

Professional Recommendation for Derek Simmons

I understand that Derek Simmons has applied for position with your company (a company we rely on for research software including Co-Counsel). I have known Derek for more than 10 years, initially through youth sports where he coached my son, but more recently as a professional colleague.

In 2023-2024, Derek worked strategically with our COO on content initiatives, demonstrating his ability to identify business opportunities and develop systematic approaches to complex challenges. He and I began talking about AI during that time and he has been my go-to person on the subject since then.

I also had the chance to observe Derek as he worked through a personal legal challenge after his position was eliminated at the Star Tribune. While my firm did not represent Derek on that case, Derek's approach to that legal challenge exemplified exactly what legal technology companies need: He leveraged AI tools strategically to build his case, documented his process systematically, and translated complex technical capabilities into practical legal advantages for the lawyer he did retain. Simply stated, it further demonstrated his AI knowledge, applications, and is well suited to apply that knowledge to assist, train, and otherwise help others.

His hands-on experience using AI throughout his own legal proceedings provides real-world insight into how these tools can enhance rather than replace legal judgment — precisely the perspective needed in legal technology product management.

Lastly, his 10+ years generating \$20M+ in revenue at a major media company, combined with enterprise-scale AI implementation experience, positions him uniquely to help legal firms optimize tools like Westlaw's Co-Counsel. Derek understands both the technological possibilities and the practical constraints legal practices face. I am confident that Derek can help firms move beyond mixed results to systematic workflow improvements that free lawyers to focus on relationship building and other tasks AI is not equipped to handle (yet).

I recommend Derek without reservation for legal technology leadership roles. His combination of strategic business thinking, practical AI implementation experience, and deep understanding of how technology can enhance professional practice makes him uniquely qualified to bridge the gap between what legal AI can do and what legal practices need it to accomplish.

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