

News

Gertmenian Profiled in *Smart Business Columbus*

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Russ Gertmenian, the managing partner of Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease LLP, was profiled in the April 2013 edition of *Smart Business Columbus* Magazine. The profile story highlighted the changes made at the firm and in the legal profession following the 2008-2009 financial downturn.

The story states:

"Gertmenian had to look at his business model, which was geared to 'we are going to be 10 percent bigger every year,' the company's hiring expectations and morale among people who weren't seeing the same kind of growth opportunities that they once had — 'and managing people who never had to struggle to find work because there was always more than enough work to do.'

'That all has been a tremendous challenge in terms of what the law firms including mine needed to do. We needed to change our approaches so we had a mutually beneficial relationship in which our clients got what they needed and we were able to provide the services in a way where it made economic sense for us.'

The story also outlined the unique approach Gertmenian took to develop solutions to the new challenges the firm faced. Rather than just speaking to other lawyers, he looked to other professions going through similar shifts in order to gain additional insight and perspective. It states:

"'Something similar was happening in the medical profession,' Gertmenian says. 'People who were my age, in their 60s, entered a profession that operated in a certain way. Medicine has been transformed much more dramatically than law, in terms of how they operate. That just creates great anxiety and uncertainty among some of the older doctors, causing them to retire or to be unhappy — whereas the kids coming out of medical school today understand the gig.'

What he could see was that things evolve, and he had to view his job as getting his staff comfortable with evolution and change.

'I don't believe you do that in most instances by simply decreeing from the top, 'This is the way it is going to be,' Gertmenian says. 'So we don't move as quickly as some of my partners would like us to move and perhaps as some other law firms move, but as we morph into what we are doing that's different, we do it over a reasonable period of time when people are buying in to it'

'That has been good for us, and we have not jumped at all the newest fads. On the other hand, when we make some changes, over a period of time, there is real buy-in to it, and I think that gives us culturally tremendous strength.'

To read the profile, visit the *Smart Business Columbus* [website](#).