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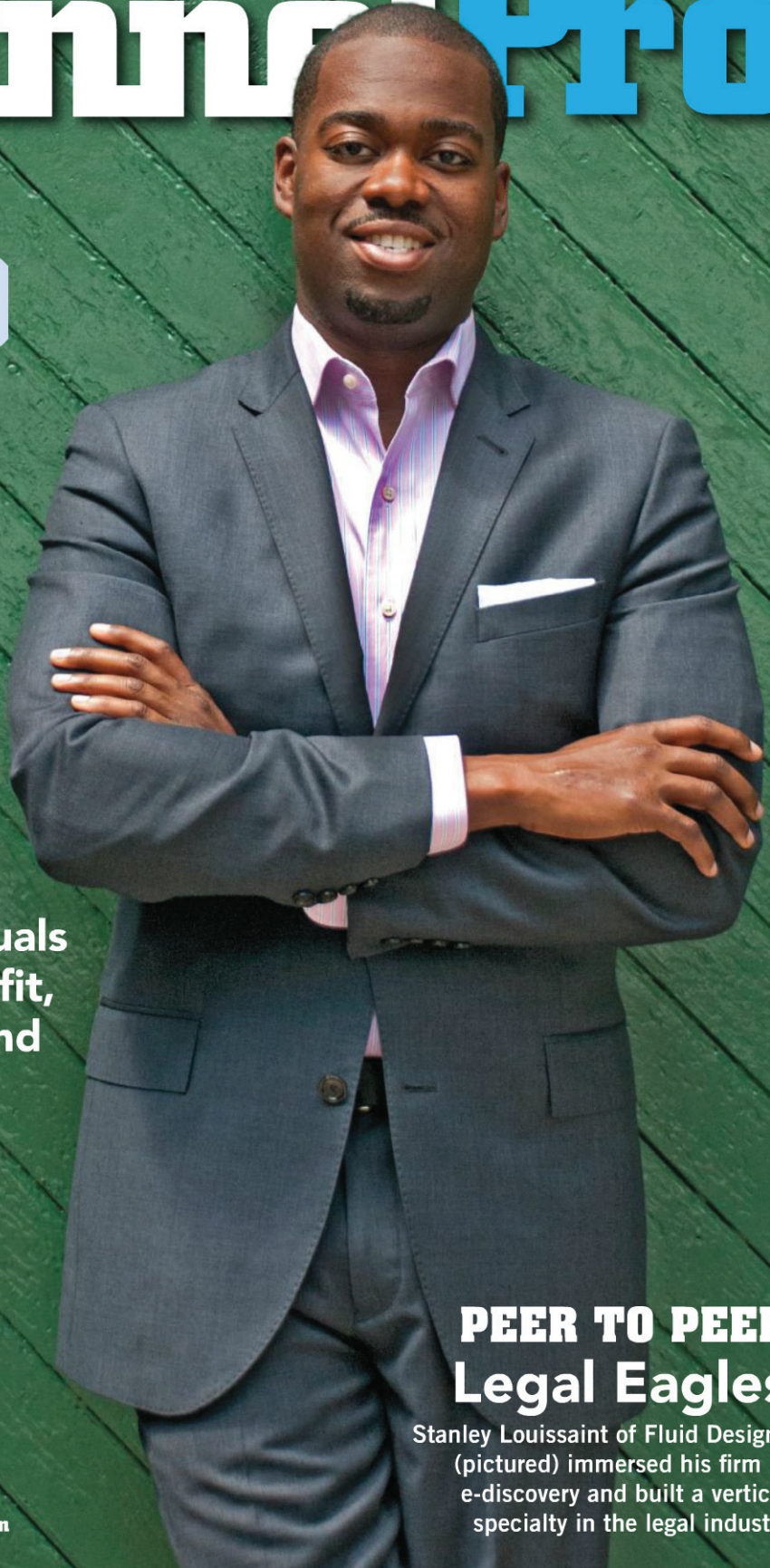
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PEER TO PEER Legal Eagles

Stanley Louissaint of Fluid Designs
(pictured) immersed his firm in
e-discovery and built a vertical
specialty in the legal industry

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PEERTOPEER

A portrait of Stanley Louissaint, a Black man with a goatee, smiling and wearing a dark suit jacket over a pink and white striped shirt. He has his arms crossed.

Stanley Louissaint

Owner and IT Consultant
Fluid Designs Inc.

FOUNDED Dec. 2001

LOCATION Union, N.J.

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES 3

WEBSITE www.fluiddesigns.com

COMPANY FOCUS Keeping IT simple for our clients

FAVORITE PART OF MY JOB Dealing with different clients and people—every day is a different day

LEAST FAVORITE PART I struggle with the idea of growing the firm into a larger entity and having to manage a bunch of people. I'm afraid it will take away from what I personally enjoy.

WHAT PEOPLE WOULD BE SURPRISED TO KNOW ABOUT ME I incorporated when I was 16, doing it myself on the State of New Jersey website. I never told anyone my age because I couldn't legally sign contracts. Yet, I was old enough to pay taxes ...

Legal Eagles

Anatomy of how Fluid Designs immersed itself in e-discovery and built a vertical specialty in the legal industry.

By Stanley Louissaint • Photography by Rich Russo

MY CLIENTS have always been willing to take the ride with me. They've trusted me to deliver, and that has also given me the chance to expand my spectrum, which is how I've been able to carve out a niche in the legal vertical market. As our company has moved deeper into this market, we've expanded our SMB managed IT services offerings to include e-discovery and forensics, and I've also been tapped as an expert witness.

Today the legal field is behind in technology, so the opportunity is there. Building trust and developing rapport are key. As my legal clients' needs have expanded, my ability to provide them with solutions has too.

My first legal client came from a referral. The firm's server was down and they couldn't get in touch with the IT provider. We ended up closing both a server project deal and a support agreement. Referrals from that client led to me building out this specialty. Lawyers work from referrals in their own business, so they have no problems referring their trusted IT provider to their colleagues at other law firms.

Once I'm in the door, I work to land them as a retained client. Then we're on-site for a mandatory visit once a month. This is a big differentiator for Fluid Designs. We can work remotely but we show up and interact—that's how we build rapport and trust. While we're on-site we'll hear about the client's current issues. Discovery is often provided from/to adversaries in digital format on a hard drive—because of this firms look to us for assistance with essentially anything technical. Maintaining their computer network makes it an easier lead-in for e-discovery work.

Leaning In to E-discovery

Our e-discovery litigation support service started when a client had a civil case with close to 50,000 documents to review on a hard drive. I immersed myself in e-discovery and its intricacies. We advised the firm on which e-discovery review platform to buy. We took care of installation, loading the documents, culling the data, and conducting keyword searches through a list they provided. All they had to do was review the relevant documents that we tagged for them. E-discovery is comparable to database management. Anyone who is not trained in e-discovery would struggle with the process up to the review. We understood the lingo and could explain a technical issue in a language they could understand. We helped them out and at the same time added a service to my practice.

Now my wheelhouse is much bigger. Although the legal vendors sell directly to the client, we consult on adding the proper e-discovery review platform to their infrastructure and manage it. We work on-site and remotely; ultimately we become project managers.

We have also expanded to provide our legal clients with expert witness services, cyber investigations, mobile phone captures, and computer forensics. While I wouldn't move away from my core business today, we had a 222 percent growth in these additional services last year.

If you want to specialize in a vertical such as legal, go where the clients go, even if that's a bar where they hang out after work. Acquiring one legal client is your gateway; from one client we've generated over three-quarters of a million dollars in work from referrals.

Also, ask the right questions. Find out what they're struggling with and what areas

they want to explore. For me, not only was I exploring e-discovery but my clients were trying to expand their practice areas as well. Familiarize yourself with products from the legal vendors such as LexisNexis and Westlaw. Do demos. I've written articles for a law journal as a "legal tech expert." You're fighting to be seen as the expert. Once folks have that view then the rest follows.

And understand that time is money for a lawyer. It is rare that you will get into an account through the lead partner; that partner's admin or office manager will get you further along.

"Acquiring one legal client is your gateway; from one client we've generated over three-quarters of a million dollars in work from referrals."

STANLEY LOUISSAINT
OWNER AND IT CONSULTANT
FLUID DESIGNS INC.

Finally, client satisfaction is critical. We provide a white glove service, so we can command a higher rate. Clients can call and get a live person. Being human is a lost art. Some lawyers still want a paper calendar, so who am I to say they have to use Outlook?

Our e-discovery and litigation support services illustrate how we took our niche with legal clients, worked to understand their world, and helped them do their work when it involved hard drives filled with data. It's an example of clients willing to take the ride with us.