetically pleasing and functional work environment for all employees. The answer was simple: smaller work spaces. In order to get smaller work spaces, they decided to do away with the culprit of office real estate square footage: the corner offices. And voila! – the Collaboration Corner was born!

Each of the three corners of LM Miami are Collaboration Corners. These spaces are multi-functional and open to all employees and visitors. While each Collaboration Corner is slightly unique from

its counterparts, they all share the following: workstations equipped with phone and internet connectivity options, lounge chairs with ottomans, and Instagram-worthy views. In essence, each member of LM Miami has access to their own corner office experience.

The feedback received by

employees and visitors alike regarding the Collaboration Corners has far exceeded expectations. For this reason, subsequent build-outs for LM locations have followed suit incorporating the Collaboration Corners to raving reviews.

It's certainly apparent that the compartmentalized layout and

hierarchical office designation is evolving and becoming a thing of the past. The necessity to have an open mind for what's to come is an understatement!

Lilly Torres is the Office Administrator at Pathman Lewis, LLP and the Editor-In Chief of The Network. ltorres@pathmanlewis.com








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A Recruiter's Tips for Attracting Top Talent

By Bill Karp, Legal Search Solutions

Hiring exceptional talent is critical to your law firm's success. Whether it's the senior partners who offer visionary leadership, the associates who can quickly execute on the legal strategies formulated from above, or the support staff who ensure that the work flow is maintained and that deadlines are met, a law firm needs great people to thrive. Naturally, employers should always reach towards the goal of bringing the best and brightest to their organization in any economic climate.

If you've ever tried to recruit a new employee for your firm, you know how challenging the process can be. You have to find the right person at the right time, and offer him or her a desirable employment package.

Contrary to what many believe, a high salary isn't always the deciding factor for a job candidate. In fact, our employment surveys consistently show

that a reasonable commute, flexible schedule and workplace environment are equally, if not more important.

This is good news for law firms of all sizes, large and small. Instead of competing on salary, you can compete on the many other advantages of working in your office. Keep the following employee recruitment strategies in mind when it's time to fill your next open position.

Emphasize the Perks

Every law firm is different. Think about what you can do or offer that sets you apart. It is important to demonstrate the benefits of working for your law firm. Top talent will appreciate your firm's culture if your firm offers:

A Positive Environment – This may seem obvious, but you'd be surprised by the number

of law firms and corporations that are known for having a negative "vibe." These places are filled with negativity and unhappy employees, many of whom are looking to leave. Not surprisingly, these businesses are often known in the community. Once this reputation is in place, it is very hard to change people's perceptions.

Conversely, the happiest employees get along with their co-workers, and even continue to see them outside the office. An environment without unnecessary stress, that offers an attitude of acceptance, and supportive supervisors makes people glad to come to work every day. It also makes it easier to "sell" your office to potential new hires.

Less Bureaucracy – Less is definitely more when it comes to bureaucracy. Ensure that employees feel as if their voices will be heard. Hold regular meetings; encourage people to speak and make them feel comfortable coming to you with questions, concerns and ideas.



New Challenges – Encourage your employees to learn new things. Maybe it's new software you are contemplating buying, taking a seminar relevant to the firm's practice area, joining the local paralegal or legal secretary association, or being involved in a new matter that is different or presents new challenges. Use job diversity and the "opportunity to grow" as another recruitment strategy to attract people who are easily bored and want to contribute.

Flexibility – Not all law firms can offer flexible hours, but if you have employees who like to start early and others who are not "morning people" maybe you can arrange a flexible work schedule to accommodate existing staff and attract new hires. If this is possible, your employees will be happier which, in turn, will lead to higher retention rates.

In addition to offering the most competitive salary your budget permits, you can also entice candidates with:

Incentives – Make it known that employees are rewarded for outstanding performance. Incentive programs give prospective employees something to look forward to and make them aware that their contributions will be recognized.

Profit Sharing / 401K Plan – Does your firm reward your employees during successful years? Do you offer employees the opportunity for “forced savings” with a 410K plan (and does your firm offer a matching contribution)? Both profit sharing programs and 401k plans are great ways to entice candidates to join your firm – after all, everybody likes “free money.”

Retention

Once you have uncovered and hired top talent, it is equally important not to lose them. With the economy booming and law firms seemingly busier than ever, the last thing you want to do is lose your key employees to a competing firm with better benefits – either financial or “lifestyle.”

To that point, it's important to remember that employee retention starts the day you hire an employee. Whatever you do, don't wait until they're halfway out the door to try to please them. Show your employees you appreciate them from day one, and give them the tools they need to make both themselves and your law firm successful.



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Raising the Bar Wellness Plan

By Melissa Clark, Firm Administrator, Hewson, & Van Hellemont, P.C.

A little over a year ago, we started our firm Wellness Committee. We asked for volunteers from different areas of our firm to sit in as Wellness Ambassadors. The response was overwhelming and was such a positive boost for our firm. We have dedicated ourselves to meeting bi-monthly and have offered sessions ranging from nutrition planning all the way to on-site chair massages. We just implemented our first Biggest Loser Challenge and had a large number of staff participate. We are constantly thinking of new and innovative ways to promote healthy interaction here in the workplace. We sponsor 5k walk/run events, purchase equipment such as Nutribullets so our staff can continue to make healthy eating choices, encourage Fitbit challenges and even offer healthier food choices in our vending machines.



The response that we have had in the past year proves that this idea was exactly what our staff was looking for. We have incorporated the costs into our annual budget and try to minimize the employee costs. We love the fact that we have a high energy, positive committee that is excited to continue to bring a healthy balance to our workplace.



“To promote the mind, body, and spirit of our employees to help them achieve a balanced, healthy lifestyle, personally and professionally.”

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*Ilan Sredni, President
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ALA Annual Conference & Expo

by Carole Sheets

The Association of Legal Administrators (ALA) National Conference & Expo was held in Los Angeles California from May 22 – 25, 2016. Over 1,000 Administrators from 12 countries and 150 exhibitors attended the conference. Our chapter had 16 members in attendance, most of which received scholarships from the chapter.

While I have attended many national conferences during my 25+ years as a member, they are all unique and I always come back with new ideas, refreshed energy, knowledge and more friends.

The conference included Idea Exchange Sessions for Large, Medium & Small firms, 25 Business of Law Discussion (Bold Bite) sessions, 10 Business Matter Sessions given by ALA's Business Partners and over 80 educational sessions. You can visit ac2016.alanet.org to access the session handouts.

I personally attended sessions on a variety of topics, including the following:

- Writing Successful Responses to Request for Proposals
- Law Firm Profitability in the New World
- How Administrators Can Support Business Development
- Electronic Billing Trends and Insights
- Pressure on Law Firms to Protect Client Data
- Changing Role of the Legal Secretary
- Maximizing LinkedIn for Lawyers
- Federal Law Employment Update

My visits to the Exhibit Hall allowed me to reconnect with "old" friends, see enhancements to existing software and products and learn of new products and services that will benefit my firm. Plus you always come away with "goodies" for your office.

Our chapter always starts off the conference with a chapter dinner where we can all gather on a social basis, meet new members and spouses and plan the week. Each day after a full schedule of educational sessions and meeting with exhibitors, you attend happy hours and/

or dinner parties sponsored by the exhibitors and ALA. Once again, this allows you time to meet administrators from all over the world, reconnect with old friends and learn of new products and



services. Alternatively, you can elect to have dinner with fellow chapter members or your new friends.

The conference ended with a concert sponsored by the ALA VIP Partners and then dessert and dancing sponsored by ALA.

Unfortunately, it appears many of our members have never attended a national or regional conference for a variety of reasons. The most common are:

- My firm does not realize the benefits of my membership with the national and local chapter
- My firm does not support my attendance, time

away from the office or financially

- I do not want to use my vacation time to attend a conference
- I cannot afford to pay for the travel, hotel or registration

ALA National and our chapter's board members (past and present) are committed to assisting all members with educating their partners on the benefits of membership and attendance at national, regional and local conferences/seminars. You can visit www.alanet.org/membership/benefits.aspx to view "The Value of ALA Membership". I encourage you to read the testimonials and watch the videos.

Alternatively, you can request South Florida



Chapter Board Members to make a presentation to your partners.

With regard to the costs of attending a national or regional conference, our chapter provides



its committee chairs and board members with scholarships to attend the national or a regional conference. If you are interested in joining a committee, please contact Marie Colon at mcolon@littler.com. Joining a committee and becoming a committee chair are ways to meet more members, development friendships and eventually become a board member. Yes, it requires time and commitment, but it is worth every minute on a professional and personal level.

Additionally, one of the benefits of membership in the chapter is the opportunity to attend a conference at a reduced cost or fully paid. The Fall/Winter Scholarship Conference application deadline is July 1st. Visit www.alasofla.org/ Member-Benefits to get additional information and download the application.

If your firm requires you to use your vacation time while attending a conference, you should consider

it as time well spent for the advancement of your career. A person has to be willing to devote time, energy and sometimes financial resources for their own professional development. Successful administrators make themselves an asset to their firm.


The South Florida Chapter has a lot to be proud of. Vicki Smith-Bilt was on the National Conference Committee and is serving a three year term on the ALA National Board of Directors as the Region 2 Director. Additionally, Paula Lawson is on the ALA National CLM Committee and Lisa Dasher and Sharon Abrahams are members of the Professional Development Advisory Committee. Sharon Abrahams was also a speaker at the conference. Also, Shundrallah Covington won the Quest Award for her diversity & inclusion efforts in 2015 and under Judith Pawloski's leadership, the chapter



won the 2015 Presidents' Award of Excellence.

After the conference concluded, several South Florida Chapter members flew home while others paired up with fellow chapter members to drive up the Pacific Coast to San Francisco. Lisa Dasher and I headed to Santa Monica where we rented bicycles and rode down the Pacific Beach for about 25 miles, visited Muscle Beach, walked a few piers, trolled down Hollywood Boulevard, toured Madame Tussauds Wax Museum, became familiar with the

local bus schedule's hop-on,hop-off system and went shopping on Rodeo Drive.

Over the years, I have developed many friendships through ALA National and our chapter. Take advantage of your membership – attend the national and regional conferences, attend local events, join a committee and have face-to-face contact with your fellow administrators. We are each other's support group. 

And more from the ALA Annual Conference & Expo

It had been many years since I attended a national conference and I was not disappointed. I gained over 12 hours of educational credits for my CLM recertification, met some great people, saw a couple Bold Bite presentations by business partners that interested me, and created some new memories with other members of our chapter who attended. I'm looking forward to the next opportunity to attend an ALA conference.

--Susan Butler, CLM, Office Administrator, Wolpe & Leibowitz, LLP

This years' ALA National Conference in LA was fantastic! The educational classes were very informative and helpful. I was even able to bring back and implement some of the ideas shared by the speakers in my office. I am glad I was able to attend this great event. Can't wait for Denver!

--Janette Lischner, Office Administrator, Arnstein & Lehr LLP

Yearning for the most up to date knowledge of legal trends and innovations in technology is part of the DNA of an administrator. The ALA annual conference in Los Angeles emphasized exactly this with the varied educational sessions.

--Marlon Mendez, International Operations Manager, Holland & Knight

What a great Conference! This was my fourth conference and once again, the sessions were incredibly informative and relevant to take back to my firm. I was reminded by key note speaker Daymond John to set goals, network, and stay on top of the cutting edge within your law firm. One of the more memorable sessions I attended was "Creating a Great Workplace through the Gift of GAB: Goals, Attitude & Behavior." I was also able to spend time with old friends and make new ones. Looking forward to Denver in 2017!

— Marie Colon, Office Administrator, Littler Mendelson, P.C.

Shundrallah Covington of Murray Law, P.A. Wins Quest Award

The Quest Award recognizes a new member of ALA for his or her conviction, dedication and relentless pursuit of personal and professional excellence. There were more than 500 eligible candidates this year, 11 of whom were nominated by their chapters for this recognition.

This year's Quest Award winner is Shundrallah A. Covington of Murray

Law, PA in Miami Lakes, Florida. Shun joined ALA and immediately became involved in chapter activities. During a lunch with a board

member, the idea for the chapter's Diversity & Inclusion Committee was born. Being new to the organization, Shun was reluctant to lead this committee but instead served as a member. Her enthusiasm and passion led to the coordination of a half-day diversity seminar as well as a diversity spotlight for each chapter meeting. To challenge herself even further, Shun

joined a Certified Legal Manager (CLM) study group and became an advocate for the group.

Congratulations, Shun!



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ALA SOFLA AWARDS 5 SCHOLARSHIPS

The Scholarship Committee has awarded five scholarships this year, three of which are renewals! The recipients are:

Michael Moreiras
Isabel-Maria Martinez
Omar Paz
Nathia Paz
Kristian Cruz

The chapter wishes to thank all the firms and individual members who donated to the fund.



ALA SOFLA ACHIEVES PRESIDENTS' EXCELLENCE AWARD

The South Florida Chapter has been awarded the 2016 Presidents' Excellence Award! This award, named in honor of ALA's Past Presidents, recognizes chapters for their efforts in effective chapter leadership.



Cece Pelaez Retires



As many of you already know, I'm retiring the end of this month after 47 years. Everyone knows how helpful membership in this association is but I don't think they realize how educational each of our email "surveys" and lunch meetings are in our development. When I first joined the ALA in the early 1990's, I was overwhelmed with the responsibilities of my position and unsure where to go for help. Responses to a question about office attire were just as numerous as those on how to get a cubicle neighbor to stop popping his gum. Ah, the awkward situations, the unusual scenarios, the uncomfortable issues, all helped by the wonderful members of the

ALASOFLA. I wish for you all the rich blessings of health and happiness.

--Cece Pelaez, retired Firm Administrator, formerly of Bast Amron, LLP

Vicki Smith-Bilt Completes First Triathlon

I participated in my first triathlon, Mack Cycle's TriMiami on Sunday, May 15. It was a sprint distance triathlon, consisting of a .25-mile swim, a 10-mile bike, and a 5k (3.1-mile) run. I was amazed and gratified to place third in my age group!

--Vicki Smith-Bilt, SPHR, CLM, Business Director, Greenberg Traurig



Judi Pawloski Published in Broward College Literary Arts Magazine

Recently, I submitted two of my poems and a short story for consideration to the Broward College Award Winning Literary Arts Magazine P'An Ku (yes, I am a part-time student there trying to finish my degree). Hoping just one would be chosen, I was proud and honored that all three of my pieces were selected! The featured photo is from a reception where I got to meet other applicants and the team that selected the pieces and put the magazine together. I even got to read one of the poems and a snippet of the short story at the reception. It was an amazing night!

--Judi Pawloski, CLM, Peterson Bernard

Paper
By Judith Hart

I am born of wood, pulp, cotton, water.
Empty, I anxiously await, upon me. Write.
Blank, lined, red, papyrus, yellowed, crisp white.
We the People, In God We Trust, We share these truths. Write.

I extend my hand. I am all you make of me. Write.
I smell of fragrant spring flowers, peal like clanging bells.
Eggs, milk, butter, cheese, don't forget the laundry, please.
Doyle's Holmes, Christie's Poirot, Pound's toilet paper. Write.

I grow to be your diploma, marriage certificate, divorce decree, Will.
Dear Diary, Gone With the Wind, Happy Mother's Day, Mommy.
Blank blank blank blank blank blank blank blank. Write.
Your thoughts are gone. Nothing. Empty. Write!

I die to ease your sorrowful heart, tell me your untold story. Write.
Without you, I am nothing. Lifeless. Meaningless. Empty. Right?
Scribble upon me, fast, hurry before the thought is gone.
Bare your soul, fill my soul, share tears, fears. Write.





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Between Settlements](#)

3:00-4:00 PM

Two locations: Richman
Greer or Greenberg Traurig

Wed., July 20, 2016

[Webinar: Creating
Proactive Leadership](#)

3:00-4:00 PM

Two locations: Richman
Greer or Greenberg Traurig

Thursday, July 28, 2016

[Happy Hour - Broward](#)

5:30 - 7:30 PM

Grille 401
Ft. Lauderdale

Wed., August 10, 2016

[Miami Dade Monthly
Lunch Meeting](#)

11:45 - 1:30 PM

Hyatt Regency,
Downtown Miami

Thurs., August 11, 2016

[Broward Monthly Lunch
Meeting](#)

11:45 - 1:30 PM

The Tower Club

Sat., August 13, 2016

[Family Fun Event](#)

11:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Splitsville, The Shops at
Sunset Place
A Member and up to
3 guests are free!

Thurs., Sept. 1,, 2016

[CLM Fall Application
Deadline](#)

Thurs., Sept. 15, 2016

[Business Partner
Appreciation Luncheon](#)

11:45 AM - 1:30 PM

Tower Club,
Fort Lauderdale

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