
The Decade Dozen

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Rubsun Ho: In-house entrepreneur

The debate on what the future law firm looks like continues to, well, be debated (that's what lawyers are wont to do, after all). But Rubsun Ho, LLB 1995, decided he was going to sidestep the discussion, and start anew, after a career at Stikeman Elliott, then as VP of business development at a wireless start-up company that enjoyed success, but busted after the dot-com boom.

Equipped with experience and contacts, Ho co-launched Cognition LLP, a firm without the traditional firm structure and downtown Bay St. locale (read: no large overhead and accompanying high fees), which delivers largely mobile commercial and corporate legal services at a fraction of the usual price,



and with a high degree of flexibility for its associates.

"Rubsun's always been more entrepreneurial than typical lawyers," says Nina Moritsugu, LLB 1994. She's one of 25 Cognition lawyers in Toronto, Ottawa and Waterloo who either work from home or go into a client's office periodically to provide senior-level 'outsourced' in-house services. "He's an excellent lawyer, so that attracts talent to the group as well. He's very serious about the quality of the work and the management of the firm, which includes being very respectful of everyone's time and other obligations."

"We refer them to our clients who need that kind of service and don't want to pay our big firm rates for a lot of day-to-day general matters," says Richard Sutin, senior partner at Ogilvy Renault. "When Cognition comes across something with clients that's out of their area of expertise, they call on us. It really is a very reciprocal relationship. And that creates strong bonds with our clients which, in the long term, would be to our advantage."

"I think the business is going to grow - considerably," says Sutin. "There's a real market for it." Moritsugu agrees. "Once clients choose us, they're amazed, and start to spread the word."

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Photo: Jeff Kirk