5 Questions with Dan Berlin, President, Software Technology, Inc.

1. You've been involved with ALA for a long time. What's been the most beneficial outcome of your ALA participation?

The most beneficial outcome has been that I met my wife at an ALA conference! Other than that, it has been gaining a better understanding of the work and needs of administrators. Having been a business partner with ALA for 30 years, we have had the opportunity to develop relationships and work directly with ALA members. This frontline access has helped us better understand their needs, and led to changes that have made our software and service better.

2. In what ways can ALA and our business partner community work together to help our members succeed?

Continue to be open to conversation. So many times our contacts at law firms are not willing to discuss their needs or listen to how we can help them. The thing that most distinguishes the ALA members to business partners is their willingness to have a conversation about what we have to offer. Even if they are not interested in our product or service, that conversation – where we get to understand why – is extremely valuable.

Business partners can work together with ALA to provide insightful education and recommendations that help members choose the software or service that is right for them. It is not unusual for us to end a conversation with an ALA member with a recommendation of another product that might better fit their needs. We've been in this industry for more than 35 years, so we know our strengths and when we aren't the best fit. We also know the other players, so when we aren't the right fit, we can often steer them to a company that is. The national and regional conferences are great venues to accomplish this.

Our philosophy is not to sell a product or service – it's to get a client that we can partner with for years to come that helps us both become better and be successful at what we do.

3. What do small firms need to know about Tabs3 in 2016?

We have been committed to helping small- to mid-sized firms work more efficiently and be more productive for more than 35 years. That commitment will never change. With our latest release, Version 18, we focused on streamlining day-to-day activities that are directly managed by ALA members using our software – bank account reconciliation, managing trust accounts, reporting, etc. We also continue to be dedicated to provide the best and most responsive support in the industry. The manager of our support department has been with us for more than 20 years, and she has seen it all. So when you call us for support, you are speaking to an employee in her department that is trained and prepared to assist you. It reinforces our dedication to being a business partner with our clients – not just the company that sold them software.

4. Why is it important for members to regularly engage with their existing business partner?

It's important because we are always willing to help members work more efficiently to make their lives easier. Our software is flexible and molds to the way members work, so it's to their benefit to follow up to see if they're getting the most out of the software they're using. In addition, a majority of our enhancements come directly from our clients. Keeping an open line of communication to provide us

with feedback on what we can do better, and what additional features they'd like to see, assists us in providing a more full-featured solution to our clients.

5. What can ALA's large-firm members learn from our community of small- to mid-sized firms?
As any organization grows, it's easy to focus more on the administration and processes and less on the people and the relationships. Obviously processes are necessary to manage larger, more complex organizations. But that doesn't mean that the relationships are no longer important. Taking time to make sure your business partner really understands your business will lead to better choices, better service and a better long-term relationship. Large firms should try to maintain those with vendors, even as they grow.

DAN BERLIN
President, Software Technology, Inc.

For more than 35 years, Dan Berlin has played a major role in the development and success of Tabs3, PracticeMaster and Software Technology, Inc. (STI). He joined STI in 1984 and was named Vice President of Sales in 1986 and became the President of STI in 1995. He has been a regular speaker and panelist at national and regional seminars and conferences on law office automation for the last 25 years. Berlin also sits on the Vendor Advisory Boards for ABA Techshow, LegalTech and ABA Expo and is a past advisory board member for ALA.