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Blog, Blog, Blog: Take Advantage of the Fact that at Least 27% of In House Corporate Lawyers Use Blogs as a Principal means of Identifying Outside Lawyers to Hire

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June, 2010

[The original post can be seen here.](#)

Recently, a deputy general counsel for the Association of Corporate Counsel, reported at a conference about a corporation that chose to conduct a “beauty contest” for a particular engagement by independently identifying the top five lawyers in the country who had the expertise to handle the matter. Of the group invited to make presentations, most were New York based. The client selected a Kentucky firm, since its rates were 25% lower than its East Coast competitors. James Merklinger of the ACC, who conveyed the anecdote, explained “In this day and age of technology, it doesn’t really matter where you are, so there’s no reason to pay top dollar if you can find someone who’s considered just as capable.”

Neat story with obvious lessons.

But the astute reader should be thinking about a different question: How in the hell did the client find a lawyer in Kentucky, of all places, with the precise expertise it

needed? A better question you should be asking is: Instead of your chasing around looking for new clients and business opportunities, attending de rigueur lunches, golf outings, industry specific conferences (where you are competing with a score or more of lawyers looking for the same work) is there some efficient way, other than late night TV ads, for you to have clients look for you, instead of your looking for them?

The fellow from Kentucky figured out how to do this.

ALM Legal Intelligence Group, in association with the Zeugheiser Group released early this week the result of a survey it recently conducted which will lead you to obvious conclusions: **27% of in-house lawyers used blogs posted** by lawyers on relevant topics as **the “most important”** tool in researching for outside counsel for a particular engagement. Another interesting statistic: only 96 of the AmLaw 200 firms used blogs. Subsequent data, published only a month later, suggests that corporate reliance on blogs to identify lawyers with requisite expertise, actually exceeds 41% of all corporate legal departments.

In fact, corporate use of various Google tools to track information on new developments in their affected industries is rather widespread by in house corporate departments. These Google tools identify to the user postings in the blogosphere relevant to their industries which may be of interest to them. This is the new radar screen. You must put yourself on the screen.

So I assume that each lawyer takes pride in his or her specialized expertise in a subset of his or her broader generic practice area. So for example, you are a litigator with relatively unique expertise in nuclear reactor construction disputes involving concrete. Likely, your firm’s web site will have you listed as part of its litigation group or part of its construction group. A Google search made by a prospective client for lawyers with that unique expertise (expertise in nuclear reactor construction disputes) will never find you doing a web search.

Don’t believe me? Try it yourself. Identify a specific area in your practice for which you have specialized and conduct a search a lawyer with that expertise. The heavy odds are you will be shocked not to find your name popping up. So,

how are the 27% of in-house lawyers who rely on blogs as their most “important tool” in searching for outside counsel going to find you?

Lesson 1: create and maintain a blog (don't know how? Skip the call to your IT department and just go to Google or a similar search engine and type in this question: How do I create a blog? Or ask your kids or grandkids). Lesson 2: put postings of interest *and of substance* on your blog, and please, don't make them boring or make them look like they were written by a second year law student writing an analysis of a case. Short, interesting, substantive, informative is part of the solution (Example this is a recent development that you should know about [please, please, no case citations and no procedural history, nobody cares]). Lesson 3: Post regularly (I suggest once a week). Lesson 4: use the key terms of your special expertise (such as nuclear reactor construction disputes involving concrete and use those terms in different combinations often. Lesson 5: circulate a very short, sweet and enticing email among your clients and prospective clients *very briefly* advising the reader that you've just written a piece about the subject and include a link to your posting . Keep adding to your email list new prospective clients. [I previously addressed this issue, if you forgot, click this link.](#) Lesson 6: Include a link to your posting on Linked In and the relevant groups to which you belong (there are 1,500,000 lawyers on Linked In and on www.jdsupra.com , thousands of groups dealing with nuclear reactors and construction, which have too many millions of members for me to count), [as we previously recommended.](#) Chances are that if you are reading this, you just saw how this all works.

And, the final and most important point, the more often you use the terms associated with your area of expertise and the more times people link up to your web site, the more often your name and area of expertise will show up when one of those 27% of corporate counsel are looking for somebody who needs the very special skills you have. Or, when an ACC member or other in house corporate lawyer calls a colleague and asks if he or she knows somebody with expertise in nuclear reactor construction disputes, hopefully he or she will say check out so and so. I've read his or her blog and he or she seems to know what they are talking about.

And then keep a pile of new matter intake forms piled on your desk as the phone rings off the hook.

Six weeks after I originally authored this piece in early June, 2010, law.com, issued a report, [which I also described](#) which further demonstrated how vital blogging has become in the arsenal of marketing. And, I have since then received dozens of notes from law firm clients letting me know that they acted on our advice and in fact, the telephone calls did indeed begin rolling in.

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