
The Legal Times – October 2, 2000

Bidding On The Future

With a management team of high-profile attorneys, eLawForum is gaining momentum: Samuel Gillespie III, former general counsel of the Mobil Corp.; David Roll, former chairman of Steptoe & Johnson; and Boyden Gray, former counsel to President George Bush. eLawForum has recruited major corporations with hefty legal budgets including TRW, DaimlerChrysler, Hartford Insurance, Chevron and Oracle.

Henry has a pattern for turning ideas into profit. “Who would ever have thought you could take acid rain and create buyers and sellers for acid rain?” Henry says referring to his second company, Clean Air Capital Markets, where he built a marketplace for the sale of so-called pollution credits. “It makes an online exchange for legal services seem elementary.” “John is someone who can immediately grasp the possibility of an idea and how to turn it into a business,” says Kay Ellen Consolver, eLawForum’s chief operating officer.

eLawForum works as a screening mechanism for corporations seeking outside counsel. In-house lawyers post requests for proposals on the site and then take bids from law firms. The corporation determines which firms respond to the RFP, often a combination of new and incumbent firms. For GCs looking to broaden their pool of law firms, eLawForum will research and recommend additional firms. After narrowing the field, face-to-face meetings take place with the final firms. eLawForum charges the corporation two percent of its legal fee, when the corporation pays its bill to the law firm.

Jeffrey Carr, FMC associate general counsel is using eLawForum to secure an outside firm to defend the corporation in intellectual property litigation. “I’m encouraging firms to run their business as efficiently as FMC runs ours,” Carr says.