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Build Your Referral Network Using YLD Committees

By Joseph Siprut

An established referral network is an important component of a lawyer's successful marketing plan and necessary to serve clients. When in need of a referral, many young lawyers tend to rely on word of mouth from other lawyers at their firm. But when you refer a case to a lawyer recommended by a colleague at your firm, guess who that lawyer will likely call when he

quick and efficient way to identify lawyers throughout the country with experience in a specific legal practice area.

For example, the YLD Litigation Committee has a link on its Web site, "YLD Litigation Committee Referral Directory" at www.abanet.org/dch/committee.cfm?com=YL406000, which is simply the member directory for the YLD Litigation Committee, and which consists

matter beyond the referring lawyer's expertise. For example, if one of my clients needed tax assistance—an area decidedly outside the scope of my litigation practice and my law firm's practice areas—I could access the YLD Tax Committee's member directory, and search for Illinois lawyers using the "Find" feature.

Of course, the foregoing is not exhaustive; there are countless other methods a young lawyer can (and should) employ to build a referral network. But the YLD's committee directories offer one additional method to build your rolodex—and with it, your practice. **YL**

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wants to return the favor? Your colleague, not you.

To grow as a lawyer and build a practice, young lawyers must create their own referral network. One of the best ways to do so is through the ABA YLD and its practice area committees. By serving on a YLD committee, you will interact with talented young lawyers from all over the country. In particular, YLD members can use committee directories as a

of more than 350 young lawyers throughout the country. If you seek local counsel in a different city or state, you can conduct a search by city or state simply by using the "Find" (Ctrl + F) feature of Internet Explorer—and just like that, you have an immediate and easily accessible list of lawyers to contact.

Alternatively, a YLD member can find a lawyer with expertise in a particular area to handle a

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FOR MORE INFO

Looking for a tax lawyer in Birmingham? Or a family lawyer near Fargo? The ABA Web site includes membership and committee directories for all its substantive practice areas. To access, visit www.abanet.org/directory.

Represent Federal EEOC Clients

By Lisa D. Thompson

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) enforces federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination and harassment against private and federal sector employees. Many lawyers are familiar with EEOC as the place to file a charge of discrimination against a private employer. Yet federal employees also may be represented before EEOC in what is known as the federal sector EEO administrative process.

Young lawyers interested in gaining experience and developing a practice in employment discrimination, a growing area of law, may want to consider representing federal employees in EEO cases for several reasons:

First, the substantive antidiscrimination laws for federal sector employees are identical to those in the private sector (i.e., Title VII, the Rehabilitation Act, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, and the Equal Pay Act), so your practice is transferable to federal courts in your jurisdiction.

Second, the federal sector process is excellent trial preparation for litigating employment discrimination cases in federal court. While the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and Federal Rules of Evidence apply in cases before EEOC, the rules are more relaxed than in federal court. Moreover, the Federal Rules of Evidence are liberally

construed so lawyers can be more creative in introducing evidence before the Commission.

Third, litigation expenses are often significantly lower for federal sector cases than they are in federal court. The federal agency bears the majority of costs associated with filing a federal sector complaint and conducts discovery free of charge prior to a case coming before it. Although the agency's investigative process may last up to one year, EEOC has specific scheduling deadlines, and, in most instances, hears complaints within 6 months from the date of the request for hearing.

Finally, there is no cost to perfect your brief-writing skills and appeal the administrative judge's decision to EEOC's Office of Federal Operations.

If you venture into the federal sector EEO process, consider the following tips:

1. Familiarize yourself with federal sector procedures.

Learn the procedural nuances of the federal sector. It's key to a lawyer's successful practice in this arena. While the substantive law is identical to that in the private sector, the federal sector administrative procedures are vastly different. For example, a private employee has 180 days to file a charge of discrimination with EEOC while federal employees must initiate EEO counseling with their agency within 45 days of the date of the alleged discriminatory employment action. After completion of the agency's investigation, federal employees have 30 days to file a request for hearing with EEOC; private sector employees have 90 days to file suit in federal court.

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