Outsourcing Everything But Your License

Having been asked to leave the firm, Pedro considers various options and decides to go solo and hang out his shingle. He has a few clients who appreciate the reduced fees and extra attention. Mindy, a loyal friend through it all, is excited for Pedro and remains in close contact with him.

Pedro continues to share his career thoughts and feelings on his blog and others often join the discussion. The blog continues to be a source of support and encouragement for Pedro in his new venture. However, support and encouragement do not pay the bills, so Pedro commits himself to increasing his book of business.

Friends begin to look to Pedro for help with small matters and old friendships begin to lead to promising clients. One day while Pedro is having lunch with Derrick, a college roommate and good friend, Derrick mentions that his wife, Samantha, has decided to start her own business. She needs assistance with forming a corporation and will need representation with other legal matters. Pedro excitedly offers to help, noting that he had drafted and filed incorporation documents while servicing some of the firm’s smaller clients. He meets with Samantha and she becomes his first corporate client. He incorporates her company and she calls him regularly for basic legal advice.

Although Pedro feels fortunate that his friends and colleagues are sending him business, he is also frustrated because of the missed opportunities for additional business; he has turned away potential clients because he felt that the work was over his head. He begins to take CLE classes to learn new areas of the law hoping that he will not have to turn anyone else away.

One day someone from his former firm, remembering that Pedro worked on a big patent case, refers a client to Pedro because the firm has a conflict. The client has a new matter that is likely to be huge.

This is a great opportunity for Pedro; however, he really doesn’t know much about patent law and he does not have any staff to assist him. That big case is just a blur now and most of the work he did was not substantive in nature. Pedro has signed up for a solo practitioner “listserv” named MYSHINGLE and asks the group whether he should accept the case. An attorney responds, “Are you serious? You can figure out how to handle any case. Why would you throw away all that money?”

Pedro posts his dilemma on his blog, “P.R. Blawg” and someone suggests that Pedro use outsourcing to solve his problem. Pedro does some research and learns that there is a company in India that can do any aspect of a case for you. He reads a testimonial about the company and is sold. He is ecstatic! Pedro accepts the client’s case and outsources much of the legal work to LegalAssist, the company in India.

LegalAssist conducts the necessary research and prepares the pleadings. Pedro studies the motion for summary judgment provided by LegalAssist and is able to win the case for the client. Pedro bills the client at Pedro’s regular rate, which is much less than the large firm, and the client is thrilled. Pedro has his overhead covered and has learned another way to use the digital age to succeed.

The following week, Pedro has a motion due in another case. Extremely pressed for time and still exuberant about the patent win, he decides to use Chat GBT to prepare the motion thereby speeding up his process and eliminating the need to deal with Legal Assist.

Pedro breathes a sigh of relief when Chat GBT exceeds his expectations and within moments produced a well written motion supported by case law that is appropriately cited. With no time to spare, he electronically files the motion with notice to opposing counsel. He bills the client for the five hours that it would have taken him to write the brief and calls it a day.

A couple of weeks later Pedro is confronted in court by both his opposing counsel and the judge concerning the cases cited in Pedro’s motion. Neither the judge nor his opposing counsel can locate the cases in any of the traditional research data bases. Apparently, Chat GBT has “hallucinated” and cited nonexistent cases. Of course, Chat GBT has not entered an appearance in the case; it is Pedro who has cited nonexistent cases. He suddenly sees his career circling the drain as he contemplates how to respond to the judge.