

15 Antitrust Lawyers Know How To Keep GCs Happy

By **Jake Simpson**

Law360, New York (February 03, 2014, 7:42 PM ET) -- A group of 15 elite attorneys who focus on issues of antitrust and competition were lauded by general counsel from the world's largest companies in a recent report identifying private practice attorneys who provide exemplary client service.

In-house counsel from Fortune 1000 companies and other large firms nominated the antitrust lawyers as part of the 2014 BTI Client Service All-Stars report from The BTI Consulting Group Inc. A total of 330 lawyers from a variety of practice areas were nominated by their clients to appear on the prestigious list.

BTI president Michael Rynowecer told Law360 that while all areas of the law are time-sensitive, antitrust representation requires attorneys to be even more forward-thinking.

"Many times, antitrust is associated with deals or regulatory initiatives," he said. "The need to be forward-looking is even more profound in these cases. We also hear a lot about new ways to approach old problems."

One example of new antitrust legal solutions is the proliferation of alternative fee arrangements to handle U.S. Department of Justice requests under the Hart-Scott-Rodino Act. According to Rynowecer, some clients are paying a single fee upfront for all DOJ requests under Hart-Scott-Rodino. As a result, the law firm receives no additional fees if the DOJ hits the firm with a request for additional information, also known as a second request.

"We're seeing attorneys come up with creative ways to make sure the DOJ doesn't send a second request," Rynowecer said. "You have to have a really strong client relationship to be able to do that [fee arrangement], because it takes a lot of confidence on the part of a corporate counsel to put that much faith in your law firm."

The 14 antitrust lawyers recognized by corporate counsel is nearly double the eight attorneys honored as 2013 BTI Client Service All-Stars. But some lawyers, such as Faegre Baker Daniels LLP partner Kim Walker, are mainstays on BTI's list.

Walker, who has been nominated by at least one corporate counsel in each of the last four years, handles a variety of antitrust and litigation responsibilities as part of his broad-based representation of companies in the food and agriculture industries. Many of Walker's core clients are regulated in the compliance space through the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which requires a proactive legal approach.

"We're advising those clients consistently on how they're maximizing compliance with all USDA requirements and setting up systems so that they comply," he said.

Another 2014 Client Service All-Star is Baker Botts LLP partner John Taladay, co-chairman of the firm's antitrust practice. For Taladay, an association and empathy with the client can be as important as the subject matter or case at hand.

"If you personalize it, live with the problem like it's your own and hold a secret grudge against losing, you'll usually find yourself in pretty close sync with your clients," Taladay said.

In addition to Walker and Taladay, antitrust attorneys named as 2014 Client Service All-Stars include Daniel Goldberg of Bingham McCutchen LLP, Brian Facey of Blake Cassels & Graydon LLP, Michael Lazerwitz of Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP, Kathryn Kirmayer of Crowell & Moring LLP, Joseph Tate of Dechert LLP, Veronica Lewis of Gibson Dunn & Crutcher LLP, Robert Robertson of Hogan Lovells LLP, Margaret Zwisler of Latham & Watkins LLP, Britt Miller and John Roberti of Mayer Brown LLP, David Marx of McDermott Will & Emery LLP, Kenneth Prince of Shearman & Sterling LLP, and Ilene Knable Gotts of Wachtell Lipton Rosen & Katz.

--Additional reporting by Juan Carlos Rodriguez. Editing by Rebecca Flanagan.
