



LABOR LAW REVIEWS

Keeping Employers Out of Court by Keeping Them ‘In the Know’ Regarding Labor Laws

Mackenzie Hughes has helped countless employers resolve labor-related issues.

SITUATION

Suits involving labor and employment law are the most common type of suit filed in the federal courts within the 32-county Northern District of New York. Mackenzie Hughes has a long tradition of successfully representing employers in labor and employment litigation throughout the region. Recognizing that employers prefer not to be in litigation in the first place, the firm’s labor lawyers resolved to figure out a way to help their clients even more—by keeping them out of the courtroom altogether.

CHALLENGE

- Help ensure client-employers be proactive, through “best practices,” to keep them out of controversial, costly and burdensome litigation.
- Accomplish this by ensuring they know about important (and new) laws and regulations affecting their industries.
- Find a way to get information to them that would enable the firm to answer their specific questions and concerns in a timely manner, before litigation arises.

SOLUTION

Mackenzie Hughes determined that it would be most beneficial to bring interested client-employers together with other client-employers, and brief them on these important topics on a regular basis. The strategy was to keep clients out of court by keeping them abreast of new laws and regulations, as well as common pitfalls that employers routinely encounter. In June 1999, Mackenzie Hughes became the first law firm in Central New York to hold what came to be known as “Labor Law Review” workshops. These monthly, hour-long sessions are designed to keep clients educated on new developments in areas such as hiring and firing, wage and hour laws, how to respond to labor union organization campaigns, employee leave laws such as FMLA, workers compensation, Americans With Disabilities Act, discrimination, and harassment.

SUCCESS

The Labor Law Review series grows each month and has garnered widespread attention, both among industries and in the news media, for its success in educating employers in advance on how to stay out of trouble—and out of the courtroom. Typical attendance is roughly 75 employers, but some topics have attracted over 250 participants. The seminars routinely attract CEOs and other executives, human resources professionals, and labor consultants from among the largest and most prominent businesses in Upstate New York. Not-for-profit organization directors and public officials including mayors, police chiefs, auditors and supervisors have participated as well.

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BEST PRACTICES

LABOR LAW REVIEWS *con't.*

“Mackenzie’s Labor Law Reviews are the perfect forum for human resources generalists. The seminars are a catalyst for changing behaviors or policies that might cause serious problems or cost companies a great deal of money. The topics are timely and the environment is comfortable—they really put people at ease when it comes to dealing with sensitive legal issues.”

—*Pam Kopiel, executive vice president, Eagle Comtronics*

“I like the fact that Mackenzie attorneys can interpret complex issues into plain language that is easy to follow. The forum is tactful, concise and engaging, and I know they really respect my time. I always walk away satisfied.”

—*Jeff Ferris, human resource director, Ferris Industries*

The attendees routinely ask that specific topics be addressed at future reviews and call later with follow-up questions.

Labor Law Review workshops have been so successful for the firm’s clients that it has spawned two offshoot programs—the Health Care Law Update, which covers legal issues affecting the health care industry, and “Coffee, Croissants and Compliance” for credit unions. These new workshops, which came about as a result of the popularity of the Labor Law Reviews, also thrive.

