

## **Creating Harmony between a Forwarding Agency and a Collection Law Firm**

Productive collaboration between agencies and law firms is essential for a strong collection industry and client satisfaction, and is not something that should be taken for granted. There are steps both parties can take when considering how to best contribute to this relationship, which will help to ensure an effective and harmonious partnership.

Approaching these relationships with an open attitude seeking the best way to work together is a good place to start. Participating in a working relationship with preconceived notions about what each party should be doing, is a recipe for confusion and frustration. Constructive communication between the forwarding agency and the onsite law firm is essential to ensuring that both understand their roles and what the other's needs are.

For example, when a law firm is made aware of and able to accommodate a collection agency's normal scheduling of status reports and remittances to clients, it enables the agency to continue supporting the client without altering established procedures and cycles. This in turn keeps a client's expectations as consistent as possible, which is key to providing total client satisfaction.

Similarly, forwarding agencies may have to tailor their usual operating procedures to what the onsite law firm requires. For instance, recognizing what documentation is necessary to support the collection of a claim from a legal perspective is paramount. Although a debtor's new customer credit application might not appear to be significant, it may have many valuable parts, such as a personal guarantee, that when gleaned by the onsite attorney can be used as leverage to collect the claim. When an agency does not take the time to request and organize all the supporting claim documentation, especially when there's a dispute against the product and service, the onsite attorney cannot effectively pursue the matter with all the legal ammunition possible.

Both parties must be especially careful in understanding how each side operates when dealing with one another from different countries. The knowledge of local cultures and legal systems is essential to minimizing communication gaffes and creating realistic expectations. Along with the usual pace of court cases and payment restrictions, which can vary greatly from country to country, exchange rates and banking restrictions may also play a significant role in the suit process. The forwarding agency and onsite attorney should clear up as many out of the norm operating procedures in writing before the claim is formally placed for collection.

Partnerships between agencies and law firms are a great cornerstone of this industry and for those who have learned how to adjust and work with each other's needs, they have become in essence a "dream team" that makes them a reliable and trusted outsourcing partner for every client that uses their respective and combined services.