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MEDIA CONTACTS:

Robin Scullin: +1 202.349.1509; scullin@acc.com

Marthea Davis: +1 202.349.1519; davis@acc.com

ACC’S NEW BLOG SERIES DRIVES TO THE CORE OF CLIENT-FIRM RELATIONSHIPS
“Client-Firm Value Conversations” Features Real-Life, Real Time Discussions on Value-Based Fees, Staffing, Metrics and Other Key Topics

AUGUST 23, 2010 (Washington, D.C.) — The [Association of Corporate Counsel](#) (ACC) has launched a value-based blog series, “[Client-Firm Value Conversations](#),” that confronts one of the most sensitive issues for in-house and outside counsel – value-based fee and staffing structures. As part of ACC’s official blog, [In-house ACCess](#), this new weekly series is designed to showcase how one client and one firm are working to build their value-based relationship, one step at a time. Conversations on the blog between the partners explore the inner-workings of how they will structure their work and relationship, and open the world to the inner-workings of their frank exchange as they labor to improve the client-firm value in their relationship.

The first installment of “*Client-Firm Value Conversations*” chronicles the evolving relationship between the [Wolverine World Wide](#) legal department and its outside counsel, [Seyfarth Shaw LLP](#), a full-service national law firm, as “[The Client’s Situation](#)” and “[The Firm’s Story](#).” Guest bloggers **Kenneth A. Grady**, General Counsel and Secretary of Wolverine World Wide, and Seyfarth partner **Lisa J. Damon**, a member of the firm’s Executive Committee, share anecdotes of their journey to infuse value into their arrangement to handle Wolverine’s trademark matters. Posts from Grady and Damon address fundamental client-firm issues, such as:

- *The challenges of fee discussions;*
- *How lawyers can become more business oriented and firms more efficient;*
- *How both parties determine metrics of value and which metrics matter;*
- *How to balance strategic roles and tactical delivery; and*
- *Law firm economics.*

With ten posts to date, each pairing between Grady and Damon offers a unique view into another aspect of the evolving client-firm relationship.

[Susan Hackett](#), staff leader for the [ACC Value Challenge](#) (an initiative to reconnect costs and value) and ACC’s Senior Vice President and General Counsel, describes the thinking behind the development of this unique blog series, “It’s our sense that folks ‘get’ why they must move toward driving new value in their relationships, but many struggle with what that means in terms of practical strategies and execution. They’re used to doing work one way, and now they’re wondering whether they will succeed if they adopt a new approach. They need both ideas and comfort that allows them to experiment with value-based services, too. Put another way, they need to see how the sausage is made. Change isn’t easy and it’s certainly not always sexy, and so we thought real-time exposure to how real-life clients and firms were navigating these challenges on a daily basis would be not only helpful, but perhaps even inspiring.”

Hackett adds, “What we want people to be interested in is not that Ken and Lisa are making difficult or risky moves, but rather the opposite: that this is ‘bread and butter’ work and that they are finding ways to make their relationship work even better.”

Grady, an ACC Value Challenge steering committee member, says, “We set out to create a fun and engaging blog by allowing readers to follow how we’re reshaping a traditional relationship to focus on alignment, outcome and value-based fee and staffing structures. We hope to show our readers that while it may require effort and commitment, value should not be an elusive concept, but rather something that defies practical applications for typical clients and firms. In fact, value is the new normal.”

Damon agrees, “Over the past few years, our firm has been working on a different way of analyzing and delivering value to our clients through the use of Lean Six Sigma methodologies. The mission of our ‘SeyfarthLean’ initiative is to bring together our practice departments, professionals, technologies and other assets to maximize value as defined by the client while minimizing inefficiencies. It gives us a framework to have a better discussion and relationship with our clients as they navigate through these challenging times.” She continues, “We aim to work together with our clients to control legal costs, provide efficient and proactive legal service, and build a partnership to assure that our solutions fit their needs. Our blog with Wolverine sets out to showcase how we work with clients using this innovative model.”

Grady and Damon’s relationship will continue to be chronicled over the next month with weekly posts to *In-house ACCess*. ACC members and the legal community at large are encouraged to join the value conversation by posting their own reactions and comments to the blog. Following the Wolverine-Seyfarth installment, ACC’s “[Client-Firm Value Conversations](#)” blog series will feature another pairing with unique insights on different matters, needs, and perspectives. The goal for the series is to continue to focus on how value plays out in practical, everyday relationships across the gamut of clients and firms, and their legal needs.

About ACC:

The Association of Corporate Counsel (ACC) is the world’s largest organization serving the professional and business interests of attorneys who practice in the legal departments of corporations, associations and other private-sector organizations around the globe. ACC promotes the common interests of its members, provides resources to help save time, money and effort, contributes to their continuing education and provides a voice on issues of global importance. With more than 25,000 members in over 70 countries, employed by over 10,000 organizations, ACC connects its members to the people and resources necessary for both personal and professional growth. By in-house counsel, for in-house counsel.® For more information, visit www.acc.com.

About Seyfarth Shaw LLP:

Seyfarth Shaw has over 750 attorneys located in ten offices throughout the United States, including: Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, Sacramento, San Francisco, and Washington D.C., as well as Brussels, Belgium. Seyfarth Shaw provides a broad range of legal services in the areas of labor and employment, employee benefits, litigation, corporate, and real estate. The firm’s practice reflects virtually every industry and segment of the country’s business and social fabric. Clients include over 300 of the Fortune 500 companies, financial institutions, newspapers and other media, hotels, health care organizations, airlines and railroads. The firm also represents a number of federal, state, and local governmental and educational entities. For more information, please visit www.seyfarth.com.

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