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Responsible Party

Samuel Solomon

A Stage For Court Rehearsals

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Lawyers are generally well prepared for important trials. But unless they can practice their oratory and their use of glossy presentations in a courtroom setting, they may feel a bit like a theater troupe going into opening night without a dress rehearsal.

Samuel Solomon, the chief executive of **Doar Communications**, based in Lynbrook, N.Y., has found a way to avoid that situation. Last year, the company started renting out a brand-new practice courtroom, complete with the rich paneling and technological bells and whistles of the real thing.

Doar, which provides consulting services on courtroom design, also offers software that helps lawyers prepare and manage trial material and do jury research. It gives discounts on the courtroom rental to customers who buy software or services.

Lawyers rent the courtroom and other spaces by the day, to experiment with legal strategies and to conduct mock trials. At their disposal are cameras for videoconferencing, Webcasting or just taping the proceedings, as well as flat-panel display monitors and Internet access—all of which can be controlled from a wireless touch screen.

Adjoining rooms with one-way mirrors allow jury consultants and lawyers to view mock deliberations. A control room provides an overview of activity throughout the facility, including several conference rooms.

“Everything is very integrated,” said Mr. Solomon, 49, who earned degrees in philosophy and finance before building the company over the last 14 years. Lawyers can rent a conference-deliberation room for about \$1,500 a day; the room has built-in high-resolution projectors and audio equipment. The entire courtroom package, which includes three sets of adjoining rooms, is available for about \$10,000. Catered meals are provided for an additional fee.

Judges and court administrators use the facility too—to evaluate technology they are considering when building or upgrading courtrooms.

The mock courtroom, which cost \$1.5 million and has 1,350 square feet of space, is used about three-quarters of the time it is available, Mr. Solomon said. The courtroom and the

adjoining 2,000 square feet of conference and jury rooms are a small part of Doar's 56,000-square-foot headquarters in Lynbrook, on Long Island and in the center of New York's busy Eastern District of federal court.

Doar is studying the possibility of building scaled-down, stand-alone versions of the courtroom elsewhere in the United States or abroad, Mr. Solomon said. One is planned next year in the Washington Area.

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