

BlumbergExcelsior:

The History of a Family Company

In 1887, twenty-two-year-old Julius Blumberg opened a small two room store at 115 Division Street in New York City's Lower East Side. That event, one hundred and twenty-five years ago, marked the beginning of a business that would become the leading nationwide supplier of specialized law products.

The original store sold newspapers, magazines, candy, and stationery and related items. Concerned with social and political reform, Julius often lent the back room of his store to various community civic groups, occasionally serving as secretary to the group. His civic mindedness was the catalyst for the foundation of today's BlumbergExcelsior, Inc.

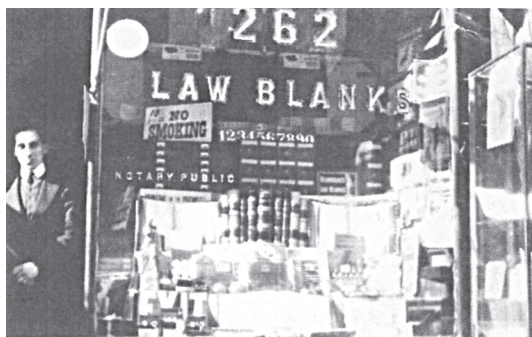
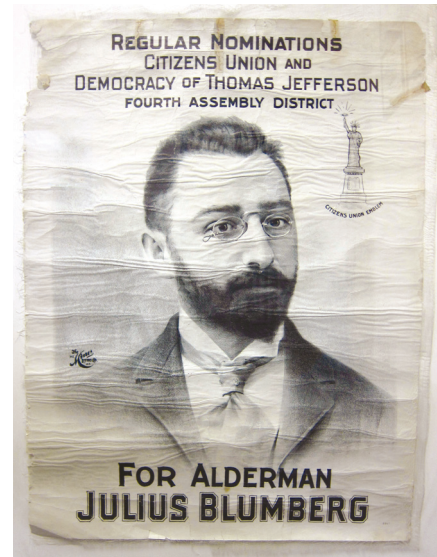
In addition to increasing the efficiency in his duties as secretary to these groups, Julius became aware of the needs of the lawyers who regularly attended the back room meetings. They quickly recognized young Julius' ingenuity and discussed with him their office problems. Julius determined that legal transactions could be greatly simplified through the use of a form on which common "boilerplate" elements were already printed. The Blumberg Law Form was born.

Julius' idea of the law form was not new. His contribution was the development of a wide catalog of useful forms—then called "law blanks"—a valuable innovation for law office administration before the invention of typewriters. The demand for the product multiplied when widespread use of the typewriter dramatically simplified completion of the forms and the many carbon copies required for each transaction. Today the company sells more than 1300 different law forms.

With the enthusiastic acceptance of his law blanks by the legal community and the New York courts, Julius' business began to grow. In 1890 the company moved to 216 Grand Street in New York where "law blanks" could be manufactured on the premises. He kept up with demand by

developing a distribution system, not only through independent stationery stores, but through newsstands in the skyscrapers that were being built in commercial districts.

Five years later the company moved to new quarters in one of New York's then most fashionable addresses, 262 Grand Street, opposite Lord and Taylor. At this location a large social and commercial stationery store was opened with



a plant in the rear. Business prospered and in the early 1920's Julius purchased the John Polhemus Printing Company, one of the country's oldest and largest printers and law form suppliers, founded in 1831.

Seeking to better serve the legal community, Julius moved the store to larger quarters at 71 Broadway in the heart of the legal center and the printing plant to nearby Washington Street. By then, the company was selling increasing numbers of corporate outfits (a packaged binder that contains items required for incorporation including corporate seals, custom printed stock certificates, minutes and by-laws and a transfer ledger) and securities printing accelerated at these new facilities. By the time of Julius Blumberg's incorporation in 1927, the company manufactured a complete line of specialty law products and had established sales and distribution networks in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.



In 1935, after practicing law for three years, Ed Blumberg joined the company. Julius had resisted Ed's desire to join the firm because the recession had taken its toll on the business and Julius thought that the business could not support another family. Ed who preferred to be in business rather than handle small litigation, argued that he could not raise a family on the \$35 a week he was earning as a lawyer. Julius, desirous of having grandchildren, relented.

With Ed's experience in civil litigation he was able to expand the catalog with many new litigation titles and in 1938 expanded the catalog further with new Federal Bankruptcy forms under the Chandler Act. The company acquired Excelsior Stationery Co., Inc. in 1941, one of the country's leading legal stationers. Excelsior was also a manufacturer of corporate outfits which, together with Excelsior's legal printing and supply capabilities, meshed well with Julius Blumberg, Inc.'s manufacturing capability. The Excelsior acquisition enabled the company to move into the national legal supply market through direct mail advertising. With the increased demand upon production facilities in 1944 the property at 43 Park Place was purchased for use as a plant.



In 1953, the United States Steel Corp., the Landlord of our store notified us that they would not renew our lease because they wanted to install a Univac computer that would require the 3,000 square feet our store occupied. A new store was built for us in the courtyard of the Exchange Court Building at 52 Broadway. That store at 80 Exchange Place was later moved to the New Street corner in the

late 1970's. We hired Edgar Tafel, a student of Frank Lloyd Wright, to design the new store. That store was operated until 9/11/2001 when Exchange Place and New Street were closed for security purposes. Our Office Products Division was then moved to the Tribeca buildings.

A leading contributor to the company's growth was the all-in-one corporate kit conceived and designed by Ed. The "Black Beauty[®]" Corporate Kit became the best-selling product of its kind in the nation.

In 1961, Julius Blumberg, Inc. acquired Legal Stationery Company and as Excelsior-Legal Stationery, Inc. became the principal nationwide outlet for Blumberg Law Products.



The third generation of the Blumberg family to manage the company Robert (Bob) Blumberg joined the company in 1966 with the assignment of broadening the company's share of the national market. Bob's law training and experience practicing law gave him invaluable insight into the special requirements of the legal community. Within a few years the company opened branches in Texas, Illinois and Georgia.

Recognizing the growing need of attorneys for informational and research services, Blumberg-Excelsior formed the XL Corporate Services division in 1973. With representatives in every state and overseas and a core staff in Menands (Albany), NY, New York City and Austin, TX, the division now provides corporate, LLC, UCC, patent, trademark, motor vehicle search and filing, lien and bankruptcy searches and other informational research services.

Under Bob's leadership, the company became the most complete one-stop-shop for attorneys and their needs with a catalog of products sent out nationwide. It also developed a nationwide network of dealers, offering more than 6000 different products with manufacturing and fulfillment in its facilities in Menands, NY.

In the mid-1980's, aware of the changing technology in law offices, the company pioneered specialized software designed to assist attorneys in various aspects of their work and simplify law office administration and document generation. Through its catalogs the company enabled many startup law office software developers to reach Blumberg customers. Today, several of these companies are industry leaders in their specialties.



Several other acquisitions enhanced the company's offerings. MidState Legal Supply in Orlando, FL was acquired in 1988 and National Legal Supply, Albany NY was acquired in 1990, adding many law forms and legal specialties to the Blumberg catalog. Gavit & Co, an engraved stationery manufacturer founded in Albany NY in 1840, was acquired in 1992.

Always sensitive to the changing needs of law offices, the company created Blumberg Forms Online in 2000. BlumbergExcelsior's web-based proprietary electronic forms applications utilize the most advanced forms technology on the internet.



BlumbergExcelsior is a member of the Hundred Year Association of New York and in 2005 the company was awarded the prestigious Burton Award for Legal Achievement in a ceremony in the Library of Congress in Washington, D. C. The award recognized the company's leadership in the plain language movement and continuing commitment to clear and precise forms.



Today, the company is divided into two areas:

- BlumbergExcelsior, Inc., creator and marketer of specialized legal products, sold through its nationwide catalog and website – recently dubbed “the Amazon.com of the legal industry.”*
- BlumbergExcelsior Corporate Services, Inc., the service division.

The company's growth from the two room store first opened by Julius Blumberg in 1887, to the national prominence it now holds, is a tribute to the visionary management of the company's presidents—Julius Blumberg, Edward J. Blumberg, and now Robert H. Blumberg.

* Neil J. Squillante, SmallLaw®, November 22, 2011.

