



Graphics to Help You Better Build Your Construction Case

by Morgan C. Smith

Owner of [Cogent Legal](#)

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When it comes to construction issues, I feel like the actor in that old ad on TV who says, "I'm not a doctor, but I play one on TV." I'm not in the construction field, but I litigated construction cases for over a decade and consequently couldn't help but develop an expertise in construction standards and practices. In a similar way, some med-mal attorneys I know have a better understanding of proper standard of care than even doctors do. When you have to prosecute or defend a case that revolves around highly technical issues, you're sure to learn the subject inside and out.

With this in mind, making the transition from litigating construction-related cases to developing graphics for those types of cases has been a natural fit for me personally and for Cogent Legal as a firm. We strengthened our foundation in this area, so to speak, by bringing two architects onto the Cogent Legal team, whom I'll tell you about below.

One construction attorney I know mentioned to me that he hesitates to use graphic design firms for litigation since he has to spend so much time explaining what he needs and what the case is about, which is frustrating. This is a shame since there are few other areas outside of patent law cases that virtually require the use of well-done graphics to present the case, since the cases are highly technical and lend themselves to visuals that show what caused problems, what the standards of care are and other issues.

To give attorneys ideas about how they can build and present their construction cases with timelines, animations and other interactive informational graphics, I asked my office to prepare [an online brochure](#) (note, it must be viewed on a Flash-enabled computer or mobile device).

In construction litigation, almost every description—from Aggregate, Beater Bars and Canusa wraps, to Wonderboard, Yokes and Z-bars—involves specialized language of the trade that must be made understandable. Visual aids enhance understanding, engage the audience and improve the retention of information in ways that oral and written descriptions alone simply cannot. Almost no area of law benefits more from graphics for mediation and trial than cases involving construction issues. The graphics help explain expert witness testimony, show basic layout of the buildings involved and illustrate the story of the case.



The cover to our interactive guide on [Construction Litigation Graphics](#).

[Click image to view online guide](#) (note, it must be viewed on a Flash-enabled computer or mobile device).

To enhance Cogent Legal’s specialty in providing graphics for construction litigation, I hired a licensed architect to assist with our construction-related cases and to provide legal and admissible exhibits as needed. I’m pleased to introduce William Marquand as a new member of our team. Bill is familiar with all phases of construction methods, processes and procedures. He has consulted with trial teams and previously worked at one of the Bay Area’s largest architectural and engineering firms. A longtime modeler, draftsman, technician and graphic artist, he contributes a diverse skill set and deep knowledge in design and construction.

My creative director, Joyce Hsu, also has a strong background in architectural design. She earned her master’s degree in architecture and worked at architectural design firms before joining Cogent Legal.



An example of architectural design work by our creative director Joyce Hsu.

Together, I'm confident we're extremely well positioned to develop demonstratives and provide strategic insights that will help attorneys prepare and present myriad types of construction cases at mediation or trial. I hope you'll [check out our online guide to construction litigation graphics](#) and [contact me](#) if you have comments or feedback.

Morgan Smith is the owner of [Cogent Legal](#), a litigation graphics and trial strategy firm based in the San Francisco Bay Area that develops clear and compelling visual presentations for attorneys to use in mediation or trial. Services include animations, 2D and 3D graphics, medical illustrations, PowerPoint or Keynote presentations, interactive timelines, videos, strategic consulting and trial support. Cogent Legal integrates the legal expertise of a successful trial attorney with the creative and technical talent of a design firm.