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Real Estate Law: Benefits of cross-practice collaboration in servicing law firm clients - by Richard Blumberg, John Bues, and Gregory Lisi

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The growing complexity of client issues regularly requires attorneys from multiple practice areas/industries to collaborate to successfully serve their clients and allow the law firm to efficiently undertake complex work. At Forchelli Deegan Terrana LLP (FDT), a full-service law firm with over 60 attorneys, lawyers from different practice groups often work together to develop innovative and comprehensive outcomes for our clients.

For example, FDT recently handled a tax lien, unpaid wages, sales tax and commercial landlord/tenant case pertaining to commercial property in Farmingdale, N.Y. The client failed to pay taxes and overtime wages to its employees and was being evicted by the tax lien purchaser who had obtained a tax deed to the property from the Nassau County treasurer.

To best serve the client in this multi-phase process, FDT litigation, bankruptcy and tax attorneys

coordinated a challenge to the tax deed to recover a deed to the property in the client's name, while attorneys in the banking, real estate and corporate practice groups negotiated to secure sufficient financing to pay off all of the client's tax debt against the property and payment of all other debts. This cross-practice collaboration resulted in the tax deed being set aside, a clear and marketable title being reacquired by our client and the dismissal and settlement of multiple lawsuits.

Subsequently, the property was sold, resulting in the client realizing a significant net gain. Thereafter, funds were available to negotiate and settle multiple labor & employment and tax lawsuits brought by the government and individuals. Our client went from having no property and potential liability in excess of one million dollars to having no liability and money in their pocket. If a law firm has the right people, collaboration can change a bad situation into a positive outcome.

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