

Amid IRS Case, Microsoft Touts Bartlit Beck in Surface Ad

By Scott Flaherty
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Talk about product placement. When Microsoft Corp. wanted to show off its Surface tablet computer in a new online marketing campaign, the company looked no further than one of its own outside lawyers. It chose Chicago-based litigator Brian Prestes, a young Bartlit Beck Herman Palenchar & Scott partner who just happens to be trial counsel for Microsoft in a bitter standoff with the Internal Revenue Service over a multibillion-dollar tax audit.

Microsoft unveiled the result on Oct. 2: A two-and-a-half-minute, sleekly produced advertisement that features Prestes as he travels around Chicago between his home and Bartlit Beck's downtown offices. His real-life wife and daughters co-star in the video, as does his German shepherd.

The video doesn't mention the IRS case. Prestes' Surface tablet, on the other hand, is never out of reach.

Selling Microsoft tablets is the video's obvious goal. But it also functions as free advertising for



Bartlit Beck partner Brian Prestes in a still image from a new online Microsoft Surface advertisement.

Prestes and Bartlit Beck, who weren't compensated for their time. And it gives the firm a chance to trumpet its admiration for an important client's product—something other law firms have taken pains to achieve in the past.

In 2010, for example, Day Pitney reportedly decided to switch to Pepsi Co. products whenever the firm offered snacks or lunches at certain offices, since the firm counted Pepsi as a client. An Above The Law article on Day Pitney's Pepsi switch also described similar product loyalty policies among large firms, including a decision by Wachtell Lipton

