

Competitive Intelligence is Litigation Team's Secret Sauce

For 30 years, Dan Boho has worked at Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP in Chicago—a 500-lawyer firm. Now as senior partner and litigation department leader with 100 lawyers in defense litigation, he is an early adopter of technology and tools to streamline business development for his litigation practice.

Dan's team uses the latest technology to secure advanced market knowledge to push competitive intelligence and improve business development. Recently, in a new business meeting with a Fortune 500® general counsel, Dan's team notched a win when the prospect was taken aback by the detailed and extensive competitive intelligence data Hinshaw & Culbertson litigation lawyers had amassed. They gladly shared a copy of the data packet, developed using LexisNexis® atVantage™ software, with the general counsel who asked to share it with his department.

Hinshaw & Culbertson launched the use of LexisNexis atVantage internally in August 2008, and this progressive database tool features advanced filtering capability covering some 43 million companies organized by geography, SIC code, sales/revenue, litigation trends and transaction volume.

Opportunistically, Dan prefers to beta test software so he has input into customizing and shaping the application to firm needs. His approach is to surround and collaborate with leading software vendors and make them trusted advisors because it enables an edge in business development and leverage of resources.

In the early days when the atVantage service was new at Hinshaw & Culbertson, the extent and depth of data was unknown. Now, with each new release, the firm can uncover more ways to slice and dice market intelligence that helps lawyers win, retain and improve client service. At Hinshaw & Culbertson, the competitive intelligence tool is integrated into daily workflow throughout the law firm. It is in use among librarians who dual as CI specialists, the chief business development officer, business development teams, marketers and litigation lawyers, associates, paralegals and support staff.

“Law firms can let major technology providers like LexisNexis pound the door and peek inside or they can find a collaborative way to work and improve efficiencies inside the firm. That is what I like to do because ultimately it puts my litigation practice at the leading edge of business development.”

—Dan Boho, Senior Partner and
Litigation Department Leader at
Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP in Chicago

Prior to adopting the tool, the firm gained competitive intelligence the best way it could—with lots of disparate databases, hard cover books and librarians scrambling to identify topical background. There was primarily anecdotal information, and nothing that linked other practice areas to one another. Searches were often done within a jurisdiction which was time consuming, inefficient and complex.

Dan is confident Hinshaw & Culbertson would not be able to sustain its track record for business development success without the benefit of atVantage software. While the demand on time is not fully calculable, the tool provides for sharper business development research, reporting and presentations.

Dan directs his team to attack each new business opportunity inquisitively with the outcome to create a pinpoint snapshot of his competition. With a prospect in mind, Dan’s team skews data from every angle to accurately glean:

- Number of law firms hired by a corporation
- Length of time law firms are retained
- Volume of business by federal and state court
- Practice areas awarded the most business
- Historical snapshot of litigation
- Wins, losses and areas of concern in each
- Current, open matters
- Current roster of firms already working the business
- Cost of product liability
- Who is the lead lawyer handling litigation

Having insight into a client's business helps Hinshaw & Culbertson fuel successful client service teams. It was one of the first law firms to implement client teams in 1990. The firm's innovative chairman instituted teams to push a fresh approach to organizing business by practice groups and top-performing clients with interplay off different geographies.

Hinshaw & Culbertson was the only top 25 Chicago law firm to survive the 2009 recession with attorney head count growth, and Dan attributes it to the firm's commitment to top client service, efficient handling of business and focused business development. When clients seek new ways to make legal services more cost efficient, it is up to the law firm to ensure that happens. Dan knows technology is the proof point to streamlining workflow, increasing productivity and winning business. He also recognizes that firms need to be poised to tackle business development in innovative ways.

Dan's regard for his litigation practice is one of respect. He recognizes the positive culture throughout his practice area drives the ability for lawyers to cooperate with one another and practice law fairly. By creating an environment where lawyers are unencumbered by inflexible policies, roadblocks disappear and the culture becomes one of cooperation and respect for the practice of law and a desire to win squarely front and center.

To request additional information go to:
lexisnexis.com/intelligence

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