



Office of Gallagher, Callahan & Gartrell. Photo by Neil Lovett

Using  
technology  
to market  
this law  
firm has  
proven  
to be  
successful  
for  
business.

by Rachel Campbell

# A New Way of Thinking

They snake through the walls peaking into and out of rooms, dropping off little nuggets and picking up others, all while going unnoticed and practically unappreciated. Old and new buildings alike are haunted with the presence of these thin, long intruders. Fearing them only causes panic and stress. Embracing them opens the doors to reach and attract potential clients.

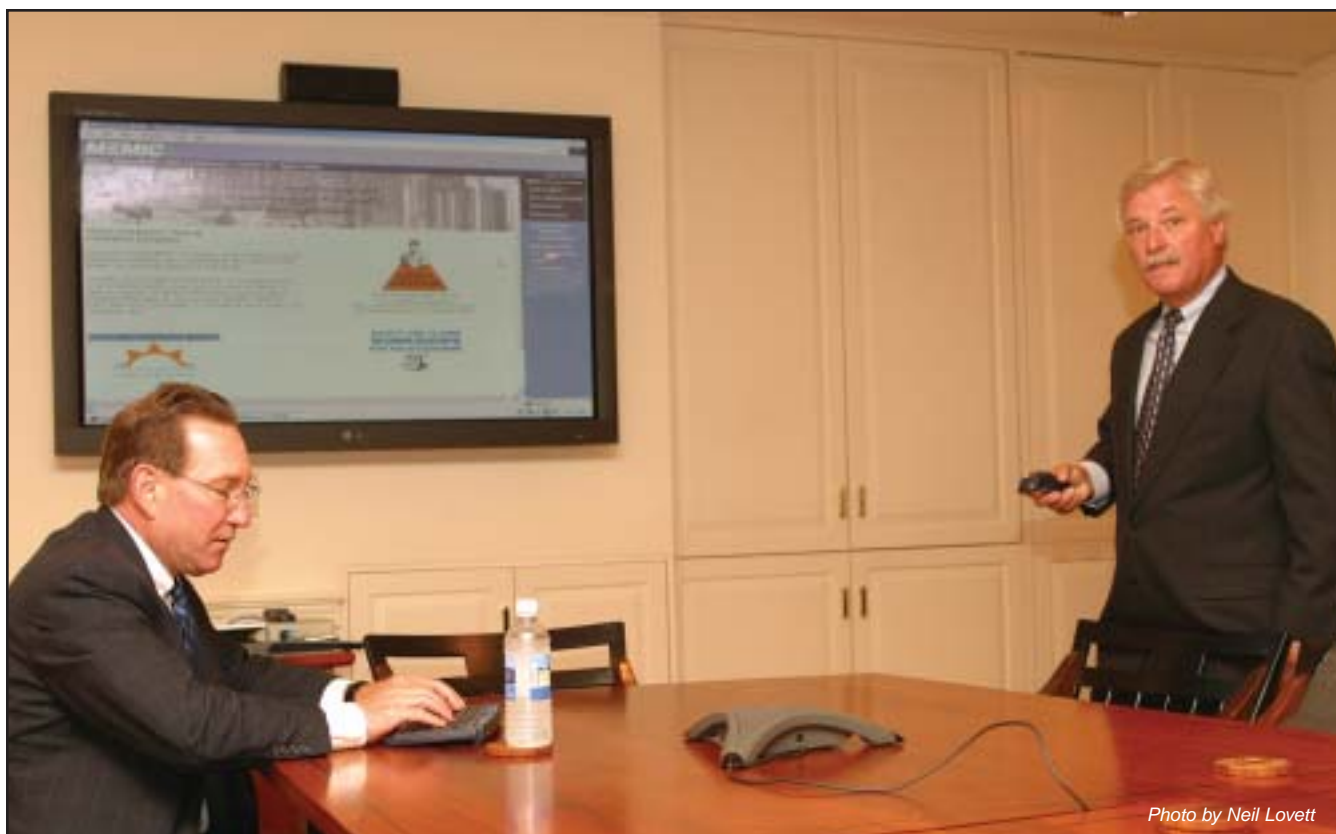


Photo by Neil Lovett

Don Pfundstein (left) and Mike Ruedig (right) in the Franklin Pierce conference room.

## If These Walls Could Talk

On Concord's historic Main Street, a brick building with recessed arches harks back to its colonial beginnings. Over the years, the building housed a number of important individuals and groups, including the 14th U.S. President Franklin Pierce. Today, the historic relic retains its original charm, while carefully masking the hub of technological advances racing through its walls and connecting the law firm of Gallagher, Callahan & Gartrell to potential and existing clients.

Since moving into the building in 1977, the multidisciplinary government and regulatory law firm has been on the forefront of technology, carefully updating the structure while still maintaining its original Adamsesque integrity.

A step inside the main lobby provides the first symbol that this building has been fully integrated into the 21st

century. A flat-screen monitor displays the firm's Web site, which clients can browse through or use to access other sites while waiting for appointments. It's all part of Gallagher's commitment to provide its clients with a complete package that fully uses the technology at hand.

"We believe that everything we do has substantial relationship-building value," said Donald Pfundstein, managing director in charge of business development for the firm. "What we

nology, particularly the use of the Internet and e-mail. One of the first points of contact Gallagher has with potential clients is its Web site, [www.gcglaw.com](http://www.gcglaw.com), which was introduced in 1999 with the help from outside consultant Amy Campbell of Infoworks ([www.infoworks1.com](http://www.infoworks1.com)).

With input from the firm, Campbell designed a straightforward site using simple HTML. The site is overseen by Campbell, who is managing producer, with help from a part-time technical person who updates and adds new pages to the site. "Our entire approach is using technology smartly," Campbell said.

Even without flashy elements, the Gallagher Web site makes an effective impact with its ever-expanding amount of

content provided by the lawyers and professionals in the office.

"When we started the Web site, we wanted to go beyond a brochure. ... By publishing information of value, we were able to differentiate the firm and

Gallagher's e-newsletter  
includes articles and updates  
on events and seminars.

are selling is not simply a result, process or product. We are selling an experience — the total experience of a relationship with us."

Selling this experience is a multi-step process that relies heavily on tech-

the attorneys. It worked beyond our expectations. Google has fallen in love with the site because of all the content we have. Google ranks our site very high," Campbell said.

Pfundstein said he requires each of the more than 30 attorneys and professionals in the firm to consistently provide articles for the Web site. "I am very aggressive in pursuing people. We have about six to seven new pieces a month. Some months we might have 10 articles. Generally, people are really good about it because they like getting their stuff out there," he said.

Another component of Gallagher's marketing strategy is an integrated monthly e-newsletter. "The e-newsletter goes out once a month to clients and potential clients who have signed up for it. It summarizes articles written that month and links back to the Web site," Campbell said. "It's a one-two punch that works really well."

Although Campbell wanted to start distributing an e-newsletter when the site first went live in 1999, Pfundstein was more cautious about rushing into such a step. "I was concerned that

our product just started generating content, and I was concerned about a false start."



The Gallagher, Callahan & Gartrell Web site, www.gcglaw.com, features articles and content written by the firm's attorneys and professionals.

When the firm did start distributing it, the e-newsletter turned out to be huge success for Gallagher. So huge, in fact, it received first place in the Legal Marketing Association's "Your Honor Awards" in the Electronic Media category this year. The firm newsletter was judged on creativity, originality, and measurement and quality of executing its strategic objective.

With the help of the press circulating information about the award and print advertising stating, "Still not reading our award-winning newsletter? Why not?" the number of subscribers to Gallagher's e-newsletter has grown to nearly 3,000.

The newsletter includes new articles produced each month, as well as updates about events, such as seminars the firm puts together. A recent seminar about environmental enforcement issues was announced in the newsletter, which also provided background information. Individuals who attended the session were given a high-tech Microsoft PowerPoint presentation displayed on a 60-inch plasma screen in the conference room.

It's all part of Pfundstein's internal directive to Gallagher professionals that it should be "content next to cash," said Pfundstein. Campbell said she agrees. "Advertising doesn't go very far on the Internet, but information does," she said.

Getting a new client in the door is only the beginning of the Gallagher experience. Once a client is working with the firm, the tech-



nology available to those within the office reinforces the client/attorney relationship.

"Number one, clients have to feel instantly in touch with the lawyer," said Mike Ruedig, Gallagher's managing director in charge of technology. "All contact information is readily available on the computer system. We are very much an e-mail-oriented organization. Using a virtual private network, every individual in the office, on the road or at home, has access to the network. As far as the client is concerned, they have constant access to me."

Another feature that keeps clients close to their attorneys is an integrated voice mail and e-mail system. Once a voice message comes in, it shows up in the attorney's e-mail inbox. The office also uses PerfectLaw's Attorney's Information Manager system to manage clients, schedules and documents within the firm.

## Building Your Own Client Base

When considering how to best use the Internet for marketing, the most important aspect is content and a lot of it. This keeps people coming back to the site seeking more information and helps the site show up on search engines.

Having someone in the firm take an active role in the upkeep of the site is also important. "The best advice for other firms is to have a lead partner take responsibility, not a committee. You need a take-charge person to invest the time, make decisions and move on. The partner should be the business development strategist or connected with those folks in the firm. Committees are a disaster," Pfundstein said.

And most importantly, have a vision for the firm and follow it. "Before you go anywhere, you need a vision, a strategic plan that differentiates you from other professional service providers in your markets. Otherwise, in designing a Web site you will wind up with an electronic version of the throw-away brochure," Pfundstein said. **LO**

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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