



Member spotlight: Hager, Dewick & Zuengler, S.C.

Honesty, integrity, client service standards differentiate

By Nancy Jean

"Relationships matter." That's the motto of Hager, Dewick & Zuengler, S.C., attorneys at law, located at 200 S. Washington St. in downtown Green Bay.

And so does integrity, said Attorney John Hager. "Integrity, your honesty, that's your calling card," he said.

Now approaching its fourth year in business, the firm has a Web site that was specifically crafted to express to clients and prospective clients what Hager, Dewick & Zuengler stands for, said Hager. Clients are never viewed as "faceless sources of revenue," the home page at hdz-law.com says. "Rather, our attorneys and staff are committed to treating the firm's clients, families and community with the care, dignity and respect that they deserve."

"We care about the clients more than just doing their work," said Hager, later emphasizing, "You can't act like you care. You have to care."

And it's that approach to doing business that makes it fun coming to work every day, he said.

Known as a business and estate planning law firm, Hager said HDZ (the abbreviated progressive branding the firm uses) prides itself on its variety of business services including business organization, business planning, mergers and acquisitions, commercial and real estate law, estate planning and business litigation, as well as individual estate planning, wills and trusts.

The enthusiasm Hager has for his work and the firm is obvious as he chats about the clients they serve, from individuals of all ages doing estate planning to start-up businesses, to some of



Pictured from left to right are Dave Dewick, Matt Zuengler, Dave Fenlon, John Hager and Brian Flood.

the area's largest employers. "We are there with you," he said.

What's unique about HDZ is its team approach to serve the best interests of individual clients and businesses. Most law firms work from a "pillar" approach, meaning a single attorney serves the client. At HDZ a client knows that multiple attorneys are familiar with their needs and are there for them, said Hager.

Along with Hager, David Dewick and Matthew Zuengler founded the law firm on Sept. 1, 2005.

Hager, a native of De Pere, has more than 25 years' experience advising individuals and business estate and business planning matters, including the purchase and sale of businesses, formation of new businesses, business succession planning and banking and commercial transactions. He does estate planning and probate as well as estate and trust settlement and administration. Hager is also a

licensed certified public accountant.

Dewick has extensive experience on complex business and real estate matters, including mergers and acquisitions, restructurings, formation and capitalization of business entities, buy/sell agreements, strategic planning, residential and commercial real estate sales, acquisitions, development and leasing, condominium formation and conversion, banking and financial transactions, and general counsel matters. He also serves on advisory boards for several clients.

Zuengler devotes his practice to advising individuals and closely held business owners on wills, trusts, estate, gift and retirement distribution planning, business succession planning, marital property agreements, and probate and trust administration, including post-mortem planning. He also has significant experience in sophisticated wealth transfer techniques.

HDZ also has two associate attorneys, David

Fenlon and Brian Flood.

Key components of HDZ's "Client Service Standards" include:

- Responding to clients' phone calls and other correspondence as quickly as possible.
- Making every decision based on what is best for clients.
- Presenting the most efficient, client-friendly facilities and using the latest technological advances to address clients' legal needs.
- Being actively involved in community organizations to improve our community as a place to live and work.

Here are some other thoughts from Hager:

— "This is a critical time," Hager said. Businesses need to be aware that forgoing legal services because of the economy's downturn could be a mistake, he said, emphasizing there are many good reasons why it's even more important to use the services of a law firm right now. An example is setting up credit agreements. "You need to get us involved earlier rather than later," he advised.

— Business succession planning is important. "Entrepreneurial types think they're going to last forever," said Hager. He admitted it's a topic some people find difficult to discuss, with HDZ's role being to guide the business owner successfully through the process.

— A strong support staff is "critical," said Hager. Jenny Vande Leest, office manager, and Julie Mushynski, senior administrative assistant, were finalists for the *Wisconsin Law Journal's* 2008 "Unsung Hero" Award.

— HDZ prides itself on the communications it has with clients. Hager said HDZ is well aware of the trust individuals and businesses put in their services. "If you can put people at ease, that's what it's all about," he continued.

For more information see the Hager, Dewick & Zuengler Web site at hdz-law.com or call (920) 430-1900.