

Disrupting the Legal Industry

Rejecting billable hours, **Reichman Jorgensen Lehman & Feldberg LLP** brings a revolutionary fee structure and a departure from traditional law firm culture.

For decades, virtually every American law firm has operated on a system of billable hours. Clients are charged in increments of attorney time, which can incentivize attorneys to work less efficiently.

The founders of Reichman Jorgensen Lehman & Feldberg LLP (RJLF) saw a better, more client-focused way: fixed fees.

“We had the ambitious goal to transform the practice of law,” says Courtland Reichman, cofounder of RJLF, a boutique trial firm specializing in cases with high stakes and high exposure—everything from environmental and constitutional law to patent, trade secrets, energy, and white-collar crime. “We wiped everything off the table and set out to reinvent it.”

With the firm’s fixed-fee system, lawyers are incentivized to work thoroughly and efficiently. “It’s a results-oriented model,” says cofounder Christine Lehman. “We don’t want to encourage our attorneys to just bill more hours; we want to unleash them

to do their best work for clients.” The results? Remarkable.

Having tripled in size since its founding in 2018, RJLF has won eight- and nine-figure verdicts, including some of the biggest patent and white-collar cases in the country. Top graduates from renowned institutions including Columbia, Harvard, and the University of Chicago are clamoring to join them. “We’re attracting the smartest, most efficient lawyers who want hands-on experience, ongoing training, and a valued voice within a firm,” says Reichman.

A Better System

To replace the billable-hour structure, RJLF uses deliverables-based project management software. Every case is broken down into parts. The firm is responsible for managing the case successfully and efficiently—cost overruns are not passed on to the client. This structural change fundamentally changed the way its lawyers practice, including their relationships with

clients and each other. “There is evidence that the billable hour is bad for clients, the profession, and for lawyers, including contributing to mental health and quality of life issues,” says Reichman. “Yet the industry is wedded to it.”

“Clients love it because it’s predictable. They aren’t billed for every six-minute phone call with their attorney,” says Lehman. “Clients want to talk to us because they aren’t getting extra bills.” The model accompanied changes to client service and firm management, including use of proprietary software to track project status and productivity, incentivizing lawyers on results, eliminating lockstep compensation and partnership consideration, and more, requiring rethinking how legal services are provided. “It’s time for something new that serves clients, improves relationships, and addresses the needs of the profession,” says Lehman.

Attorneys, likewise, are empowered to maximize their potential within the fee-based model. Young lawyers are brought to depositions for firsthand trial experience at no extra cost to the client—a mentorship mentality that cultivates well-equipped counsel.

Diversity, too, is a powerful tool at RJLF, a majority women-owned practice. Employing team members with wide scopes of experiences isn’t about checking a box; rather, it’s about utilizing diverse perspectives, whether racial, gender, generational, socioeconomic, or other. Everyone is valued and encouraged to speak—from first-year attorneys to veteran founders.

“This approach is transformative in an industry that can be hierarchal,” says Reichman. “We’ve cultivated a culture that empowers people to speak. This leads to practical advantages.”



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