

International Attorneys Enter International Marketplace

By Emily Sanderson

Law firms, just like many other businesses in the global marketplace, are minimizing US borders, both in the work they perform and in the associates they hire. The following article features an actual legal client, although the name and other distinguishing characteristics have been changed.

Sun, a Chinese native, has recently applied to US law firms that represent manufacturing clients with operations in China. Sun, who first came to the United States through a study abroad program during law school, worked for two years in Philadelphia in commercial law. She returned to her native land to be closer to family and friends, but three years later, she is ready to return to the United States to work in a position that will allow her to come home to China regularly. "When I was with a previous law firm, I assisted one of the clients in setting up a joint venture in China with Chinese counter party," Sun says. "[The company] is a Chinese entity and has to abide all the Chinese laws. I advised on this part and drafted the contracts required and governed by Chinese law, (which were not a practice of US law), and the other attorney in the office helped on the US corporate law part. From time to time, I will get the questions from the clients asking questions on

China-related legal issues, as quite a few corporate clients of our have subsidiaries in China."

Businesses who have gone global need representation they can trust in both their domestic and international legal affairs, and firms are finding that the best attorneys to provide this are well-informed about both US statutes and those of the country in which the business is taking place. US companies with international ventures often negotiate so that both sets of laws are represented. For example, although US child labor laws do not apply in China, many US manufacturing companies maintain policies which mirror US hiring requirements, often as a public relations effort.

International attorneys may be US natives who have spent time abroad, or they may be foreign-born attorneys who have spent time in the US. Both types of attorneys provide different benefits and face different kinds of obstacles.

Attorneys who are US natives have the benefit of connecting with partners who are US natives, both linguistically and culturally. Although US discrimination laws prevent favoritism in this arena, cultural and linguistic affinities are nonetheless a tool that US native attorneys will make use of. US native attorneys

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will also help to provide communication to other associates regarding partner wishes, and in the global marketplace, effective communication across cultural barriers is critical.

International attorneys who have a handle on the language and culture of the country in which they are doing business often have the advantage of being able to communicate on a personal level with the other associates and staff of a US law firm who work in an office in a country outside of the US.

The International Alliance of Law Firms provides international commerce legal resources and offers memberships to international firms.

“Local representation in a foreign jurisdiction offers many advantages,” according to the International Alliance of Law Firms’ website. “If a company is expanding into a foreign market, an Alliance Member firm should be able to assist with commercial negotiations, help locate suitable premises, examine the most tax effective structures, source grants and incentives available, and arrange meetings with local authorities and other professionals.”

The alliance holds conferences each year at various international locations. This year they are holding conferences in Vancouver, Canada, and Copenhagen, Denmark.

Sun, seeking assistance with US grammar and spelling, recently ordered a Bronze Package with Attorney Resume. Her credentials already made her competitive with other candidates, but with a polished resume and cover letter, her application will get noticed.