



Philadelphia Chapter of the Association of Legal Administrators Round Table and Idea Exchange Ground Rules and Suggestions

- 1) **What is said in the room, stays in the room.** To foster full, frank, and honest discussion, we expect discretion on the part of ALL participants with respect to the topics, comments, suggestions, and questions covered.
- 2) **Notwithstanding Rule 1, do not say something you would not want your Managing Partner and/or Management Committee to hear.** If you have a specific situation or problem to discuss, consider changing the facts, circumstances and/or identities involved to sufficiently obfuscate the details. Just remember that nothing said in these meetings is privileged from legal discovery, and you certainly don't want to discuss anything related to pending or threatened litigation.
- 3) **Do not hog the mike.** Round tables and idea exchanges are driven by participation – they are collaborative exercises and the more voices heard, the more valuable they are. Extended soliloquies may be shut down by the discussion leader.
- 4) **Topics are a starting point, not a directive.** Expect the discussion to segue (sometimes gradually, at other times suddenly), from one topic to the next. These “free association” moments can be valuable – let them go to see where they lead. But before you head off in a new direction, make sure the current topic has been discussed to the satisfaction of the entire room.
- 5) **Less is more.** Too many topics for a single round table or idea exchange forces superficial and quick visits to each topic to make sure you get through the entire list, or make the attempt to do so. A few topics (or even one) covered in depth can be far more valuable.
- 6) **Play nice.** Leave your judgment hats and eye-rolls at the door: Round tables and idea exchanges are judgment-free zones that require civility, courtesy, and respect from all participants for all participants.
- 7) **Connect.** Use your round table and idea exchange participation to connect with other chapter members. Have a problem that you feel more comfortable discussing in one-on-one setting? Think you have a solution to a problem posed by another participant? Reach out, connect, and ask for or offer assistance.
- 8) **Mentor.** Round tables and idea exchanges are one of the few settings where law firm managers and administrators of widely-varying experience levels can get together and “talk shop.” Take advantage of this to both impart and gain wisdom.
- 9) **You drive.** If your participation in a round table or idea exchange triggers in you a desire to attend a follow-up to explore a topic in more depth, or attend a session on a new topic, consider moderating your own roundtable: The Philadelphia ALA Chapter Education Committee would be delighted to facilitate that for you, including helping you find meeting space and providing lunch. Email the committee (education@Phila-ala.org) with your ideas.



Philadelphia Chapter of the Association of Legal Administrators How to Get a Round Table Started

A Round Table will consist of between 5-15 ALA members. Events will be scheduled from 12:00pm – 1:00pm, but could be scheduled at other times. A Round Table discussion should last for approximately one hour; time will be monitored by a facilitator. Round Tables are comprised of members who share a similar work environment (ex. Small Firm), a similar job function (ex. Benefits Specialist) or a similar work product/tool (ex. Juris software). Round Tables could be a one-time discussion on a particular subject or occur on a regular basis (monthly/quarterly) and cover multiple topics in each session.

1) **Submit your suggestion for a Round Table to education@Phila-ala.org**

If it is important to you, it probably is important to many of your ALA peers. In what type of discussion group would you participate? Your suggestion will be reviewed and scheduled by the Education Committee.

2) **Agree to participate as a co-facilitator with your Education Committee partner at the first Round Table event that you suggested.**

We would ask that you agree to co-facilitate the first meeting along with a member of our Education Committee. You do not have to co-facilitate, but we hope you that you would.

3) **Confirm a date, secure a venue, post event on the website and send invitations.** The Education Committee does all of this work! Dates will be confirmed based on availability of venues and in consideration of other ALA Chapter events, as well as general holidays. Round Tables will be posted approximately one month prior to the date to allow for registration and promotion.

4) **Prepare a list of discussion topics.** As noted in point #4 of the Guidelines, 'topics are a starting point, not a directive.' Facilitators come prepared, but the conversation can evolve organically. About 1-2 weeks before the event, co-facilitators will prepare a 'very' rough outline of topics to be discussed. This outline is not shared with the group, but serves as the facilitators' roadmap for keeping the conversation moving. It should take about 1 hour to prepare your outline.

5) **Arrive early on event day.** Facilitators should arrive approximately 20 minutes early to check venue, confirm delivery of food (if having a meal). Adjust tables/seating into a circle or semi-circle, so all participants can see one another. Confirm attendance. Education Committee will have a list of registrants.

6) **Complete the brief Round Table survey.** Ask participants to complete the brief survey. This will help the Education Committee determine if the group has a desire to continue and to schedule the next event.

7) **Send brief notes from the discussion to the group? Yes? No?**

