

NEWS RELEASES

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Husch Blackwell Wraps up Inaugural Legal Innovation Challenge

FIRM BORROWS REALITY TV CONCEPT TO DRIVE NEW PRODUCT, SERVICE OFFERINGS

Husch Blackwell is pleased to announce that it has concluded its first Legal Innovation Challenge, a firm-wide, *Shark Tank*-style tournament aimed at generating innovative ideas for products and services in the legal industry.

Teams comprised of attorneys and paralegals squared off to present new ideas. The team members themselves served as judges for all entered projects with the top concepts submitted to the firm's Innovation Advisory Team, which chose the top three ideas for recognition and support. The winning teams received cash awards and billable-hour credit.

The year's contest produced winners in multiple practice areas and across multiple concepts. First place was awarded to the Startup Diagnostic Tool team, led by associates Meghan Brennan (Denver) and Jake Brown (Chattanooga). The software program under development would assist attorneys assess early-stage companies and startups in order to address more precisely their legal needs. Brennan and Brown said the program would solve a major issue – the inefficiency of most initial legal startup consultations – while at the same time better engaging early-level associates in more client interaction and business development.

“Associates often struggle with blending our tech-forward millennial world with the traditional law firm approach,” Brennan said. “This competition was exciting because we were able to bring the two worlds together in a way that benefits clients and attorneys looking to develop as legal professionals.”

Others projects that garnered recognition included software intended to streamline Title IX investigations and a website to help clients retain, organize, and access employee benefit plan documents and information.

“This contest was designed to be fun while at the same time tackling some serious problems that our clients face,” said Dean Boeschen, Husch Blackwell’s Chief Growth Officer. “I think we accomplished both goals. We want to continually innovate with the latest technology, and this exercise demonstrates our capabilities to create new products and services.”

The winning teams will now enter the development phase of their projects, which includes kickoff meetings with the firm’s technology staff to begin formulating business plans and development timelines for the new products and services.