

Maritime law firm's student recruitment video a hit on YouTube

LUIGI BENETTON TORONTO

"Yes, that's my backyard," Tara Erskine laughed. "That's my grill."

How does a Toronto-based writer like me get acquainted with an East Coast lawyer's backyard? Via the web. Erskine, a labour and employment partner and Manager of Legal Human Resources for Halifax-based McInnes Cooper, regularly hosts firm events, and the 2007 bash made the firm's online recruiting video.

Online corporate videos are nothing new. Dave Sciuk, Managing Director, Ontario Region for executive search firm The Counsel Network, says videos like those from Google are noteworthy. "They are like an effective PowerPoint presentation," he said. "They deliver four or five messages that you want to communicate."

Among law firms, New York-based Choate, Hall & Stewart may have earned the best online buzz by aping Apple Inc. ads, substituting an extraordinarily smug Choate associate and a ridiculously hapless "Megafirm" lawyer (both actors) for the bantering computer systems.

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Where the Choate effort was quarterbacked by an outside agency, McInnes Cooper's video was home grown. Granted, the Halifax firm boasts impressive internal filmmaking talent in article clerk Mark Purdy and law student Kate Mullan.

When Purdy returned from a summer film studies stint in New York City, people at the firm suggested he produce a new corporate video, so he and

Mullan got to work.

After running focus groups to determine the video's contents, then writing and producing over several months' worth of free time, they came up with a video that begins and ends with a job-interview skit featuring McInnes Cooper tax litigator (and sometimes actor) Dan Wallace.

Wallace took one for the team. Actually, he took ten — splashes, that is, from a car driving through a puddle so the film crew could capture the event from different angles.

That incident drove the skits at the beginning and end of the video. The cream of the Oreo included scenes from Erskine's backyard barbeque, a firm hockey game, a charity run, a rafting trip and views of McInnes Cooper's fabulous downtown office, which features floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking Halifax Harbour.

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For the uninitiated, YouTube quickly became the world's most popular video sharing site soon after its 2005 birth. In 2006,



DAVID GRANDY FOR THE LAWYERS WEEKLY

Kate Mullan, summer law student and rising YouTube filmmaker.

Google played its "if you can't beat 'em, buy 'em" card and acquired the upstart for US\$1.67 billion.

One reason for this price tag is the continuing lock YouTube seems to enjoy on the valuable 18-35 demographic. Ensconced

in this group are summer law students, hence the logic of posting recruitment videos.

Erskine couldn't name any pitfalls to the scheme, but she prevented one that might have detracted from the video — she

See Video Page B8

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YouTube reaches right demographic

Video

Continued From Page B7

turned off the ability for viewers to comment. "If you permit it, you open yourself up to people who don't like you, and say nasty things," said Peter Marx, president of marketing firm Legal Insight Media, Inc.

That didn't prevent people from commenting on their own blogs — favourably. While McInnes Cooper is already known at recruiting events for the branded cookies it serves to prospects, it seems people enjoy the firm's digital cookies as well. The video has been seen more than 4,000 times. Erskine found American blogs linking to it with comments like "Wow, where is this firm?" "Their offices look great!" and "Do their lawyers really wear gowns to court?"

However, Sciuk points to the committees and partners charged with recruitment as evidence of YouTube's limited usefulness in recruiting, particularly for laterals. "Recruiting is a personal process," he said.

Web 2.0 phenomena such as YouTube, Facebook and Second Life excite marketers, but best practices for businesses that want to leverage the interactive web have yet to emerge. "Nobody has found a formula," said Marx.

Canny online video producers do avoid certain traps. Poor-quality videos are blatant invitations for mocking. The same goes for stiff infomercials that feature the "hostage video" look



Erskine

of head shots behind desks. "Students know when they're being sold to," said Erskine.

And Youtube itself might not mesh with the patrician image

certain firms carefully cultivate.

Yet Marx opines every law firm should use the medium. "It's where law students live," he said. "You have to meet them on their turf to relate to them."

"You can do a nice glossy brochure that looks pretty and costs a lot of money," said Erskine, "but it won't generate the interest that we want and that students look for when they decide where they want to practise law." ■

Announcements

CANADIAN HEALTH LAW PRACTICE MANUAL

LexisNexis Canada Inc. is pleased to announce that the law firm of **Borden Ladner Gervais LLP** is the new General Editor for the looseleaf publication *Canadian Health Law Practice Manual*. The four Partners at Borden Ladner Gervais LLP who have undertaken the General Editor role on the firm's behalf are John Morris, Mary Lynn Gleason, Patrick Hawkins and Kristin L. Taylor.

LexisNexis Canada Inc. wishes to thank **Mary Jane Dykeman** for her editorial leadership and many valuable contributions to the publication during her past term as General Editor of *Canadian Health Law Practice Manual*.



John Morris is the National Leader of Health Law at Borden Ladner Gervais LLP. His firm acts for over a hundred health facilities across Canada and is counsel to the Healthcare Insurance Reciprocal of Canada. Mr. Morris has appeared before all levels of Court in Ontario as well as numerous health-related administrative tribunals. He received the designation of Certified Specialist (Health Law) from The Law Society of Upper Canada in February 2007. Mr. Morris is named in the 2008 edition of *The Best Lawyers in Canada* in the specialty of Personal Injury Litigation: Medical Negligence. Mr. Morris is a co-author of the book *Canadian Nurses and The Law, 2nd Edition* and author of the book *Law for Canadian Health Care Administrators*. He is an Adjunct Lecturer, Faculty of Law, Queen's University in Alternative Dispute Resolution as well as an instructor for the Osgoode Professional Development Part-Time LL.M. Program. He is a member of the Advocates Society and a Past President of the Medico-Legal Society of Toronto.



Patrick J. Hawkins is a civil litigator, specializing in health law and personal injury defence. Since being admitted to the Ontario Bar in 1992, he has devoted much of his practice to representing hospitals and other healthcare facilities in professional malpractice litigation and a wide variety of other litigation and policy matters. He acts as general counsel and provides situational advice to health care providers on a wide range of issues including privacy, consent to treatment, mental health issues, quality of care reviews, adverse event management and disclosure, and physician credentialing.



Kristin L. Taylor represents hospitals and other healthcare providers in medical malpractice litigation, and also provides general legal advice to healthcare clients on a wide variety of issues including physician credentialing, coroner's investigations, college investigations, privacy compliance, quality assurance reviews and police disclosure. She regularly speaks and writes in the area of health law and is a member of the teaching faculty of the Ontario Hospital Association. She is a member of the Advocates Society and the Medico-Legal Society and is a past member of the OBA — Health Law Section Executive.



Mary Lynn Gleason practises in the area of Health Law, particularly in the defence of hospitals and their staff in medical malpractice obstetrical claims. She has acted as counsel for hospitals, nurses, physicians and other health practitioners at inquests, various courts and administrative tribunals, including the Health Professions Appeal & Review Board. She is a member of the Medical Legal Society, the Health Law section of the Canadian Bar Association of Ontario and The Advocates Society.

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