



EXECUTIVEDIRECTIONS

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Professional Legal Management Week — October 3 – 7, 2005

Managing any business, let alone one in the legal field, has never been easy. In law firms, corporate legal departments and other legal organizations, effective management takes broad knowledge and expertise. It requires diverse skills and abilities. It takes dedication, hard work, patience and perseverance. And management in legal organizations is uniquely impacted by the fact that the practice of law is a service profession where, in addition to all the standard challenges, business decisions and management must mesh with service to clients, high degrees of accountability and public trust, and an intellectually charged and demanding environment.

“Success” in business, including the practice and business of the law, can be characterized or defined in many ways and contexts. One important definition is that “success” is good management in action. Good management is professional management, and the importance of that concept to the success of the business of the law is what has led ALA to establish Professional Legal Management Week (PLMW).

Professional Legal Management Week is about awareness, understanding, education, and recognition. It is about conveying what men and women in the legal management profession do on a daily basis. It is an opportunity for

education and for increasing the management understanding and business “savvy” of everyone in the organization — among other things, this special week can be an impetus for better in-firm education about how your firm or legal department runs.

And PLMW provides a forum for recognizing those in legal management for what they do and the role they play in the success of the organization, and in its service to its clients and to those who work in the organization. “Man” is the principal syllable in “management” and PLMW is in part tied to recognition of the human side of business success.

A key part of Professional Legal Management Week is its focus on “Professional” — both in the sense of something done well and at high levels, and in the sense of a career commitment by those in legal management. That is sometimes overlooked, but the commitment is no less than that made by lawyers in practicing law and being advisers, counselors and advocates; it is present in those who are planners and designers, analysts and decision makers, managers and administrators, and supervisors and implementers.

As such, PLMW is not confined to administrators or ALA members. Its focus is on professional legal management and on *all* those on the management

team who contribute to their organization’s success — including managing partners, principal administrators, chief operating officers, and management specialists in areas like marketing,

human resources, information systems and technology, legal recruiting, library administration, and paralegal management. In addition to being ALA members, many of those with careers in those areas are also members of specialty law-related organizations and we have reached out to those groups and invited them to formally join ALA as sponsoring partners of PLMW. We hope this can be a professionwide effort.

And that includes the participation of ALA chapters, the support of our vendor partners, and most importantly the interest and participation of ALA members. In the coming weeks and months ALA will be taking many steps to meet Professional Legal Management Week’s multiple goals of awareness, understanding, education and recognition; and we’ll be sending along ideas you can use in your firm or organization to carry out those goals and show and develop the pride we should all feel in professional legal management. ♦



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