

April, 2013

Background: At the insistence of the Chairman, a mid-size firm retained us a while ago to facilitate development of a strategic plan. When we arrived to begin our analysis, he handed this to us and said, “This describes us and what we’ve been doing.”

RIDING A DEAD HORSE

Dakota tribal wisdom says, when you discover you are riding a dead horse, the best strategy is to dismount.

However, in law firms we often try other strategies with dead horses, including the following:

- Decide the horse is not dead.
- Change riders.
- Say things like “This is the way we have always ridden this horse.”
- Appoint a committee to study the horse.
- Visit other firms to see how they ride dead horses.
- Harness several dead horses together for increased speed.

The rest of management and the partners soon recognized the firm was riding a dead horse and dismounted. With our guidance, they developed new strategies and mounted a new horse. Both this horse and the firm are now very much alive.

Unfortunately, in this changing and challenged legal profession, some firms continue to ride a dead horse.

Robert Denney Associates Inc. provides strategic management and marketing counsel to law firms and closely held companies throughout the United States. Previous Communiques, as well as articles on important issues and information about our services, are posted on our web site which is constantly updated.

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