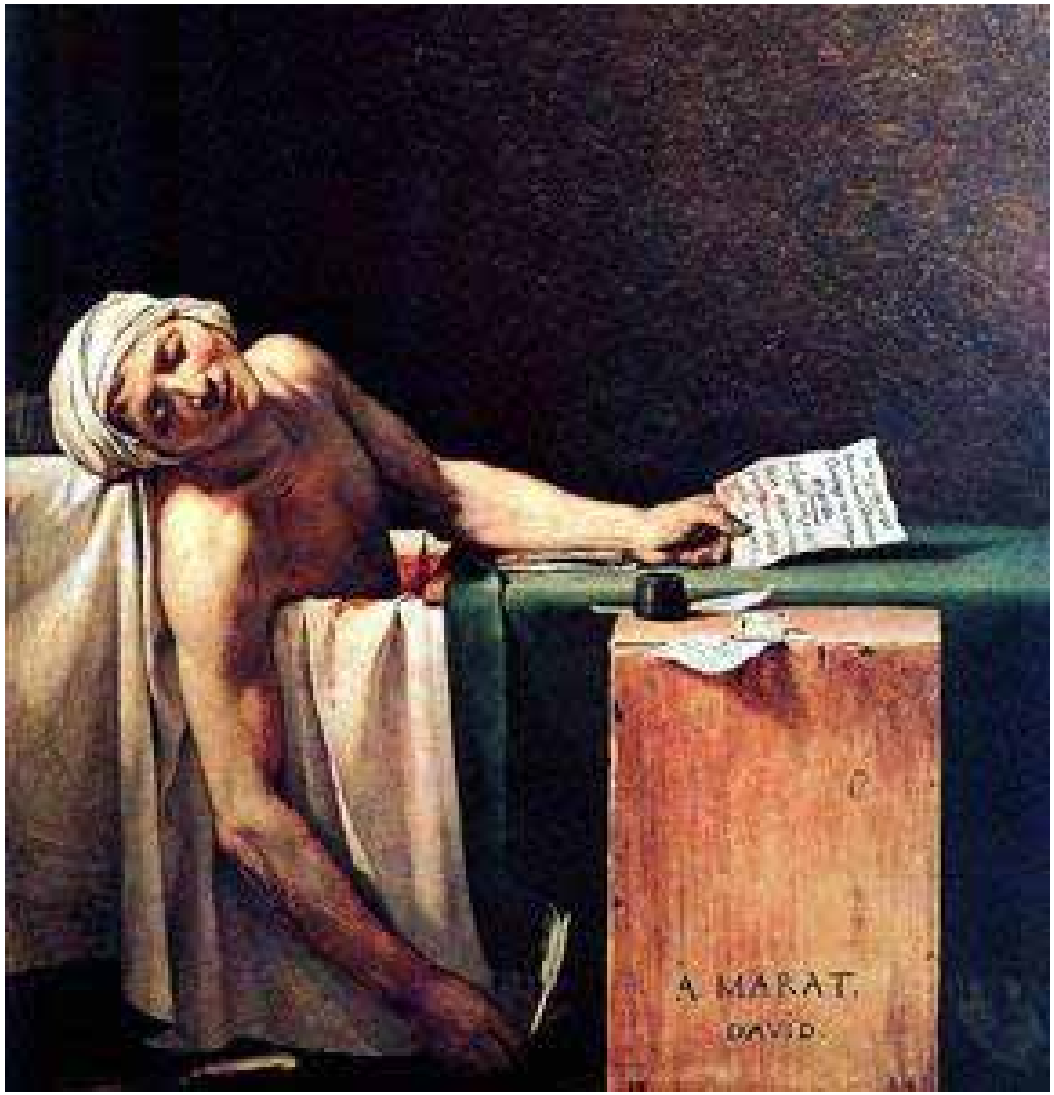
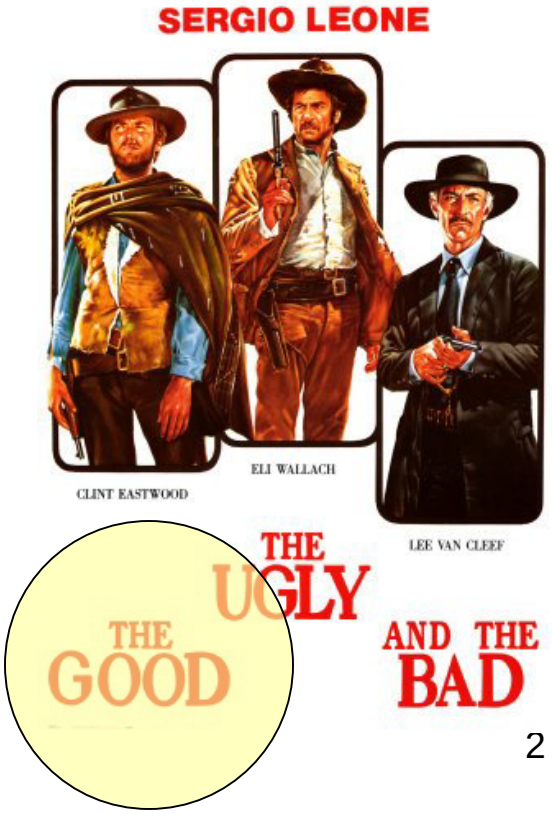
Oh, no! Cost control?



Ten Good Practices

- ☑ **Regional law firms**
- ☑ **Budgets on major matters**
- ☑ **Competitive bids on major matters or bundles**
- ☑ **Concentrate spend on fewer firms**
- ☑ **Centralize litigation discovery**
- ☑ **Limit turnover of timekeepers**
- ☑ **Fewer hourly bills**
- ☑ **Early and periodic ECA**
- ☑ **Temporary staff/offshore**
- ☑ **Bill summaries of key tasks**



Ten Bad Practices

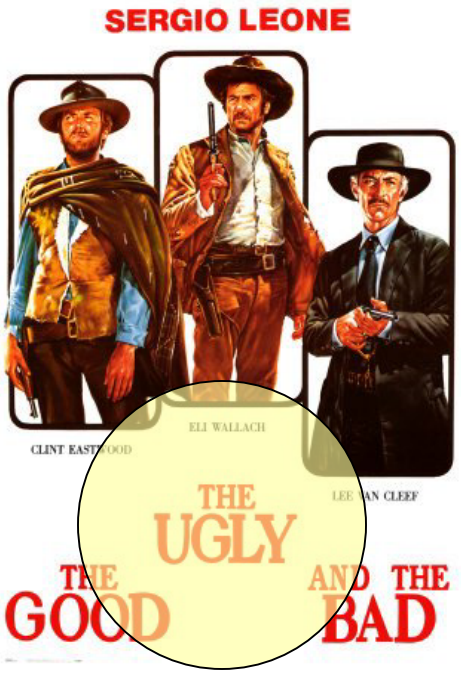
- Mostly relying on discounts from hourly rates
- Focusing on low hourly-rates
- Obsessing on disbursements
- Complacency with incumbent firms
- Aggressive audits of bills by third parties
- Creating detailed and strict guidelines
- Relying on task-based billing systems
- Insisting on Most-Favored-Nation status
- Indiscriminate rate freezes
- Decentralized retention of law firms

"If you're found guilty and sent to prision for life I'm willing to give you a seven percent discount off my usual fee."

NYSBA Journal, Nov./Dec. 2006, p.34

10 Ugly Practices … Well, Unproven

- ? **material savings from e-billing's after first year**
- ? **Gatherings of law firms to share ideas**
- ? **Unbundling -- firm doesn't do it all**
- ? **ADR (arbitration, mediation, etc.)**
- ? **Procurement's involvement**
- ? **Law department as profit center**
- ? **Limit rates across firms for same work**
- ? **Professional social networks for lawyers**
- ? **Incent inside lawyers to cut costs**
- ? **Real-time billing information**



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Rees Morrison CMC has bee consulting with law departments for 18 years to help them better manage themselves and their outsid counsel. A former practicing lawyer, author of six books, Senior Director of Hildebrand International (Somerset, NJ). Rees welcomes comments here or at RWMorrison@hildebrandt.cor All posts on this blog are (C) 2005 Rees W. Morrison, all rights reserved.

Categories

JD/MBA's in law departments more than in law firms?

Wouldn't it make sense a priori that many who obtain the two degrees – an LLB or JD and an MBA – would gravitate toward the overlap of business and law – a law department? Someone could pore through directories and gather some data on the incidence of in-house lawyers who have the combined degrees.

Or do such students value and excel at academics, which draws them toward teaching? Then again, being hardworking and disciplined, do JD/MBAs end up as partners in a law firm?

Or do none of these outcomes dominate, as joint degree holders chuck the law and move into business? The resident advisor on my floor sophomore year, Jim Koch, got a JD and an MBA from Harvard, and now is the CEO of Sam Adams Brewing.

Posted by Rees Morrison on December 31, 2006 at 05:01 PM | Permalink | Comments (0)

A history of law departments in the United States

It's one of my fancies to delve into histories of companies, old magazine and newspaper articles, and house histories of law firms – to name a few sources for archival digging – and to compile a historiography of US law departments. A previous post described

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Rees Morrison, Esq.

Management Advisor

973-568-9110

Rees@ReesMorrison.com