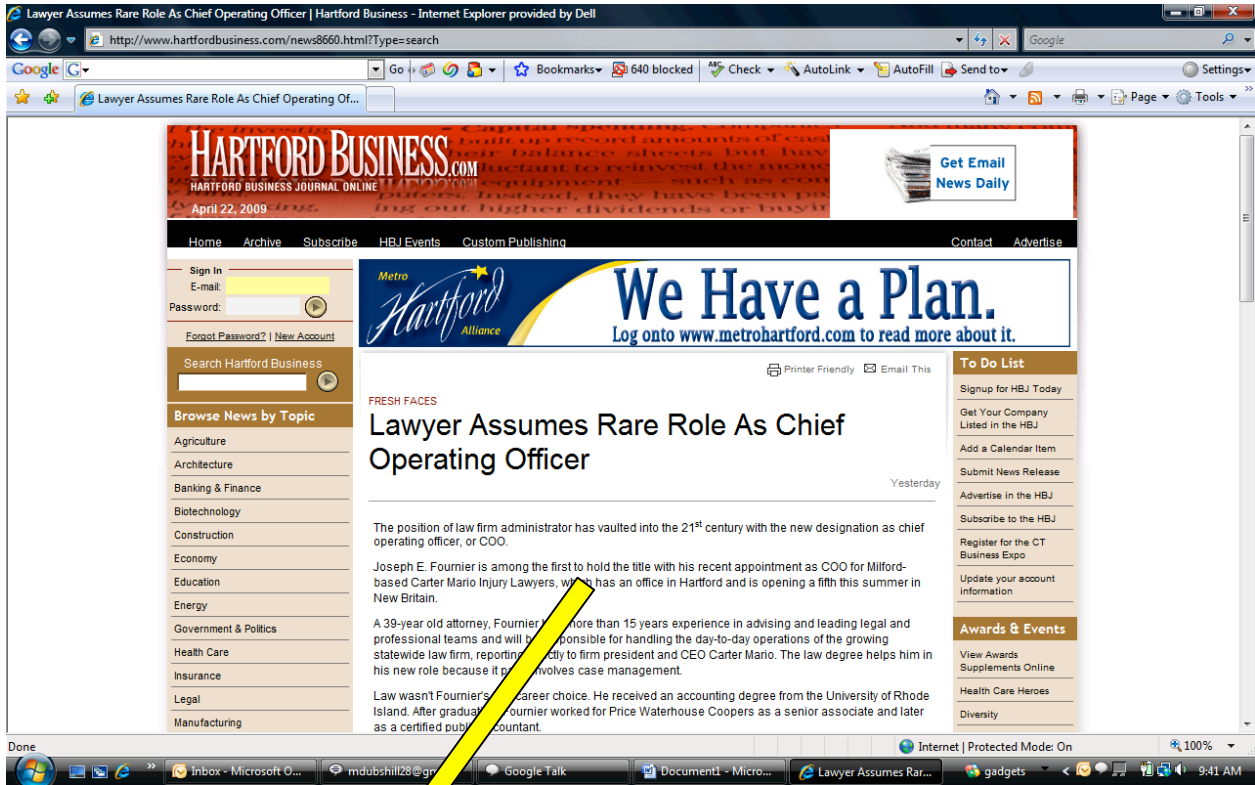


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FRESH FACES

Lawyer Assumes Rare Role As Chief Operating Officer

Tuesday, April 21, 2009

The position of law firm administrator has vaulted into the 21st century with the new designation as chief operating officer, or COO.

Joseph E. Fournier is among the first to hold the title with his recent appointment as COO for Milford-based Carter Mario Injury Lawyers, which has an office in Hartford and is opening a fifth this summer in New Britain.

A 39-year old attorney, Fournier has more than 15 years experience in advising and leading legal and professional teams and will be responsible for handling the day-to-day operations of the growing statewide law firm, reporting directly to firm president and CEO Carter Mario. The law degree helps him in his new role because it partly involves case management.

Law wasn't Fournier's first career choice. He received an accounting degree from the University of Rhode Island. After graduation, Fournier worked for Price Waterhouse Coopers as a senior associate and later as a certified public accountant.

The legal field beckoned, though, because, he said, accounting is a black and white world with no wrong answers.

"I always wanted to challenge myself with a different way of thinking," he said. "With law, you always have to look at things from different outcomes."

Fournier said the law firm's business model attracted him to the position. (He was formerly vice president of legal affairs and administration with ChartOne in Boston, a medical information services firm.)

"I enjoy the way we focus on customer service as a law firm," he said. "You have a lot of customer avoidance sometimes at other law firms."

Fournier said his customer embrace extends to co-workers

"The recognition I've received has been the best part," he said. "There's no doubt in my mind I could comfortably live in this area."

His days are largely consumed with commuting between Carter Mario's four Connecticut offices in Milford, Hartford, Bridgeport and Waterbury. He travels home to North Attleboro, Mass., 36 miles southwest of Boston, as often as possible to see his four children, ages 8, 5, 4 and 2.

Somewhere in that mix, the avid golfer says he still finds time to read sports books.