



## LIBERTY MUTUAL GROUP CLE-LEARNING

EVERY YEAR, IN-HOUSE COUNSEL SPEND MANY HOURS AWAY from the office—jetting off to various cities in their quest to keep current on their CLE credits. The travel involved is not only time consuming from both a professional and personal standpoint, but it's also pricey. And with every lawyer in the legal department needing to fulfill the same requirement, the budget can take a hefty hit.

Faced with the dilemma of cutting costs while maintaining the highest level of education for its in-house lawyers, Liberty Mutual's legal department decided to take CLE into its own hands.

"We have had a robust training program for many years at Liberty Mutual," says Thomas Newcomb Hyde, the company's national director of legal and training. "But we had to reduce cost."

Along with Arlene Zalayet, the company's general attorney, Newcomb Hyde devised a plan in March that would allow Liberty Mutual to provide CLE to its in-house lawyers without asking them to go any further than the conference room down the hall.

"Instead of sending them to the training, we brought the training to them," Newcomb Hyde says.

The Web Seminar Initiative brings an instructor to one central location, where he or she teaches in front of an audience. The session is broadcast to other Liberty Mutual offices via the Internet, allowing all or some offices to participate in the training.

"You hear a lot about people taking Web seminars at their desks," Newcomb Hyde explains. "But we didn't want that. We wanted the lawyers in the other offices to sit together in a conference room and learn amongst their peers."

In June, Liberty Mutual conducted its first legal department Web seminar, broadcast live from its Chicago office. The company's Warrenville, Ill., and St. Louis offices also participated in the inaugural session, which focused on legal ethics.

But Newcomb Hyde had to jump through several hoops to ensure the session qualified for CLE. First, he had to write the content and get it approved by the appropriate CLE parties in Illinois, Kansas and Missouri. He also had to ensure that all participants received session materials before the training and had hard copies available to them during the session. Finally, he had to adhere to a specific time requirement. Since this session qualified for four CLE ethics credits, Newcomb Hyde had to make sure he provided four hours' worth of valuable legal ethics training.

COVER



Thomas Newcomb Hyde

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According to Newcomb Hyde, the Chicago session alone saved Liberty Mutual's legal department a minimum of \$7,000—not including travel and expenses the lawyers would have incurred or the value of their time away from the office.

Although the Web Seminar Initiative is only in its early stages, Newcomb Hyde believes the success of its first session has set the stage for future sessions. And he's already planning a schedule for Liberty Mutual's 60 offices nationwide.

"The level of enthusiasm over this program is very high," he says. "In the long run, it will go a long way toward reducing our costs."

—CATHLEEN FLAHDY

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK WEMPLE