

THE COMPANY:
DEB SHOPS, INC.

MARTINDALE-HUBBELL USER:
**LORRAINE KOC,
VICE PRESIDENT &
GENERAL COUNSEL**

DEB



Established in 1932, Deb Shops was originally known as Joy Hosiery, a leading retailer of foundation garments in and around Philadelphia. Today, the company has evolved to become a leading nationwide junior apparel retailer under the brand names DEB, CSO, and Tops 'N Bottoms, with over 330 stores in 41 states.

With three lawyers in the legal department, Deb Shops' General Counsel, Lorraine Koc, is regularly faced with the challenge of allocating resources to address the growing company's varied legal needs. As the department is asked to do more for less, this requires an even higher degree of partnership between the legal team, management and outside counsel.

While Deb Shops uses a handful of firms as the company's primary go-to resource, Koc says she regularly needs to find outside counsel for specialized needs. She recalls a recent instance in which Deb Shops learned that a default judgment had been entered against it in an unfamiliar Kansas City jurisdiction. Koc needed to find the best lawyer in the area to handle her case, and consulted Martindale-Hubbell to identify, evaluate and select the right one.

She executed a search on *Martindale.com* to identify the lawyers with the specific expertise she was looking for. She then searched through the Martindale-Hubbell *Legal Articles* database to find articles written by the attorneys on her short list. Koc says using this intelligence to inform her selection resulted in the success she was looking for. "My usual reference sources couldn't respond quickly enough, which

is often the case," said Koc. "So, the person we ultimately selected, we found through Martindale-Hubbell. And we were pleased with the outcome – we would use this lawyer again for future work."

Koc says this example illustrates why Martindale-Hubbell is just as important today as it was before the Internet Age. "I might be presented with as many as six or eight matters in a year that require me to look beyond my preferred providers. If I were to do a Google search, it would return so much information from so many irrelevant sources, that it takes too much time to cull through it all," explained Koc. She added that while law firm websites can contain useful information, they don't provide the objective, reliable, and credible information that she looks for when selecting outside counsel. "Martindale-Hubbell includes vital information I can't get on a firm's website. It's also marketing-neutral and provides other credible indicators of quality that you can't find elsewhere, such as *Peer Review Ratings*, which we rely upon regularly."

According to Koc, because she must anticipate legal issues beyond a single locality, and oftentimes on a national basis, Martindale-Hubbell remains an essential resource. "In-house counsel will always value their personal networks. That won't ever change. But we must be able to extend beyond those networks, and that's where Martindale-Hubbell comes in – it's our industry's most reliable source. If a firm is not listed in Martindale-Hubbell, it raises a question in my mind. Is the firm less involved professionally? Are they keeping up? Are they a step behind?"