

Attorney Makes a Good Case for an MBA

A look at Greg T. Rinckey's professional history makes it clear that he is a modern-day Renaissance man. He started out as a firefighter, and doggedly pursued his dream of becoming an attorney. Along the way, he sandwiched in jobs as an emergency medical technician and as a military lawyer. It was when he obtained his MBA, however, that he fully realized how business management skills could give his successful law practice a boost.

"As my law firm expand(ed), I felt I needed additional management skills and a more skillful understanding of the business side of the law," he said. "My MBA has allowed me to tackle complicated business matters much easier."

Rinckey, who possesses a bachelor's degree from Hofstra and a law degree from New York's Touro Law School, attended his executive MBA program at the State University of New York at Albany on the weekends. This allowed him to take care of personal and professional commitments while learning the ins and outs of business.

The attorney's view: Why go to business school

Rinckey, managing partner at Tully Rinckey PLLC in Albany, N.Y., established his law firm with fellow Hofstra University alum Mathew B. Tully in 2004. Rinckey completed his MBA while managing the firm and now specializes in military and employment law, as well as discrimination litigation and national security clearance mitigation. The firm also takes on civil and criminal litigation and cases related to bankruptcy, family and real estate.

Business school helped Rinckey improve his understanding of the business side of the law, and enabled him to better relate to clients who are business owners -- cash flow and marketing are concepts that his clients face and that he now understands. He also has gained insight into both military and corporate styles of leadership, and can find a balance between the two that works for him. These skills can be helpful when it comes to keeping track of up to 70 clients at one time. Top computer programs and well-trained staff also help with excellent business management.

From a law firm's perspective, Rinckey is better able to read and understand balance sheets and more efficiently tackle the daily and yearly paperwork that comes with owning a business. Rinckey also uses the education gained in his MBA program to help expand the business: attorneys, legal support, marketing, technology, finance, and client relations staff now comprise the 71-person law firm, but new plans are in the making. The firm, with satellite offices in Washington, D.C., and Arlington, Va., should open a fourth location in Syracuse, N.Y., in the spring. And, within the next two years, two new offices should launch in Rochester and Buffalo.

MBA programs to top up your career

Rinckey's love of the law dates back to his time in the Army, where he served as an attorney with the Judge Advocate General's Corps. It was there that he learned to prosecute and defend soldiers on felony charges ranging from drug possession to murder. Since leaving the military, he has represented federal and private sector employees in investigations and cases in front of the Merit Systems Protection Board, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the Office of Special Counsel. He's been appointed to the Committee on Character and Fitness for the State of New York Appellate Division's Third Judicial District and, as part of his duties, interviews prospective attorneys before they're allowed admission to the New York State Bar.

As Rinckey's experience shows, it's never too late to keep refining your professional path. MBA programs can also add finesse to a well-established career. For Rinckey, the common thread that runs through it all is his devotion to helping others.

"We exist to help and care for each other," Rinckey said. "I do that through service to my country, my community, and helping people with complicated problems. When someone meets with me, they or their business is facing one of the toughest challenges they'll have to experience in life. It's my job to right that wrong or to minimize the pain and stress of that situation as much as possible. I enjoy that."