

Mightier than the Sword

A legal marketing communications strategy
for Lathrop & Gage LLP

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Executive summary

Lathrop & Gage LLP is a full-service corporate law firm founded in 1873 and is the oldest law firm west of the Mississippi River still in operation. It is one of the largest law firms in the world and is a member of the “AmLaw 200,” a list of the 200 biggest law firms in the U.S. The firm works on behalf of corporations and individuals to provide them with the highest quality of legal advice and representation.

The headquarters of Lathrop & Gage is located in the Midwest, making it highly competitive for serving the legal needs of the agribusiness market. The agribusiness practice group of Lathrop & Gage consists of business attorneys who are uniquely positioned to deliver valuable legal services to agribusiness companies because of their expertise and personal experiences as farmers and ranchers. However, there are several other law firms in the Midwest of similar size and resources as Lathrop & Gage that it competes with in the limited agribusiness market. In addition, changes in the economy brought about by the recent recession have created new threats and opportunities for Lathrop & Gage in the marketplace. These factors necessitate an integrated marketing communications plan to help Lathrop & Gage agribusiness attorneys foster relationships with prospective clients and people who could refer them business

For the purposes of this report, “agribusiness” is defined as any company specifically involved in agriculture for the production of food and/or trade materials such as cotton. We will exclude tobacco due to special regulatory conditions related to this product, and for the same reasons we will exclude the gas and energy sector involved with ethanol derived from corn.

Internal review

Lathrop & Gage is a full service corporate law firm. Diversity is treated as a valuable asset and several initiatives are in place to foster inclusiveness in its culture regardless of background, race, religion, gender, age or sexual orientation. The firm also values community involvement and leadership ("Firm Facts: Lathrop," 2013).

History

Gardiner Lathrop and William Smith opened a law office in 1873 in the River Market district in Kansas City. Lathrop was born in Waukesha, Wis., in 1850 and was a graduate of Yale and the University of Missouri. He earned his law degree at Harvard ("Gardiner Lathrop,").

John Gage was born in Kansas City, Mo., in 1887 and grew up on his parents' dairy farm at Ninth and Cleveland Streets. He sold milk to people in the area throughout his youth, then graduated from the University of Kansas and earned a law degree at the Kansas City School of Law.

In 1940, Gage was elected mayor of Kansas City and helped dismantle the Pendergast political machine. He was re-elected twice and his tenure saw a new era of transparency of government in Kansas City. At the conclusion of his third term, he re-entered private law practice and moved to his farm in Douglas County.

Gardiner Lathrop delivered the commencement speech at John Gage's graduation from high school in 1903 and handed him his diploma. The law firms of Lathrop & Norquist and Gage & Tucker merged to form Lathrop & Gage 93 years later in 1996. Lathrop & Gage is the oldest law firm west of the Mississippi River still in operation ("Firm History: Lathrop," 2013).

Lathrop & Gage today

In 2012, Lathrop & Gage's revenues were \$140.8 million, up from \$138 million in 2011 (Koepp, 2013). The firm currently has 320 lawyers and has offices in 11 cities nationwide: Kansas City, Boston, Boulder, Chicago, Denver, Jefferson City, Los Angeles, New York, Overland Park, Springfield, and St. Louis.

The firm's first and oldest client is the BNSF Railroad ("Our Approach: Lathrop," 2013). The firm also operates a human resources consultancy called HROI Human Resources Return on Investment; a government relations firm called EnGage LLC, and it has a strategic partnership with Rutherford & Bechtold LLC, a complex finance law firm ("Affiliates: Lathrop & Gage," 2013). Joel B. Voran is the firm's CEO ("Administrative Leadership: Lathrop," 2013).

Katherine Hollar, chief marketing officer of Lathrop & Gage, describes the firm's brand as, "formed on the heartland principles of honor, service, trust and value." She adds, "Other firms try to hide their Midwestern values, but we don't need to do that." She says the firm's branding is represented by the pieces of Midwestern art on the home page of its website, and that the art "reflects positive Midwestern values," (Hollar, 2013).

The logo for Lathrop & Gage LLP is displayed in a large, blue, serif font. The letters are bold and evenly spaced, with the ampersand being slightly smaller than the surrounding letters. The 'LLP' is in a smaller font size than the main company name.

The Lathrop & Gage LLP logo

A unique Lathrop & Gage characteristic is its culture of entrepreneurialism. "We support attorneys thinking as business owners," says Hollar. This is reflected in Lathrop & Gage's partnership with the Gigabit Challenge, a contest held in 2011 for entrepreneurs to compete for cash over their ideas on how to use Google Fiber in a business plan (Gigabit Challenge, 2011).

Value

Lathrop & Gage is strategically positioned to offer a better value than its competitors on the coasts in terms of price because having its headquarters and the majority of its offices in the Midwest is less expensive. The firm offers several different payment plans beyond the billable hour such as operation within a predetermined budget, fixed fees for components of services, flat rates regardless of whether an associate or partner works on a project, discounted upfront rates with success fees, and regularly-recurring retainers. These alternative fee arrangements are as a result of industry-wide changes in consumer demand for new payment model options for legal services.

The firm monitors client satisfaction through feedback interviews which are regularly reviewed and acted upon, and the firm invests heavily in technology such as videoconferencing equipment ("Commitment to Value," 2013).

Services

Business Transactions: Lathrop & Gage provides support in sales and purchases for health care and real estate, as well as securities, tax and corporate governance.

Employment and Employee Benefits: Lathrop & Gage works with employers to craft policies, design benefit plans to attract top talent, and provide litigation support.

Environmental: Lathrop & Gage works with clients to assure compliance with environmental legislation. It focuses on environmental insurance, litigation and regulations.

Intellectual Property: Lathrop & Gage handles patent, trademark and copyright through prosecution, transactions and litigation.

Litigation: Lathrop & Gage helps clients resolve conflicts through bankruptcy, antitrust and white collar criminal defense, and product liability defense.

Wealth Strategies: Lathrop & Gage protects its clients' financial futures through drafting wills, estate planning, trusts, and advising on charitable gifts. It protects businesses through succession planning, ownership transfer and entity formation. It also advises nonprofits on issues related to tax and government regulations.

Industries

Lathrop & Gage attorneys offer legal services in the following fields:

- Advertising
- Agribusiness
- Biotechnology and Life Science
- Charitable Organizations
- Construction
- Digital Privacy and Data Protection

- Education
- Energy
- Finance
- Freight Transportation
- Healthcare
- Hospitality & Entertainment
- Media & Entertainment
- Real Estate
- Technology

Firm marketing strategy

Hollar described the firm's commitment to relationships and goodwill as keys to its success. In addition to the newly-launched website lathropgage.com, which was recognized by the Web Marketing Association as "outstanding in the legal and professional services categories," ("Katherine Hollar," 2013) and some magazine advertising, the firm regularly hosts social events as well as continuing legal education (CLE) classes for attorneys. These events create opportunities for Lathrop & Gage lawyers and staff to build and maintain relationships with current clients, prospective clients and referral sources, and to position Lathrop & Gage attorneys as experts in their areas of practice.

Hollar also stresses the importance of responding to requests for proposals (RFPs) from organizations looking for a specific legal service. Her goal is to help the attorneys as much as possible to give those organizations at least three reasons why Lathrop & Gage is the best choice to handle their particular matter. However, she points out that although the marketing department can get them to the "20-yard line," it's up to the attorneys themselves to actually close deals with clients.

One aspect of Lathrop & Gage's commitment to lasting and quality relationships with its clients is its practice of regular client feedback interviews. Hollar initiated the program in 2009 as a means to continually improve the client experience ("Katherine Hollar," 2013). Clients are interviewed about their opinions regarding the firm's performance and their satisfaction with the results. In addition, interviews are used to evaluate relational aspects of the lawyers' service

such as their communication skills and the concern they express for their clients' needs. The results of these interviews are shared with the attorney who worked with the client and with Lathrop & Gage's CEO. Areas where the firm excelled are identified along with potential areas for improvement, and Lathrop & Gage works with clients to craft recommendations about how best to proceed with them in the future. Composite scores from the results of all the client rankings are then calculated and shared with the whole firm to give all timekeepers a general idea of where the firm stands in the eyes of its clients.

Lathrop & Gage maintains a presence on several social media channels. The firm has a LinkedIn page with 856 followers, but does not publish any information beyond an "About" page with a company description. It has a Facebook page with 289 "Likes" where it publishes links to news and articles on its website. Its Twitter page has 570 followers and publishes links to news and articles on its website as well as other relevant legal industry content that is retweeted from other sources. There is no official Lathrop & Gage presence on Google+.

Lathrop & Gage regularly publishes legal alerts on its website with articles that communicate breaking legal developments in specific industries. These alerts contain the contact information of lawyers whom recipients can reach out to for more information. They are then emailed to people who sign up to receive them. There are links to Lathrop & Gage's Facebook and Twitter profiles on each alert (Lathrop & Gage 2013).

David Shorr, partner in charge of the Jefferson City and Columbia offices of Lathrop & Gage ("David A. Shorr," 2013), says, "My market is pretty narrow in terms of what I get. I do more complex cases, almost all in regulatory side. I go to conferences, I belong to quite a few groups that would give me access to people who are going to have issues, and my objective is to get my name out and Lathrop's name."

Shorr said the decision maker in a corporation that chooses to hire him is usually the CLO or the CEO if the company does not have a legal officer, "less than 60 percent of the companies I work with have a CLO." He also said the perceived quality of a lawyer's work and his reputation is "important" to help the company get business.

In regard to the support Lathrop & Gage's marketing department provides to his practice, Shorr said, "They provide us funds from the standpoint of being able to attend conferences, and they do some a very nice (things) for name recognition for Lathrop."

Shorr said he felt social media and content marketing for his practice and for Lathrop & Gage would be helpful: "I think ... as younger people start (becoming a part of the) decision making process ... I think it can be exceptionally effective regarding name recognition. I'm still convinced people are not prepared for advertising lawyers for defensive skills. But name recognition is readily acceptable and helpful."

Shorr warned that social media content alone would not be enough to win new business from his clients: "Younger people have a better understanding about social media. The only reason I even know about these things is because my kids told me. It's not organic with people in their 50s like it is people in their 20s. CEOs and decision makers who are in their 50s will not make a decision based on something they see on (social media)."

Shorr goes on to say he thinks social media is good for name recognition in the marketplace. "I think if used in a broader context, social media is helpful. Stories about practice successes or community involvement are helpful from a standpoint of name recognition and community identification, and the occasional story of a success in a specific area is helpful."

Shorr has a LinkedIn profile with 265 connections (Shorr, 2013).

Agribusiness marketing strategy

Hollar is interested in developing a marketing strategy to help lawyers in the firm's agribusiness industry group develop relationships with decision makers in Fortune 500 agribusiness companies. Many of the firm's locations are strategically positioned in the Midwest where agribusiness is prevalent such as Kansas City, Boulder, Denver, Chicago, Jefferson City, Overland Park, Springfield, Columbia, and St. Louis. Several of the attorneys in its agribusiness industry group have backgrounds in agriculture and have a track record of success in the representation of agribusiness clients.

Notable agribusiness cases handled by Lathrop & Gage include: successfully defending one of the nation’s largest pork producers in a nuisance case related to odors emanating from 80,000 hogs, and obtaining a favorable settlement in a case involving selling and shipping chicken carcasses to Russia ("Agribusiness: Lathrop & Gage," 2013).

The lawyers who lead Lathrop & Gage’s agribusiness group are partners Wallace E. Brockhoff, Dan Cleveland Jr., J.A. “Jay” Felton, and William A. Rudy. Felton is also the firm’s marketing partner and helped launch the firm’s client feedback program and its first national marketing plan ("J.A. "Jay" Felton," 2013).

Agribusiness group

The following is a roster of Lathrop & Gage agribusiness attorneys:

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| <p>Jay Felton Partner Tort Kansas City</p> | <p>Jay is the head of the agribusiness group and the marketing partner for the firm. He focuses his practice on litigation, representing a number of Fortune 1000 companies in product liability, complex commercial, environmental and intellectual property matters.</p> |
| <p>Robyn Anderson Of Counsel Business Litigation Kansas City</p> | <p>Robyn concentrates her practice in insurance coverage and ERISA benefits. She represents both policyholders and insurers. She has particular expertise with matters concerning product recalls, food contamination, environmental liability, toxic tort liability, product defect, business interruption, and the London insurance market.</p> |
| <p>Ashley Atwell Associate Business Litigation Kansas City</p> | <p>Ashley concentrates her practice in business disputes, specifically on tort claims, product liability, white-collar criminal defense and international litigation.</p> |
| <p>Bill Beck Partner Environmental Kansas City</p> | <p>Bill’s practice concentrates on toxic tort and insurance coverage matters. He is a member of the firm’s Executive Committee.</p> |

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| Jean Paul Bradshaw Partner Tort Kansas City | Jean Paul concentrates his practice in tort. He has particular experience leading the firm's hog farm lawsuits, recently obtaining a victory on behalf of Smithfield Foods and Premium Standard Farms. |
| Wally Brockhoff Partner Corporate Kansas City | Wally's practice focuses on corporate matters, primarily mergers and acquisitions, corporate finance, corporate governance, securities law, strategic alliances and ESOP. |
| Dan Cleveland Partner Intellectual Property Denver | Dan practices exclusively in the intellectual property field of law, including all aspects of patents, trademarks, copyrights and trade secrets, as well as related contracts and litigation. |
| Mara Cohara Partner Tort Kansas City | Mara is chair of the tort department. Her practice focuses on litigation involving personal injury, product liability, premises liability, breach of warranty, nuisance, commercial, and toxic torts. |
| Peter Daniel Tort Kansas City | Peter's practice focuses on product liability. He handles warranty claim litigation and advises clients on production and supply disputes. |
| Bill Ford Partner Environmental Kansas City | Bill's litigation experience includes environmental, general business litigation, and products liability. |
| Cameron Garrison Partner Intellectual Property Kansas City | Cameron represents consumer product manufacturers, retail chains, marketing and media clients and others in intellectual property litigation. He has significant experience in patent, trademark, false advertising, copyright and trade secret litigations. |
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| <p>Tom Greaves Partner Corporate Kansas City</p> | <p>Tom counsels clients in corporate and transactional issues including the formation of business entities, mergers and acquisitions, management, strategic relationships, corporate finance and other fundamental business changes.</p> |
| <p>Tedrick Housh Partner Labor and Employment Kansas City</p> | <p>Tedrick concentrates his practice in employment litigation. He handles all types of workplace matters, and frequently handles not to compete matters involving the use and misuse of trade secret data which requires a special emphasis on electronic discovery and related issues. He is the vice chair of the firms data privacy and digital protection practice group.</p> |
| <p>Tim McNamara Partner Business Litigation Kansas City</p> | <p>Tim has more than 30 years of experience representing clients in business and complex commercial litigation. He formerly served as the chair of the firm's litigation department, as a member of the Executive Committee, and as managing partner/CEO. His practice has included jury, non-jury and appellate litigation, as well as numerous mediations and arbitrations throughout the United States. Cases and disputes have included: accountants' liability, bankruptcy, breach of contract, breach of fiduciary duty, business torts, commercial transactions, construction, dealership/distribution, defamation, employment, lender liability, media law, noncompetition agreements, partnership disputes, professional liability, real estate, shareholder disputes, trademark and copyright, trusts and estates, and Uniform Commercial Code.</p> |
| <p>Jessie Merrigan Partner Environmental Kansas City</p> | <p>Jessie focuses in environmental law, including representing clients in administrative negotiations with the EPA and state agencies, advising clients regarding their regulatory requirements and assisting in litigation of environmental claims, including contribution claims under the federal Superfund law.</p> |

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| <p>Sarah Millin Partner Insurance Recovery Kansas City</p> | <p>Sarah focuses her national practice on the litigation, arbitration, mediation and negotiation of complex claims in the areas of insurance recovery. She represents and advises corporate and individual policyholders in policy analysis, claim development, charting, allocation, negotiations, mediations, arbitrations, coverage litigation and risk analysis. She has worked with agribusiness, waste management, financial services, transportation and manufacturing companies, as well as with individual policyholders, in disputes in a wide range of claims.</p> |
| <p>Justin Poplin Partner Intellectual Property Overland Park</p> | <p>Justin is a registered patent attorney, and a former clerk at the United States Patent and Trademark Office Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences. His practice focuses on both transactional and litigated intellectual property matters. He also has experience with intellectual property portfolios and counseling clients regarding trademark, copyright, trade secret, licensing and confidentiality issues.</p> |
| <p>Mark Samsel Associate Business Litigation Overland Park</p> | <p>Mark concentrates his practice in business litigation, handling matters such as breach of contract, loan enforcement actions, construction, insurance disputes, regulatory matters, business torts, and professional liability matters.</p> |
| <p>Kurt Schaefer Partner Environmental Jefferson City</p> | <p>Kurt is a State Senator for the 19th Senate district and chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee. His practice concentrates on litigation, environmental, health care, government relations, administrative, business and public utilities.</p> |
| <p>Eric Schmitt Partner Business Litigation St. Louis</p> | <p>Eric is a State Senator for the 15th District in St. Louis County. His practice focuses on real estate and litigation matters. He also represents several national and local businesses as an advisor and attorney.</p> |

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| <p>Todd Seelman Partner Business Litigation Denver</p> | <p>Todd has more than 20 years' experience representing clients in federal and state antitrust and unfair competition litigation matters. These involve monopolization, price-fixing, bid-rigging, market divisions, resale price maintenance, tying and marketing foreclosures. He is an adjunct professor of antitrust and unfair competition law at the Sturm College of Law at the University of Denver.</p> |
| <p>David Shorr Partner Environmental Jefferson City</p> | <p>David concentrates his practice in environmental law. He is a past director of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, the State of Missouri's environmental protection, state parks, and natural resources agency. He represents clients in regulatory matters in the environmental, energy and utilities arenas and handles complex cases involving the scope of legal authority and government public policy. He has particular experience with water, wastewater, air and solid waste issues.</p> |
| <p>Sally Sullivan Partner Intellectual Property Boulder</p> | <p>Sally has more than 20 years of experience as a patent agent and attorney. She has written and prosecuted patents in numerous aspects of the biotechnology and life sciences industry. She provides counseling on patenting and licensing strategies, patentability, and patent infringement and validity.</p> |

Attorneys in the firm's agribusiness division define "agribusiness" as farmers, seed and chemical producers, and farm implements and machinery. Felton describes "contiguous U.S. farmland overlaid with rail, highway and river transport" as the "greatest natural resource in the world." He points out the opportunity to create a "value chain" of "chemical and seed providers and tech companies, a relatively small group of farmers, and myriad processors" who "use crops to

produce food and energy.” He says Lathrop is uniquely positioned to serve clients in “all the links of that chain,” (“Boots on the Ground,” 2013).

Agribusiness partner Brockhoff grew up in northeast Kansas on a diversified livestock and grain farm, and has been involved in agriculture for his entire life. He went to Kansas State as an undergraduate and earned his law degree from the University of Kansas where he took classes in agribusiness law. Today, his practice focuses on business law to help entrepreneurs by advising on topics such as raising capital, mergers & acquisitions, and other aspects of law that do not involve going to court. A significant number of his clients operate in the agribusiness industry.

Brockhoff describes the process of growing his practice as one involving general networking with family, friends and contacts he has acquired over his lifetime. He says part of getting new business is doing a good job for current clients to earn their referrals, and says this is often the most effective means. He also says this is a particularly good time to be involved in the agribusiness industry: “This is a very exciting time in agribusiness. There’s a lot of activity in the past couple of years such as globalization and development in foreign countries. This has driven a tremendous amount of demand for agricultural products. Food is scarce; we are blessed in the U.S. and particularly in the Midwest to have the most productive farmland in the world. Finally, there are also low interest rates for foreign currencies because the dollar has weakened so much. It’s relatively cheap for other countries to invest in us.”

Regarding the marketing department at Lathrop & Gage and the role it plays in supporting his practice, Brockhoff said, “They’re terrific,” and described how it puts together responses to RFPs, identifies prospective clients, and works to get quotes from Lathrop & Gage attorneys in articles relevant to their practice areas.

When asked if chief legal officers are the primary decision makers is a company decides to use his services, Brockhoff responded, “It depends on how big they are. For smaller companies and mid-market companies, it tends to be the CEO or CFO, oftentimes the principal or founding shareholder. For larger organizations that are large enough to support their own internal legal counsel (it is the CLO).”

Brockhoff said the possibility exists for social media networking to be a useful tactic for business development, but he remains skeptical: “I would say I use social media, I wouldn’t say I’m super active on it. Twitter works great if you’re following your favorite sports team; it’s a less effective medium for communicating complicated legal content.” In regard to a legal marketing communications strategy involving blog content creation and distribution, he said, “The idea is good (but) it’s hard to execute well. You do need relevant content. It takes time to generate content and time is money for lawyers who bill by the hour. There’s tension there between the idea of doing it and the implementation (Brockhoff, 2013).

Brockhoff has a LinkedIn presence with more than 500 connections. He is also a member of several discussion groups involving agribusiness as well as alumni associations and Kansas City-based business (Brockhoff, 2013).

Cleveland has a complete LinkedIn profile with 91 connections and is a member of two groups related to professional interests (Cleveland, 2013). Felton has a complete LinkedIn profile with 406 connections and is a member of four groups related to professional interests. He is on Google+ and six people have him in their circles, and he has a Twitter page with 11 followers (Felton, 2013).

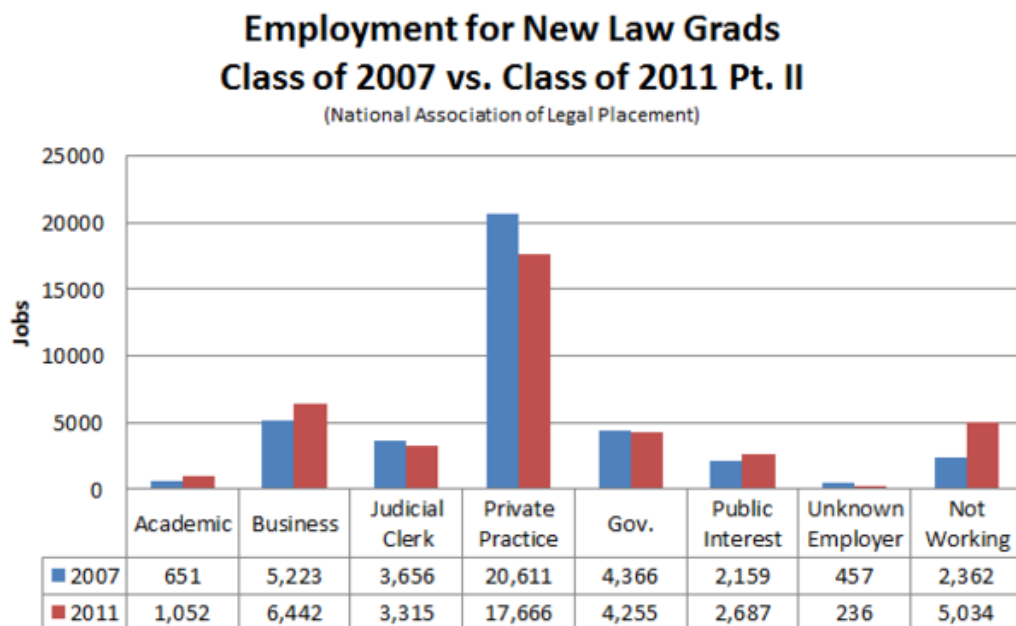
External review

The American legal industry, which generates \$261 billion in revenue annually ("The case against," 2013) is in a time of change (Hopkins, 2010). The recent recession, the rise of the internet and social media as marketing tools, consumer demand for alternative fee arrangements, and the increasingly pinched job market for new lawyers has resulted in a plethora of issues facing legal marketers. While the business of law is still relationship based, the ways in which relationships between clients and attorneys are built and maintained are in a state of flux, creating new risks and opportunities for law firms, lawyers and legal marketers.

Negative effects of the recession

The legal industry was severely negatively affected by the economic crisis and recession of 2008. This was reflected in law firm hiring trends between 2007 and 2011. In this period, law firms hired fewer lawyers and laid off hundreds (Rogers, 2013). Law school applications are down, and more people are graduating from law school without a job than ever before; the legal industry lost 2,300 jobs in January 2013 compared to the previous year (Baird-Remba, 2013).

This graphic from "Business Insider" in 2011 reveals the impact of the financial crisis on the legal industry hiring practices:



New law school graduate employment continues to be a problem, and a trend has developed where recent grads have begun to sue their alma mater because they cannot find jobs despite promises of high graduate employment rates by their law schools. Michael Lieberman, a 2009 graduate of Southwestern Law School in California, says, "I know I did my research on it. I relied on those numbers when I made my decision. I relied on that 95-97 percent employment." He says Southwestern Law School advertises that 97 percent of graduates have jobs within 9 months ("Law school graduate," 2013).

Business model and fee arrangements

Legal marketing and business development has traditionally consisted of lawyers receiving referrals from their network of friends, family and contacts. With the advent of mass communications such as phone book and television advertising, and later internet and social media networking, lawyers were able to reach a larger audience of prospective clients with marketing messages. That outreach, however, is limited by state bar associations that regulate attorney advertising and marketing communications through ethical rules based on the American Bar Association's Model Rules of Professional Conduct.

The purpose of this regulation is to prevent abusive or unethical behavior by attorneys as they develop their practices (*Model Rules*, 2012). Though rules are all based on the same model, they can vary greatly from state to state. For example, North Carolina recently determined that lawyers who practice in its state cannot use online advertising services such as Groupon, but Missouri decided its lawyers may do so (Zaretsky, 2011).

Law firms can only be owned or invested in by attorneys, a rule enforced by the American Bar Association ("The case against," 2013). This has resulted in keeping law firms relatively small compared to businesses in other industries. The largest law firm in the world by number of lawyers, Chicago-based Baker & McKenzie, has only 3,805 attorneys ("The NLJ 350," 2012) and a total of 10,000 employees ("Baker & McKenzie," 2013). This is a small number compared to the 49,000 employees who work for its client The Dow Chemical Company ("Fortune Global 500," July).

The Southern California law firm of Jacoby & Myers recently sued to allow non-lawyers to take ownership interest and to invest capital in law firms on the basis of free speech ("The case against," 2013). The argument is that if outside investors were allowed to infuse law firms with capital, those firms could then operate more like modern businesses with cutting-edge technology and a robust management structure to implement replicable business processes, with the end result being a more valuable service to the client. However, the American Bar Association disagrees, saying that the concerns of a legal practitioner are separate from those of a businessperson, and that lawyers have special ethical obligations to their clients that would be undermined if they also had to consider the needs of investors in order to generate a return on investment. This argument is ongoing.

Regardless of the dispute over the appropriateness of non-lawyer investment in law firms, the business of law is still a business and therefore subject to market forces. One recent development is a change in how clients demand to pay for legal services. Lawyers traditionally charge by the hour and measure the business success of their practices in terms of hours billed over a specific period of time. However, clients that consume high volumes of legal services have begun to demand different billing structures or "alternative fee arrangements."

Since the recession, legal billing rates have increased at a rate faster than consumer spending ("The case against," 2013) and as a result many corporations have decreased the amount of "bread and butter" legal work they outsource, preferring to have their in-house counsel take care of that work instead. Edward Ryan, executive vice president and general counsel of Marriott International, says the change is "a reaction to the significant increases in billing rates over the last 10 years," (Ho, 2012).

Amy Schulman, general counsel of pharmaceutical giant Pfizer, has started to demand flat rates for legal work she directs to outside law firms she hires. She believes the billable hour is an outdated model in the current economical climate of the legal industry. "Most people that understand the model really embrace it as a call back to a different era when lawyers and clients had a much more collaborative, trusting, long-term relationship," she says (Hopkins, 2010).

This graphic, from The Economist, compares the increasing cost of legal services with the increase in consumer prices over the past 10 years:



Bruce Buchanan, copywriter at the law firm of Womber Carlyle Sandridge & Rice LLP in Winston-Salem, N.C., agrees, saying “I think the recession forced law firms to be more client-focused, both in how they market and in how they deliver services. For example, firms (at least the smart ones) started looking for alternative fee arrangements and ways to share the cost overrun risks that traditionally had fallen completely on clients,” (Buchanan, 2013).

As a result of this trend, law firms have begun to adapt to the demands of the marketplace for flat fees for legal services. In a recent survey of the AmLaw 200, the 200 biggest law firms in the U.S., 92 percent of respondents reported using flat rates.

Another alternative fee arrangement that has gained popularity in recent years is the success-contingency model where attorneys charge little up front for their services and make the majority of their compensation based on whether they achieve the client’s goals. The Kansas City law firm of Stueve Siegel Hanson LLP offers this contingency-based model (“About Us,” 2013), as does Kansas City-based Lathrop & Gage LLP (“Commitment to Value,” 2013). Other alternative fee arrangements include retainers where lawyers are paid up front and then perform work on demand for a given time period; blended rates where experienced and non-experienced lawyers work together for the average of their collective individual rates; component rates where

lawyers are paid per segment of work completed; and “collars” where lawyers bill for up to a certain amount of time and then offer discounted rates for the time they go over.

Robert Lipstein, partner at the law firm of Crowell & Moring in Washington D.C., says of alternative fee arrangements, “Any law firm leader today who thinks they can do 100 percent of work on billable hours forever into the future is not going to have a law firm for very long,” (Ho, 2012).

The importance of relationship-building in legal marketing

The majority of major corporations maintain a group of 15 to 20 law firms they regularly send legal work to. This group forms a company’s “preferred” list of legal services providers (Beardslee, Coates IV, Nanda & Wilkins, 2010). Pfizer is an example of a large company that maintains such a group of preferred law firms (Hopkins, 2010). These law firms are fed commodity legal work on a regular basis by their client corporations. However, in the case of special legal needs such as mergers or “bet the company” litigation, corporations will seek out the best attorneys available in terms of quality and expertise with the issue they’re facing (Beardslee, Coates IV, Nanda & Wilkins, 2010) even if those attorneys do not work for firms on the company’s preferred list. Chief legal officers and chief executive officers are generally the primary decision makers in determining if a corporation will hire outside counsel.

Regardless of whether a law firm is one of a corporation’s preferred legal service providers, a pre-existing relationship between the corporation’s CLO and/or CEO and a law firm’s attorneys is of paramount importance as to whether that firm gets the business of that company. In a survey of CLOs in the S&P 500 about how they hire law firms and whether an unknown lawyer could get a pitch meeting with one of them, one respondent said, “I think the answer is you're not going to . . . if you're moving in from (someplace out of town like) Alaska, you're not going to get me. You've got to work a little while and have a relationship. . . . [F]or me, people have the reputations and their reputations are well known. And so it's sort of the matter of I'm going to come to you more than you're going to come to me.” There is also an incentive for CLOs to form relationships with legal services providers because without pre-existing relationships, the best lawyers and law firms can be difficult to hire because of a pre-existing workload and lack of

familiarity with a particular company and its legal issues (Beardslee, Coates IV, Nanda & Wilkins, 2010).

Just as corporations have a list of preferred legal services providers, they also may keep a list of “banned” providers, at least informally. There are several ways for lawyers or law firms to end up on a company’s banned list, but according to IBM General Counsel Robert Weber, the first sin is to solicit his counterparts at his company for business. He says that it’s fine for lawyers to socialize with the executives at his company, but when lawyers ask them for business it creates an awkward situation. Unethical behavior or actions that are insensitive to client needs are other ways to make sure CLOs skip over the names of prospective recipients for their legal work. The most important thing Weber says that he wants from lawyers and law firms he wants to hire is clear, concise legal advice (Sparkman, 2013).

There is a tendency for corporations to hire lawyers and not necessarily law firms. It is not uncommon for a CLO to hire a law firm because he knows the lawyer he’ll be dealing with who works there and considers her to be a star, and he will follow the star lawyer from firm to firm (Beardslee, Coates IV, Nanda & Wilkins, 2010). In fact, Kansas City-based Husch Blackwell recently lost several attorneys and the business of the clients those attorneys worked with to its competitors Denver-based Kutak Rock LLP and Kansas City-based Stinson Morrison Hecker LLP (Koepp, 2013). This is evidence that corporations hire lawyers, not law firms. Womber Carylyle copywriter Bruce Buchanan says, “In terms of marketing, I also think we are seeing a shift from firm-level branding to individual attorney branding, and social media has been a huge component in that. Generally, clients hire attorneys, not firms, so marketing efforts are now more focused around building up individuals,” (Buchanan, 2013).

CLOs and CEOs judge lawyers and law firms subjectively. Though objective criteria do play a role in the decision making of CLOs, CEOs and those who influence their hiring decisions, law firms and lawyers are overwhelmingly selected for subjective reasons based on how they are perceived in terms of competence and trustworthiness. The selection criteria CLOs cite as the most important in their decision to hire outside counsel for very significant matters are “prior experience” with that lawyer or law firm, “reputation” of the lawyer or law firm, and “results in similar cases.” These three criteria ranked far above others such as, “rankings in periodicals,”

“size,” “geographic scope,” and “leverage.” Though other factors are important and a small number of CLOs rely on objective criteria such as publicly available data, “prior experience, reputation and results in similar cases” are the main reasons why CLOs and CEOs select a lawyer or law firm for very significant matters (Beardslee, Coates IV, Nanda & Wilkins, 2010).

A law professor at an accredited law school in the Midwest agrees that perceived quality of service and reputation are the most important factors in whether a lawyer or law firm gets hired. “A firm’s reputation is the most important thing,” he said. “You can put everything else secondary to the quality of work that a law firm does.” He also believes that while advertising may be useful for new lawyers or law firms that have not established a reputation yet, it will not be as effective for an established legal practice. He recommends for lawyers to write articles for trade publications of industries they practice in as a way to position themselves as subject matter experts in front of their target audiences. He also says that a social media strategy could be useful if it increased the exposure of such content to target audiences, though he doesn’t have any direct experience with social media marketing (Doe, 2013).

Legal marketing in the information age

The first lawyers in history were orators in Ancient Greece who acted as the advocates of their friends and pleaded their cases in public. These public speakers were not allowed to accept fees for their services so they could not organize as a formal profession. Accepting fees for advocacy was also banned in Ancient Rome, but this sanction was abolished by Emperor Claudius who allowed advocacy to become its own profession, though he severely limited the size of fees that advocates could charge for their services. The legal profession had become highly regulated by the early 4th century at the dawn of the Byzantine Empire ("History of the Legal Profession," 2013).

It is perhaps in this historical tradition of ethical advocacy that the modern-day American Bar Association bases its suggested standards for state bar associations which regulate the practice of law in their jurisdictions. Though each state has its own controlling rules of ethical standards its lawyers must follow to maintain their license to practice law, these rules are largely based on the ABA’s Model Rules of Professional Conduct (*Model Rules*, 2012). A lawyer who does not

follow his state's ethical guidelines or otherwise engages in deliberate subterfuge for profit is disparaged as a "pettifogger."

Rule 7 of the ABA's Model Rules specifically addresses marketing for legal services and stipulates what is and is not acceptable behavior for an attorney seeking new business through marketing communications. Here is a brief and abridged summary of the rule's requirements:

Rule 7.1: *Information about legal services* – "A lawyer shall not make a false or misleading communication about the lawyer or the lawyer's services."

Rule 7.2: *Advertising* – "A lawyer may advertise services through written, recorded or electronic communication, including public media."

Rule 7.3: *Solicitation of clients* – "A lawyer shall not ... solicit professional employment when a significant motive for the lawyer's doing so is the lawyer's pecuniary gain, unless the person contacted is a lawyer or has a prior relationship with the lawyer."

Rule 7.4: *Communication of fields of practice and specialization* – "A lawyer may communicate the fact that the lawyer does or does not practice in particular fields of law. A lawyer shall not state or imply that a lawyer is certified as a specialist in a particular field of law, unless the lawyer has been certified as a specialist by an organization that has been approved by an appropriate state authority or that has been accredited by the American Bar Association."

Rule 7.5: *Firm names and letterheads* – "A lawyer shall not use a firm name, letterhead or other professional designation that violates Rule 7.1. Lawyers may state or imply that they practice in a partnership or other organization only when that is the fact."

Rule 7.6: *Political contributions to obtain legal engagements or appointments by judges* – "A lawyer or law firm shall not accept a government legal engagement or an appointment by a judge if the lawyer or law firm makes a political contribution or solicits political contributions for the purpose of obtaining or being considered for that type of legal engagement or appointment."

According to a 2011 report, 85 percent of younger lawyers were actively engaged in social media and older lawyers were beginning to follow suit. A consulting industry has arisen solely for the

purpose of instructing attorneys how to use social media to develop their practices. Because of the marketing communications utility of social media and the therefore implied risks of ethical violations in accordance with the ABA's Rules of Professional Conduct, the ABA has taken an interest in defining what acceptable behavior is for lawyers who use social media to grow their practice (Baldwin, 2011).

The Securities and Exchange Commission, the government agency which oversees public companies, recently issued an opinion on the use of social media by public companies, including their attorneys. In a press release published on SEC.gov on April 2, 2013, it says, "Companies can use social media outlets like Facebook and Twitter to announce key information in compliance with Regulation Fair Disclosure (Regulation FD) so long as investors have been alerted about which social media will be used to disseminate such information ("Sec says social," 2013).

Jeremy Mishkin, an attorney specializing in internet privacy for the Philadelphia-based law firm of Montgomery McCracken Walker & Rhoads LLP, says of the SEC's decision, "They recognize that social media has become just as valid a channel for corporate communications as any traditional media. An increasing number of people get their information from Twitter feeds and Facebook updates, and the commission's decision reflects that reality," (Provost, 2013).

The caveat for public companies that wish to use social media platforms as venues to make disclosures is that the information must be accessible to anyone who wants it, and that notice must be given ahead of time where such information will be distributed and how to find it. "One set of shareholders should not be able to get a jump on other shareholders just because the company is selectively disclosing important information," George S. Canellos, the SEC's acting enforcement chief, said. "Most social media are perfectly suitable methods for communicating with investors, but not if the access is restricted or if investors don't know that's where they need to turn to get the latest news," (Choy, 2013).

This development is significant because public companies are highly regulated just like the legal field. The SEC recognizing the legitimacy of social media platforms as appropriate venues to make serious disclosures sets a precedent other governing bodies of professional services industries may be inclined follow.

A specific social media marketing tactic that creates substantial concern over potential ethical violations is blogging, or in the case of legal blogging, “blawging.” Blawgs give lawyers the opportunity to share their insights and experiences as well as other news and information relevant to their target audiences instantaneously. Blawging also allows readers to comment and ask questions to which the author may then respond publicly.

Jasmine Abdel-khalik, law professor of the University of Missouri at Kansas City says, “Although I’m not in practice anymore, I have noticed that a number of law firms operate blogs or prepare blog length postings (on open websites rather than intrawebs or via emails/newsletters directed to clients) on legal developments within specific areas of expertise. It may be a subtle way of demonstrating depth of expertise and the fact that the firm is up to date on the latest developments without needing to charge future clients for as much research. Regardless, it’s a relatively new development.”

Blawging and social media engagement create a series of potential ethical pitfalls for attorneys (Baldwin, 2011). If an attorney-client relationship is formed as a result of any conversation between an attorney and an individual whether on a website, a blog or in person, the lawyer has ethical obligations to that individual and this affects how she may proceed in the relationship (Loeffler, 2010) with that person. There can be severe penalties for attorneys who mismanage attorney-client relationships including sanctions and disbarment (*Model Rules*, 2012). Even casual, informal, off-the-cuff legal advice can create an attorney-client relationship for which the attorney is completely responsible.

Evan L. Loeffler, a real estate attorney in Seattle, says, “Life would be a lot simpler if there was theme music or a gong that would sound when something momentous occurs.” However, an attorney-client relationship officially commences, “when there is a mutual understanding that the client is going to confide in the attorney and the attorney is going to listen,” (Loeffler, 2010).

Even if someone asks a vague, general legal question on Facebook and an attorney on their friends list offers a vague, general legal answer, that attorney has just entered into an attorney-client relationship with that person even if the original post is deleted. Other ethical considerations for social media use is the practice of “following,” “friending,” “liking,”

“connecting,” or any type of engagement with social media profiles of opposing counsel, judges, complainants, or anyone else who could possibly represent a conflict of interest in the present or future of a lawyer’s practice. There is also the risk of the transmission of confidential client information that would violate the sanctity of the attorney-client relationship (Baldwin, 2011).

However, despite the dearth of precedent regarding the ethical use of social media for lawyers, there is an argument that much of what constitutes social media networking is not as ethically risky as it may seem. Kevin O’Keefe, a former attorney and current CEO of Lexblog, a legal blogging consultancy, says that so long as the same considerations given to advertising are given to social media engagement, then the risk of an ethical violation is minimal. “I’d advise lawyers who are blogging and using other social media to abide by legal ethics pertaining to advertising or any other matter,” he says. “It’s common sense and it’s not that hard.”

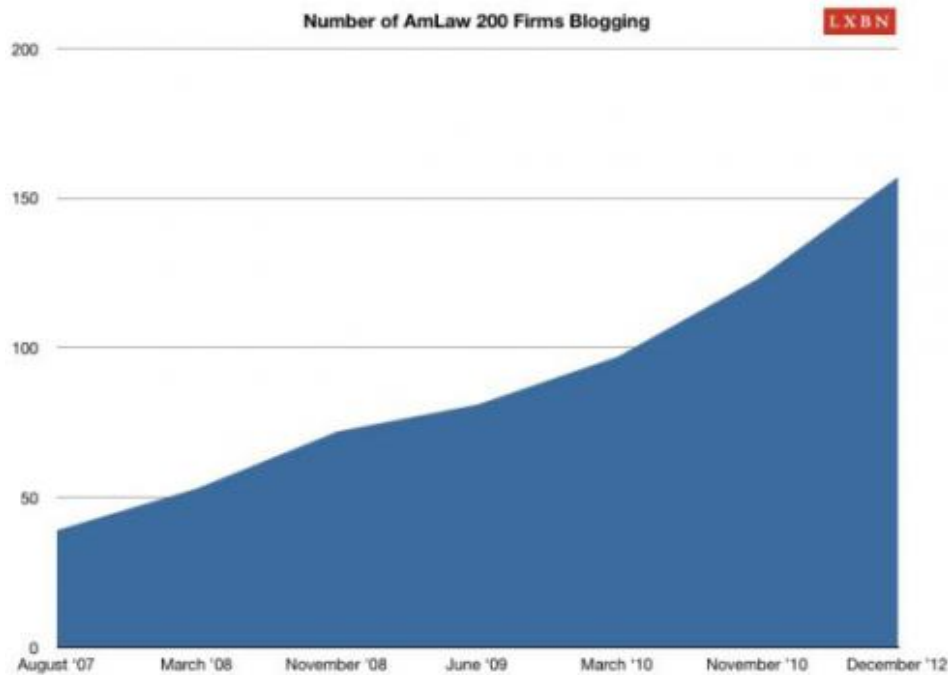
“But social media, social networking, and blogging by lawyers, for those who have not tried it, is just the same stuff lawyers have done for over a hundred years. It’s not all advertising. It doesn’t have to be crass marketing,” (O’Keefe, 2012). Professor Abdel-khalik affirms this sentiment, “When I was in practice, I don’t think there were any social media sites for lawyers. Now, certain sites like LinkedIn seem necessary, and I believe that many other firms use other sites, such as Facebook. Given how many commercial entities use social media, lawyers may need to use such networking to respond to consumer expectation,” (Abdel-khalik, 2013).

Further evidence suggests blawging is becoming the norm as a marketing tactic for lawyers and law firms, and the majority of the law firms in the AmLaw 200 now use blawgs or have lawyers with blawgs. LexBlog’s “State of the AmLaw 200 Blogosphere, 2012 in Review,” published in conjunction with the ABA Techshow and the LMA Annual Conference on April 4, 2013, shows that law firms with blogs have a distinct advantage over firms that do not from a marketing and business development perspective (O’Keefe, 2013). Some key facts from the report include:

- 78 percent of the AmLaw 200 have blawgs or lawyers blawging, which is a 71 percent increase since LexBlog’s last report on the subject in 2010.
- Clients and potential clients do read blawgs as a part of their decision making process to hire lawyers and law firms.

- There is a correlation between blawging practices and revenue growth, and this trend is becoming stronger.

This graphic from the “LexBlog State of the AmLaw 200 Blogosphere, 2012 in Review” report shows the distinctly upward trend of blawging among the 200 largest law firms in the U.S.



Revenue growth is a key factor in legal marketing strategy, and the evidence suggests blawging is related to greater revenue growth in firms that use it versus those that don't. Though a direct causative relationship between blawging and revenue growth can't be found with the data available, there are several factors that shed light on the correlation including the fact blawgs are no longer seen as “aggressive” or “controversial” marketing tactics in the legal industry, and because social media marketing doesn't require a large expansion of the investment of resources to implement, (O'Keefe, 2013.)

Based on this report, it would seem that blawging is becoming a necessity for legal marketers who want to keep up with their competition. The report notes, “Blogging is quickly becoming an expected part of any firm's marketing arsenal. Those who do not use blogs are behind, it is that simple,” (O'Keefe, 2013).

Samantha Collier, law firm marketing expert and blogger, lists the following considerations when planning to start a blawg (Collier, 2013):

- Who will be writing for your firm’s blog? One or multiple authors?
- Who will proofread and upload these blogs?
- What type of blogging software will you be using? Blogger, WordPress, etc.?
- How often will you publish blog posts?
- Where will you get inspiration for blog posts?
- How will you determine the success of your blog?
- How much of your marketing budget can you spend on your law blog?

Collier cautions legal marketers who may be considering starting a blawg not to get too excited about the outcomes they can expect; blawging is not a silver bullet or turnkey solution to winning new clients on its own, but is instead another tool in the marketing toolbox to use in a legal marketing campaign. She says, “Your clients and potential clients are mobile and using the Internet. Will all of these people hire you based on your law blog? No. Having a law blog is an additional tool in your marketing toolbox that may or may not matter to the people that hire you (Collier, 2013).

Competitors report

For the purposes of this report, Lathrop & Gage will be compared to three of its main competitors: Shook, Hardy & Bacon LLP, Husch Blackwell LLP, and Stinson Morrison Hecker LLP. These competitors are of similar size as Lathrop & Gage, they are all headquartered in Kansas City just as Lathrop & Gage, and they all boast agribusiness-specific law departments with active marketing communication strategies. Also, each organization emphasizes its Midwestern roots and the implied price advantages versus coastal competitors in their branding.

Shook, Hardy & Bacon LLP

Shook, known as the “Big Tobacco” law firm, was founded in 1889 by Frank Seabee. It is named for partners Edgar Shook, David R. Hardy and Charlie Bacon. Edgar Shook was named Kansas City’s first “Man of the Year” in 1939 for his work cleaning up the corrupt Pendergast

political machine ("SHB - Practice," 2013), and according to former Missouri Governor Lloyd C. Stark, Shook "led the transformation of Kansas City from a notoriously lawless and open city with a gangster dominated police department to a city which is as well governed and as well policed as any in America," ("Edgar Shook," 1970).

Hardy was renowned for his ability to "see around corners" to anticipate upcoming opportunities and was responsible for winning the business of the embattled tobacco giant, Philip Morris USA, now Altria Group and five of the "Big Six" tobacco companies ("Shook, Hardy & Bacon," 2013).

Shook, Hardy & Bacon employs 462 lawyers across eight offices nationwide in addition to two international offices in Geneva, Switzerland, and London, England. It generated \$316.8 million in revenue in 2012 (Koepp, 2013). One of the firm's unique differentiators is its staff of scientific research professionals who advise the firm's attorneys on issues pertinent to their cases. The firm's agribusiness division has 37 attorneys and is led by partners Mark D. Anstoetter and Madeleine McDonough ("SHB-Practice Areas-Agribusiness," 2013).

The "Agribusiness" page on the firm's website is robust with up-to-date content and information useful to the decision makers and referral sources of agribusiness companies including newsletters authored by Anstoetter and McDonough as well as webinars and presentations on agribusiness issues ("SHB-Practice Areas-Agribusiness," 2013). Anstoetter has a presence on LinkedIn with a complete profile but few connections (Anstoetter, 2013). McDonough has a complete profile as well with several hundred connections. She is a member of several LinkedIn groups (McDonough, 2013).

Shook's website has a clean design and prominently displays the firm's accolades from various organizations. The homepage also has a regularly-updated newsfeed about events at the firm, and a collection of downloadable newsletters about different practice areas ("Shook, Hardy," 2013). Shook's LinkedIn site has 1660 followers; however, the page is not updated with content regularly. The LinkedIn home page displays Shook's distinction as "The American Lawyer Product Liability Firm of the Year 2013," and has an "About" section with pertinent information regarding the firm. The "Services" page lists "legal services" and contains a standard legal

advertising disclaimer, “The choice of a lawyer is an important decision and should not be based solely on advertisements,” (“Linkedin-Shook, Hardy” 2013).

Husch Blackwell LLP

Husch employs 520 lawyers in 13 offices nationwide as well as one office in London, England. In 2012 it generated \$282.2 million in revenue. It emphasizes its agribusiness industry experience and recently resolved a \$1 billion intellectual property dispute on behalf of its agribusiness client Monsanto (Koepp 2013). Its branding also places a special emphasis on its deep legal knowledge and industry expertise (“Firm Overview,” 2013).

Partner James Ash leads 46 lawyers in the food and agribusiness group. He has an incomplete LinkedIn profile (Ash, 2013). There is agribusiness-related content on the Husch website, but it is old and sparse (“Food & Agribusiness-Services-Husch Blackwell,”).

The Husch Blackwell website home page has a news feed of current events at the firm. It also has links to Husch’s official Twitter profile and LinkedIn page (“Husch Blackwell LLP,” 2013). The Twitter profile has 340 followers and is following 185; it regularly tweets updates from the Husch news feed as well as Husch-branded newsletters written by Husch lawyers about developments in various legal practice areas (“Husch Blackwell (huschblackwell),” 2013). Husch’s LinkedIn website has 1478 followers and publishes updates from the news feed in the firm’s main website. There are no disclaimers anywhere on Husch’s LinkedIn site (“Linkedin-Busch Blackwell: Overview,” 2013).

Stinson Morrison Hecker LLP

Stinson Mag & Frizzell PC was founded in 1878 by Frank Rozzelle. The firm merged with Morrison & Hecker LLP in 2002. Stinson boasts deep connections to Kansas City; Rozelle was the personal attorney of William Rockhill Nelson, founder of the Kansas City Star and for whom the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art is named. Arthur Mag was Harry Truman’s personal lawyer (“Stinson Morrison Hecker,” 2013).

The firm has 305 lawyers in 10 offices nationwide. It generated \$148.8 million in revenue in 2012 (Koepp, 2013). Parthenia B. Evans leads the 12 attorneys in the agribusiness industry group. There is some content on the agribusiness page of the Stinson website, but it is outdated ("Stinson Morrison Hecker," 2013).

Stinson's website homepage contains a newsfeed with current events at the firm ("Stinson Morrison Hecker," 2013). Stinson's LinkedIn website has 882 followers but is not updated with content regularly. There are no disclaimers on its LinkedIn presence ("Linkedin-Stinson Morrison Hecker," 2013).

Analysis

Lathrop & Gage's competitors have a generally strong online presence. Their websites are search engine optimized, actively updated with fresh content on a regular basis, and are rich with information about their firms and the attorneys who work there. Shook's agribusiness page in particular is quite strong because of the plethora of content available on it.

However, Lathrop & Gage's agribusiness industry group has its competitors beat in search engine rankings. When one types in "agribusiness law in Kansas City" into Google, one of the first results is the FindLaw profile of Jay Felton, the leader of the Lathrop & Gage agribusiness industry group. The third result is Lathrop & Gage's agribusiness page on its website. Shook's agribusiness page on its website also appears among the highest rankings of Google search results, as does its agribusiness brochure and online profile of the head of its agribusiness division, Madeleine McDonough.

While each of Lathrop & Gage's competitors make good use of online marketing tactics, there are marked opportunities for Lathrop & Gage to outdo its competition through the consistent creation and distribution of targeted content. Specifically, the Lathrop & Gage agribusiness group would be able to differentiate itself from all of the aforementioned competitors by regularly posting agribusiness-related legal content to the Lathrop & Gage website and social media properties. The result would be improved search engine optimization and increased traffic to the Lathrop & Gage agribusiness website.

SWOT analysis

This is an analysis of Lathrop & Gage agribusiness attorneys' strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in their efforts to win the business of large agribusiness clients.

Strengths

- *Dedicated agribusiness industry group* – Lathrop & Gage has a group of attorneys whose experience in corporate law comes specifically from the agribusiness industry. Other firms may have attorneys who are competent in business law issues faced by agribusiness companies but have not had specific experience in the agribusiness industry itself.
- *Personal agriculture experience* – Attorneys in Lathrop & Gage's agribusiness group are farmers or ranchers themselves with direct experience of the issues faced by agribusinesses. This gives them a unique perspective on the legal and business realities of agribusiness, and the ability to empathize with the needs of agribusiness owners that other lawyers without agribusiness backgrounds simply cannot.
- *Quality of experience and reputation* – Lathrop & Gage's agribusiness attorneys are all highly-accomplished individuals with numerous honors, accolades and accomplishments.
- *Technology* – Lathrop & Gage continually invests in technology to facilitate communications between stakeholders in projects. It has an internal team devoted to the production of electronically-stored information (ESI), and maintains cutting-edge video-conferencing equipment so agribusiness attorneys, clients and staff can meet in real time regardless of the distances between their physical locations.
- *Client feedback* – Lathrop & Gage recognizes the value of ongoing relationships with clients and knows the key to providing a lasting value is communication. As a result, the firm routinely engages in client feedback interviews to better understand the needs, thoughts and feelings of clients in regard to the quality of service the firm provides. The results of these interviews are shared with the firm's CEO as well as attorneys and paralegals so all stakeholders know what their clients think about the service they have

received. This allows agribusiness attorneys and staff to see how they've made their clients happy as well as to identify opportunities for improvement ("Lathrop & Gage," 2013).

- *Alternative fee arrangements* – Besides the traditional billable hour, Lathrop & Gage attorneys are available for compensation arrangements on a budget, component fees, blended rates, success fees, and retainer. This gives agribusiness clients the ability to strategically determine what fee arrangements will work best for them, and ultimately creates more opportunities for Lathrop & Gage to engage clients ("Lathrop & Gage," 2013).
- *Locations* – Lathrop & Gage's offices are mainly located in the Midwest, strategically positioning the firm close to where the action is in agribusiness. In addition, having its headquarters and the majority of its offices in the Midwest gives Lathrop & Gage the opportunity to offer a more advantageous price point to its clients compared to its competitors in major cities and on the coasts.

Weaknesses

- *Content* – There is a dearth of agribusiness-specific content on the Lathrop & Gage website and social media presence. Without a consistent flow of new content, Lathrop & Gage agribusiness attorneys miss out on opportunities to brand themselves as experts, differentiate themselves from their competition, and remain top-of-mind to the people who can hire them and refer business to them.
- *Underdeveloped social media strategy* – While Lathrop & Gage agribusiness attorneys generally do engage in a certain amount of social media networking, there are missed opportunities to optimize their social presence to generate leads and referrals. They are not fully utilizing social media networking as a means to build and maintain relationships with clients and referral sources.
- *Inconsistent voice and messaging* – The Lathrop & Gage agribusiness practice has a plethora of experts in myriad legal topics all relevant to agribusiness, but there is no

centralized hub of communication from the Lathrop & Gage agribusiness industry group to the external audience, nor can external audiences communicate to the agribusiness group as a whole.

Opportunities

- *Relationship development* – There are opportunities to build and develop relationships with clients and referral sources through the creation and distribution of content relevant to audiences interested in agribusiness. If the Lathrop & Gage agribusiness attorneys pool their knowledge in a centralized location easily accessible to external audiences and created simple means to engage in a dialogue on the topics of their expertise, they would have an advantage over their competitors in developing relationships that could lead to more business.
- *Increased social media engagement* – The number of people joining social media networks is increasing every day, and this is true of lawyers and people in professional services who would serve as referral sources, as well as CLOs and CEOs of agribusiness companies who would drive the decision making process to hire outside counsel. This creates new opportunities to communicate with people who would otherwise be out of reach with content and messages to demonstrate the expertise of Lathrop & Gage agribusiness attorneys for the purposes of business development.
- *Changing competitive landscape* – The legal industry has changed significantly in the wake of the recent economic crisis and the development of new communication technologies and platforms such as social media. There are fewer opportunities for new lawyers in large firms, and large firms have had to change their practices to suit an increasing demand for a demonstrable return on investment in the marketplace. These factors give Lathrop & Gage agribusiness lawyers opportunities to create a niche and position themselves as subject-matter experts and thought leaders in their areas of legal specialization relative to agribusiness.

Threats

- *Agile competition* – Lathrop & Gage attorneys not only face competition from other large law firms for agribusiness work, but they also must deal with smaller and more agile competition. The combination of the lack of opportunities at large firms for qualified new lawyers and the development of communication technologies that make it easier to connect with decision makers at agribusiness companies enable smaller, younger firms to compete with attorneys in larger firms for the same business in ways that would have been impossible 10 years ago.
- *Economic uncertainty* – Despite recent gains in the stock market, there is still a high degree of uncertainty as to whether the economic recovery will be sustained. Large companies and agribusiness firms have reacted by clamping down on the amount of work they outsource. It is crucial for Lathrop & Gage agribusiness attorneys to take advantage of opportunities to establish, build and maintain relationships with decision makers and referral sources that could lead to more business in the future.

Lathrop & Gage agribusiness content marketing strategy

One of the most marketable assets that Lathrop & Gage agribusiness attorneys bring to the table is the legal knowledge and experience they possess relative to the needs of the agribusiness companies they can help. The purpose of this marketing communications strategy therefore is to bring this expertise to the forefront of the minds of decision makers and referral sources that can create new business opportunities for Lathrop & Gage attorneys.

Based on the external review of the legal industry, the internal review of Lathrop & Gage LLP, and the SWOT analysis, the following key principles are crucial to the development of a legal marketing communication plan to facilitate business development on behalf of Lathrop & Gage agribusiness attorneys:

- CLOs and CEOs are the primary decision makers in a corporation's choice of outside counsel and they tend to hire lawyers, not law firms, and preexisting relationships are virtually a prerequisite both for attorneys to be hired and for CLOs and CEOs to hire the attorneys they want to work with.
- Corporations maintain a list of about 15-20 preferred service providers they have existing long term relationships with that they regularly send work to, though they will look outside this group for subject matter experts if special legal needs arise.
- Quality of service and reputation are the most salient factors in the decision whether or not to hire a particular attorney or law firm over another, and these factors are perceived subjectively based on the opinions of the individual CLOs making the decision.

Goals

With these principles in mind, the Lathrop & Gage agribusiness marketing communications strategy has three goals:

1. To facilitate relationship building between Lathrop & Gage agribusiness attorneys and CLOs at large agribusiness companies.

2. To get Lathrop & Gage agribusiness attorneys on “the list” of preferred service providers for large agribusiness companies and to enshrine the expertise of Lathrop & Gage agribusiness attorneys and the quality of their services for display when an agribusiness company needs someone with specific legal knowledge or experience in a particular area.
3. To facilitate the development of Lathrop & Gage attorneys’ personal branding and network development.

These goals can be accomplished by pooling the knowledge and expertise of Lathrop & Gage agribusiness attorneys into a single outward-facing communications hub with information useful to agribusiness CLOs and referral sources, and using it as a platform to distribute content to these audiences to facilitate relationship building. The following is a content marketing strategy to achieve these objectives:

Target audiences

The target audiences for a marketing communication plan to help Lathrop & Gage agribusiness attorneys win the business of large agribusiness companies would be the chief legal officers, their C-suite colleagues and board members of these companies. The following is a list of the top decision makers in the largest agribusiness companies in the Fortune 1000. The needs and interests of these individuals are what should guide the inspiration of content for this marketing communications strategy. Those individuals whose names are *italicized* are on the social networking site LinkedIn and can be immediately reached with content. The rest are people who can be found, researched and reached with traditional marketing means such as direct mail, phone calls, and joining trade organizations, groups or associations they are a part of.

- Cargill ("Cargill: Our Company," 2013)
 - **Gregory R. Page**, Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer
 - **David W. MacLennan**, President and Chief Operating Officer, Chief Financial Officer
 - ***Emery N. Koenig***, *Executive Vice President and Chief Risk Officer*
 - **Laura Witte** Corporate Vice President, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary

- Monsanto (“Monsanto Company Leadership,” 2013)
 - **Hugh Grant**, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
 - **Pierre Courdouroux**, Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer
 - *Janet Holloway, Vice President, Chief of Staff and Community Relations*
 - **Board of Directors:**
 - *David Chicoine, President of South Dakota State University and professor of economics*
 - *Laura Ipsen, Corporate Vice President of Microsoft Corp.'s Worldwide Public Sector organization.*
 - **Janice Fields**, Former President of McDonald’s USA, LLC
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 - **Jeffrey Simmons**, Senior Vice President Eli Lilly Company and President Elanco Animal Health
 - **Steven Stanbrook**, *Chief Operating Officer, S.C. Johnson & Son, Inc.*

The Lathrop & Gage Agribusiness Law Blog

This report recommends that in order to reach target audiences with information about the reputation and quality of service that Lathrop & Gage agribusiness attorneys offer and to facilitate the relationship-building process crucial to the procurement of new business, the chief marketing officer of Lathrop & Gage authorize and oversee the creation of a blog devoted to the agribusiness industry group or “AgBlawg.”

The AgBlawg will benefit the marketing efforts of Lathrop & Gage agribusiness attorneys by displaying their knowledge and expertise, assisting with search engine optimization and facilitating the distribution of content they can share with prospective and current clients as well as with referral sources.

The AgBlawg will be richly populated with information on legal topics relevant to agribusiness and written to an agribusiness audience. The information will come in the form of posts of 200 to 300 words each that are published at least once per week. Lathrop & Gage agribusiness industry group leaders will be the AgBlawg's editor, and their contact information along with links to their attorney profiles on the Lathrop & Gage website will be displayed prominently. The "agribusiness" page of the Lathrop & Gage will have a link to the AgBlawg next to the "Description and "Attorneys" tabs. Legal alerts about the agribusiness industry will also be published on the AgBlawg.

Finally, links to other news articles or blogs on the topics of agribusiness and agribusiness law can be posted on the AgBlawg as well. This will increase the richness and depth of the information available to target audience members as well as lend enhanced credibility from multiple sources of information. There will always be a steady flow of fresh content on the AgBlawg, and this consistent posting of keyword-rich information will gradually enable search engine optimization so that when someone types words relevant to agribusiness law into a search engine, the AgBlawg will be more likely to be among the first few pages. This will make it easier for people looking for agribusiness lawyers to find the attorneys in the Lathrop & Gage agribusiness group.

The AgBlawg will need to be designed by a professional website designer who can create an up-to-date and appealing look while managing the under-the-hood aspects of website development such as HTML, CSS and integration of Google Analytics as a means to track website traffic and calculate return on investment for this strategy. It is recommended that the AgBlawg be designed in WordPress because it is a widely-used application in website design and because it has turnkey functionality to ensure that it can be regularly updated with fresh content without the assistance of a designer.

The design of the AgBlawg should contain symbols, colors and imagery that are reminiscent of agriculture and agribusiness. This will impact the branding because viewers will come to associate the AgBlawg as having direct relevance to agribusiness. Finally, a disclaimer reminding viewers that no part of the AgBlawg is meant to convey legal advice in line with the Missouri Rules of Professional Conduct should be included on the site. The Missouri Bar Association should also be consulted to ensure the creation and implementation of a website such as this is appropriate within its guidelines.

After the initial launch of the AgBlawg, a media relations campaign to announce the blawg's launch will direct attention to it. Journalists and publications relevant to agribusiness and agribusiness law will be identified and will be sent press releases about the AgBlawg and the information it provides. The AgBlawg website address should be included on all marketing collateral for the agribusiness industry group including business cards of Lathrop & Gage agribusiness attorneys, their email signatures, and agribusiness law CLE materials and brochures.

Once the AgBlawg is established and is populated with two to three months worth of content, it can be submitted to the American Bar Association Blawg Directory. The ABA maintains a list of blawgs on various legal topics relevant to lawyers and the consumers of legal services. It serves as a way for people to find blawgs on topics they're interested in to stay up to date on current trends in various aspects of law ("Blawg Directory - ABA," 2013). If the ABA decides to publish the Blawg then it will add legitimacy as well as help people who are interested in agribusiness law to find the AgBlawg.

Adding a link to the AgBlawg to the ABA Blawg Directory page will create what's called a "link exchange" that will facilitate search engine optimization so that when people type in search terms relevant to agribusiness law they will be more likely to find the AgBlawg. Other blawg directories the AgBlawg can be submitted to include Justia.com, Blawg.com, and the Law Blawg Yahoo directory (Murley, 2005). Once listed on these sites, the AgBlawg can include links to them as well to create link exchanges to facilitate search engine optimization.

Lathrop & Gage agribusiness attorneys can then send content from the AgBlawg to their contacts to stay in touch and add value. This is a means to stay top-of-mind with their prospective clients,

current or past clients, and referral sources without being intrusive. Articles can also be sent out in the form of legal alerts to people who sign up to receive them.

CLE agribusiness webinar

To get the members of the target audience in the loop and to promote the AgBlawg to them, particularly the CLOs and CEOs, Lathrop & Gage agribusiness attorneys can hold a free CLE webinar on trends in agribusiness using Lathrop & Gage communications technology and meeting applications like GoToMeeting.com. Applications for CLE accreditation can be made in each state where it is feasible to do so and where the headquarters of the companies our target audience members work for are located. Even if it is not feasible to seek CLE credit in certain states where target audience members' company headquarters are, the webinar can still be promoted to them as a way to quickly educate themselves about the future state of their industry.

The webinar would require two attorneys to spend four hours preparing and presenting content. At a billable rate of \$300 per hour this would work out to \$2400 worth of billable time, and would require a direct mail campaign to promote at a cost of \$500. The total cost for the webinar would be an estimated \$2,900.

Another option would be to have a daylong event such as a program similar to Kutak Rock LLP's recent CLE seminar ("Agribusiness CLE 2012,") in which speakers make presentations throughout the day, including a keynote speaker with a plated lunch provided. The content of this event could also be broadcast online as a webinar. This would be a far more memorable event, just more expensive than a 90-minute webinar.

For a daylong event, at least eight attorneys would need to spend about four hours preparing and presenting content. At a billable rate of \$300 per hour, this would come to \$9,600. According to Sarah Snyder, event manager for Kansas City-based business incubator Think Big Partners and owner of experiential marketing company Event Sizzle, the cost for a daylong, formal event with plated lunch would be, "\$22 per person, plus seven percent tax and 15 percent service charge," (Snyder, 2013). So planning a CLE event for a 100 people would cost about \$2,700. Added to the cost of a direct mail campaign of \$500, the total investment for the event would be an estimated \$12,800.

Once the content and structure of the program is arranged, the event can be promoted to target audience members directly through phone calls, direct mail, and email. The event details can also be published on the AgBlawg and distributed through social media to reach as many interested people as possible; people who would be agribusiness decision makers or referral sources as well. All promotional materials including brochures and event programs would also promote the AgBlawg and encourage participants to visit it, follow it and share its content with their contacts.

Social media distribution

In addition to traffic generated by organic search engine optimization, email and including the AgBlawg's website address on Lathrop & Gage agribusiness marketing collateral, social media networks offer an opportunity to reach target audiences with content to drive traffic as well. Each social media network is different in terms of its layout and how it functions so each requires a unique content distribution strategy. However, the goals of each strategy are basically the same: to reach target audience members with content and drive traffic to the AgBlawg which will facilitate relationship-building between Lathrop & Gage agribusiness attorneys and prospective clients and referral sources, with the end result being more business opportunities. Lathrop & Gage agribusiness attorneys should all have robust social media profiles on LinkedIn, Twitter, and Google+ and should have links to those profiles in their email signatures and attorney bios on the Lathrop & Gage website.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a professional networking social media platform. Lathrop & Gage agribusiness attorneys can use it to connect with prospective clients, current clients, professional contacts, friends and other referral sources. The more contacts an attorney has on their profile, the more people are likely to see the updates they publish to their profile. Whenever an attorney meets someone at a networking event who could be a prospective client or referral source, they should reach out to connect with that person on LinkedIn to stay in touch and share valuable information of mutual interest. This is important because every time the AgBlawg is updated with a new piece of content, attorneys in the Lathrop & Gage agribusiness group should publish a link to it on their LinkedIn profile. Publishing links this way will help drive traffic to the AgBlawg site as

well as assist with the attorneys' personal branding as a source of valuable information and a thought leader on the subject of agribusiness law.

Once a link is published on a LinkedIn profile, it can then be shared in LinkedIn groups. Groups are discussion boards where members can dialogue with each other on topics of mutual interest, and there are many groups dedicated to agribusiness where the types of articles published on the AgBlawg would be appropriate to share. Group members receive email digests of recently published topics and the group's commentary up to that point so they can easily read what other people have said and join in the conversation. Publishing AgBlawg articles to LinkedIn agribusiness and legal interest groups would generate traffic to the website, position the attorney who published it as a thought leader on the topic, and spur online conversations that could lead to real life relationships that could themselves lead to new business. Also, members of LinkedIn groups can send messages directly to each other through LinkedIn. This creates an opportunity to send personalized messages to individuals along with links to content on the AgBlawg to facilitate the development of a relationship.

Finally, links to the AgBlawg content should be added to the Lathrop & Gage LinkedIn page. This will make it so that all the followers of the Lathrop & Gage page on LinkedIn receive a link to the AgBlawg content in their newsfeeds, and will help facilitate search engine optimization.

Twitter

Twitter is a micro-blogging site where members post or "tweet" up to 140 characters of content. When people "follow" a person's Twitter profile, that profile's posts show up in their news feed. Lathrop & Gage agribusiness attorneys can create complete Twitter profiles and follow the profiles of people they want to build and maintain relationships with so those people will follow them back. They can also post links to AgBlawg articles when they come out so those links appear in the newsfeeds of people who follow them. Finally, the Lathrop & Gage Twitter profile can retweet links from its agribusiness attorneys to maximize exposure.

Google+

Google+ is a new social media network that allows people to add their contacts to their “circles” then choose which content is exposed to each circle. Because it is a Google property, content shared publicly on this site is given special priority in the Google search engine. Lathrop & Gage attorneys can add prospective clients, current clients and referral sources to their circles and share links to articles from the AgBlawg on their profiles.

Facebook

Facebook allows people to build networks of contacts that will receive updates whenever content is posted on their profile. Lathrop & Gage has a Facebook presence it uses to share content to its followers, and this would be a good place to share AgBlawg content as well in order to increase exposure and serve as another means to drive traffic. Facebook is good to cultivate one’s personal life, but not necessarily a person’s professional life.

It is the opinion of this report that Facebook is primarily useful for staying in touch with friends and family, sharing photos and inviting contacts to personal events. Though this report does not discourage Lathrop & Gage attorneys from joining and enjoying Facebook for the personal benefits it offers, and certainly concedes the potential marketing benefits of staying in touch with people who could refer them business or who are both clients and friends at the same time, the general opinion of this report is that Facebook is not the appropriate forum for the sort of professional relationship-building it recommends. That is not to say that some lawyers do not use Facebook successfully for the purposes of business development, but this report simply recommends there are better venues in which to pursue business opportunities for lawyers.

Google Analytics

This is a tool to measure website traffic and engagement. Once it is integrated with the AgBlawg website, it will tell how many people have visited the site in a given time period, where they are, how they found the site, what content they viewed, what links they clicked on, and how much time they spent on the site. This information will show what content people prefer, where the majority of people find the site, and how successful the site is at helping to achieve Lathrop &

Gage's agribusiness marketing goals. It will also help determine if people are going on to other sites such as the Lathrop & Gage website or sharing content with their networks. This information can be used as part of a metric or formula to calculate return on investment for this marketing strategy.

Heuristic development

A heuristic is a simple way to engage in problem solving when an exhaustive method would be impractical; a heuristic is a "rule of thumb." Because there is no way to tell the direct impact of sharing a single piece of content online relative to how much new business it does or does not generate, data from Google Analytics along with a simple marketing database can be used to develop heuristic strategies to calculate and maximize return on investment of the Lathrop & Gage content marketing strategy.

For example, if a Lathrop & Gage agribusiness attorney consistently bills "X" number of hours per month before the implementation of the content marketing strategy, and within several months after the implementation of the strategy there's a significant amount of traffic on the AgBlawg website and the lawyer begins to bill "Y" hours per month consistently and "Y" is greater than "X," then it can be reasonably assumed that the content marketing strategy likely had something to do with the increase, and a ratio of traffic on the website to the increase in billable hours or any other fee arrangement the attorney utilizes can be calculated. The purpose will be to arrive at a heuristic formula that says: "For every "X" blog posts that generate "Y" hits or more within a given time period, Lathrop & Gage attorneys will bill "Z" number of hours which is "XX" more hours than this time last year before the implementation of the content marketing strategy.

Lathrop & Gage content marketing manager

The consistent implementation of this strategy would require a member of the Lathrop & Gage marketing department to work full time creating, distributing and measuring the return on investment of content, as well as to be on call at all times when an agribusiness attorney requires assistance or training on how to use social media for the purposes of business development. As a result, this creates the need for a new position in the Lathrop & Gage marketing department

specifically to plan, implement and drive the content marketing strategy for the agribusiness group.

The content marketing manager benefits the attorneys of Lathrop & Gage in three specific ways:

- Creation of relevant content Lathrop & Gage attorneys can share with prospective clients and referral sources to establish themselves as thought leaders
- Optimization of the Lathrop & Gage website to help prospective clients and referral sources find Lathrop & Gage on search engines
- Differentiation of Lathrop & Gage from competing lawyers and law firms with a unique strategy to build relationships with prospective clients and referral sources through social media

The content marketing manager will assume the role of the person interested in hiring an attorney for a specific business issue, then think of all the information that person would need to have in order to make a sound decision and use it as a framework to guide the creation of content.

The CMM is responsible for managing the Lathrop & Gage agribusiness content marketing strategy. The job involves creating, publishing and distributing agribusiness law content on the Lathrop & Gage Agriculture Law Blog or “AgBlawg.” The CMM will write articles to be reviewed by the attorneys and published on the AgBlawg. Once per month, the CMM will prepare an analytics report of traffic that has been generated on the AgBlawg site and what the degree of lift in revenues for the agribusiness industry group can be attributed to the content marketing strategy.

The CMM will serve as a social media consultant and create a cohesive social media strategy to generate a measurable return on investment. This biggest issue with the potential success of this position is the ability to create relevant and high-quality agribusiness law content while minimizing the amount of time required for input from attorneys. The content marketing manager will have to know how to use multiple sources to identify concrete legal principles then extrapolate them into agribusiness.

Deliverables would be:

- Consistent content updates to the AgBlawg and Lathrop & Gage social media channels
- On demand social media consultation
- Monthly analytics and ROI report

Specific duties would be:

- Create and follow editorial calendar for content to be produced and published online
- Research, plan and implement a social media strategy to reach target audiences with content
- Stay up to date on social media trends as they pertain to law firms and lawyers
- Serve as social media consultant for firm attorneys
- Be on call for content creation or consultation on short notice
- Develop a system to measure return on investment

Requirements would be:

- A bachelor's degree from an accredited university in journalism, marketing, or communications
- Three to five years of experience in a marketing communications capacity
- Expert research abilities and ability to correctly anticipate the needs and interests of the target audience
- Must have a strong degree of empathy and ability to see things from the perspective of others
- Solid understanding of online, social, and traditional marketing concepts and processes
- Comfortable managing successful professional relationships with stakeholders at all levels
- Time management skills and ability to work under deadline
- Exemplary written and verbal communication skills
- Ability to craft an engaging narrative from a series of data
- Strong presentation skills
- Willingness to be on call and work evenings and weekends as needed

Preferred characteristics would be:

- Master's degree
- Intimate understanding of LinkedIn as a marketing and business development tool
- Marketing communications experience in a law firm or professional services environment

Costs

Because the content marketing manager is a full-time position requiring a specific level of marketing communications knowledge, experience and education, as well as specialized experience writing content for social media on behalf of professional services providers, the compensation would have to be competitive with other jobs at a similar level in marketing departments and advertising agencies. The potential to work long and irregular hours creates a need for an exempt, salaried position.

Similar job titles include: social media specialist, content manager, and media relations specialist. The salary for these jobs can range between \$40,000 and \$60,000 per year. In order to be competitive for top level talent while remaining economical to maintain a focus on value to the firm's clients, this report recommends offering a salary of approximately \$50,000 per year and a comprehensive benefits package including health, dental and vision insurance, as well as a retirement plan.

The benefits package would be about 25 percent of the position's salary, which would work out to \$13,000 per year. In addition, the content marketing manager would need to consult with Lathrop & Gage agribusiness attorneys two hours per month out of time they could be billing. At a rate of \$300 per hour, this is \$600 per month or \$7,200 per year. If a CLE event is chosen to raise awareness of the AgBlawg, it could cost between \$2,900 and \$12,800.

The total cost to the Lathrop & Gage marketing department for the content marketing manager position would be \$72,200. The total cost for the content marketing strategy including the CLE event would be between \$75,100 and \$85,000.

Conclusion

Lathrop & Gage is a strong brand with a successful business model and a powerful marketing message. Its agribusiness attorneys are among the best in the country in terms of the quality of services they provide. A strategically implemented content marketing plan would augment the firm's existing marketing efforts by creating additional opportunities for Lathrop & Gage agribusiness attorneys to develop professional relationships that lead to more business.

The AgBlawg, as well as greater attention to emerging social media trends, would amplify the online presence of the agribusiness attorneys and Lathrop & Gage itself, adding to the already renowned reputation of the firm and its attorneys and creating opportunities for professional relationships that simply did not previously exist. Blawging and social media marketing are future of legal marketing, and Lathrop & Gage has a chance to get ahead of its competitors through the implementation of a content marketing strategy such as the one suggested in this report.

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