

## 5 New Ways to Use Competitive Intelligence

By Larry Bodine

I'm here at the LSSO conference in Reston, VA. There are more than **100 attendees from the sales and business development staff of law firms nationwide.**

I just came from a program on **new tricks and techniques in competitive intelligence**, presented by **Doug Hoover**, Director of Strategic Marketing at Thomson West and **Daniel P. Hampson**, Manager of Business Development at Goulston & Storrs.



Doug Hoover

### LAW FIRM MERGERS

Hoover said, "Take the example of a law firms in "D" level market like Indianapolis. Their goal is to merge with another "D" level firm, so that can be acquired by a third "D" level firm and become a regional law firm." **What they're doing is putting their client bases together to see the merged footprint** — and what competitive intelligence can do is show which clients the firms work with and in what jurisdictions.



Dan Hampson

According to Hampson, Mintz Levin was considering opening an office in San Diego. "We broke our clients up by life science companies, which companies were public, private, who's representing them, compiled a list of technology companies, what law firms are in San Diego and their practices, what talent we needed." They found Fish & Richardson and acquired 12 attorneys to work for Mintz in their new San Diego office.

### KEY CLIENT PLANNING

Hoover said law firms should start by creating the basic spreadsheet of clients, ranked by revenue or profits, and list out columns with all the practice groups of the firm. In each cell, you plug in the revenue collected from that client. But revenues can be misleading -- they can show a client as being "at risk" but this may be because the client's revenues were down, and meanwhile the law firm has increased the share of client wallet and solidified the relationship. It should be scored as a winner.

External data should be added to each cell: **which other law firms represent the client and what legal work they are doing.** It may turn out that a client has no work for one of your practices. "You may find there is a lot of work and it's being distributed to many firms," Hoover said, the **perhaps your firm can take away from your competitors.**



Amanda Walsh

### HELPING WITH PITCHES

**Amanda Walsh, Director of Marketing, Bowman and Brook** said, "Few attorneys are comfortable asking a client for business. Attorneys are trained to make decisions based on facts. I use competitive intelligence reports to arm my lawyers with the facts about a prospective client, their industry and the ways their needs map to our strengths. **When equipped with these (business intelligence) facts our attorneys become much more comfortable and confident in building relationships.** They can approach the prospective client with the sincere intention to help, not the intention to sell."

### CREATE A "HUNTING LIST" FOR RECRUITING

Hoover recounted how an East coast firm was planning to open an office in Los Angeles. It did a lot of insurance defense work and had established relationships with insurance companies. Their

strategy was look up the top 10 insurance carriers clients, and find out which lawyers in Los Angeles had represented them. The firm shortened the list by cross-referencing the lawyers with any other firm clients they had worked with." **The list of lawyers is the hunting list of lawyers they were trying to poach,**" he said. "Competitive intelligence increases your ability to penetrate a new market."

### **CREATE YOUR OWN RANKINGS**

The bane of a marketer's existence is responding to the questionnaires of magazines that publish rankings and league tables of law firms. Often the results don't help your business development efforts.

Hoover recounted how Paul Weiss got named the American Lawyer litigation department of the year. Paul Weiss used competitive intelligence as part of preparation of submission to Am Law. They were able to find out what their competitors were doing and compared it to themselves.

"But when you're trying to pitch a client, you have the control of the information that's not under the control of the publishers. **You can create your own league tables. You can say you are the "fastest growing IP litigation firm for pharmaceutical industry in the three-state area."** You can present the statistics vis a vis other law firms with competitive intelligence.

And where do you get this competitive intelligence: **Thompson Firm360, LexisNexis Market Intelligence, ALM Research and Bloomberg.**

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