

BLUE RIDGE BUSINESS JOURNAL

Serving Roanoke Valley/Lynchburg/New River Valley

VOL. 19, NO. 25, DECEMBER 17, 2007

bizjournal.com

50 cents

CORPORATE SUCCESS STORY

Law firm uses technology to keep clients ahead

‘Our clients are migrating more toward business models comprised significantly of Internet-based businesses, remote work forces and a national or even international presence. Confining our law practice to a traditional bricks-and-mortar operation and an old-school office environment would have been noticeably out of step with the changing business environment within which we work.’

— James Creekmore

There’s the Hollywood stereotype of the large corporate law firm—several silver-haired partners, scads of junior lawyers, even more paralegals, all working 100-hour weeks on big Fortune 500 company cases, winning big-time verdicts or structuring complex settlements. Then there’s The Creekmore Law Firm in Daleville—totally different approach (including a nimbleness with technology and practices that make for happy workers committed to the clients) but equally successful results on similarly complex cases.

The firm, which consists of lawyers James Creekmore and Brian Wheeler and paralegal Jamie Hatfield, focuses on litigation involving intellectual property, contract and other business disputes.

As befits a business dealing with digital issues, technology is a key component to its success. Each person is on the job no matter the location, but the team is closely linked by a server, laptops and remote access software, a voice-over-IP phone system, and BlackBerries. At least once a week, or more as needed, they meet at the main office to catch up and coordinate.

“Collegiality and a sense of team is a focus for us,” says Creekmore. “I try to make sure everyone feels like we are in this together, and success depends upon everyone’s efforts.” In return for an emphasis on getting the job done and not just watching the clock, Creekmore gets that team spirit from his colleagues.

“In a big firm, you’re often driven by fear,” Wheeler says. “Will I make my billable hours? That doesn’t necessarily help the client. Here, I genuinely believe we’re guided by a sense of professionalism and the best interests of our clients. The technology truly gives us flexibility. I never have to sleep on my office couch anymore.”

Hatfield is quite clear. “My first priority is my family and then my work. James totally gets that; so, having the flexibility to work from home and to have a place for my children when I’m in the office makes me even more loyal and willing to make the extra effort when work demands it,” she says. “The face of success has changed and James can relate to this new concept of work.”

Creekmore says that among his previous big firm colleagues who had talked of opening their own firms, there was a fear that the quality of the work would suffer without a big firm name and reputation.

However, in the short time he has been on his own, some things have not changed. “We spend most of our time with corporate clients, pursuing or defending litigation in which several hundred thousands of dollars—or more—are at stake. We have clients around the country and in Europe. I am pleased to say we have



James Creekmore (standing), Brian Wheeler and paralegal Jamie Hatfield

not found ourselves wanting in any respect for quality—or quantity—of work.”

Creekmore also has found a unique way to add depth and breadth of resources to the firm’s intellectual property practice.

He is a founding member of the XDL Group, a consortium of lawyers and intellectual property professionals from six different firms across the nation that concentrates on intellectual property and patent litigation. “What this group brings to the process is not just nine lawyers,” he says. “Each lawyer has a deep network of expert resources that can provide the information that make a successful case. We don’t have to go find them, they’re here already.”

Ultimately, Creekmore thinks it’s important that the work environment

reflect the kind of work being done. “Our clients are migrating more toward business models comprised significantly of Internet-based businesses, remote work forces and a national or even international presence.

“Confining our law practice to a traditional bricks-and-mortar operation and an old-school office environment would have been noticeably out of step with the changing business environment within which we work,” he says.

“It’s my goal to establish and maintain a high quality business litigation practice that effectively serves the evolving legal needs of our clients while ensuring a quality of life for everyone at the firm not normally recognized in today’s legal market through an alternative and flexible practice group.”

“Confining our law practice to a traditional bricks-and-mortar operation and an old-school office environment would have been noticeably out of step with the changing business environment within which we work.”



The Creekmore Law Firm
52 Pondview Ct.
Daleville, VA 24083
(540) 966-2504
www.creekmorelaw.com