

GCs Name Cream Of The Crop Litigators

By **Linda Chiem**

Law360, New York (February 15, 2013, 1:42 PM ET) -- Corporate counsel singled out nearly 100 litigators as the most client service-driven in their field thanks to their innate ability to deliver solid outcomes, effectively communicate litigation strategy and prioritize their clients' business interests.

The 2013 BTI Client Service All-Stars report from The BTI Consulting Group Inc. (Wellesley, Mass.) lists a total 307 attorneys named by corporate counsel as delivering on outstanding client service, at least 95 of whom are litigators.

BTI said the all-star attorneys were named individually, and unprompted, by more than 240 corporate counsel from Fortune 1000 and other large companies. They were recognized for their intense focus, exceptional understanding of their client's business, ability to deliver a plan of action that yields results and their overall legal prowess, according to BTI President Michael Rynowecer.

"Some litigators litigate big and their client's objective may not be at all to litigate or the objective is to keep their name out of the newspaper or they may want not want to set a precedent," he said. "The best litigators in client service really embrace that and they try to find a balance between preparing for the worst but also working for the best targeted outcome."

The recognized attorneys said the formula for building a successful litigation practice includes fully understanding the client's business interests and aligning them with their own to deliver the best possible outcomes. Above all, making sure that clients and all the essential players are on the same page and kept up to date on the latest stage in litigation is absolutely crucial, according to the litigators.

Adam P. Hall, chairman of the litigation department at Frost Brown Todd LLC in Cincinnati, and four-time BTI Client-Service All-Star, said it's essential for litigators to evaluate the merits of each dispute and communicate each dispute's likely results early on.

Hall said other elements that make a successful litigator are a genuine enthusiasm for the dogged pursuit of the best evidence, arguments and presentations to prove your client's case, and the ability to produce results consistently that meet the client's expectations for a successful resolution.

Alan S. Gilbert, a litigation partner at SNR Denton, agreed, saying he always works with clients to objectively assess the future costs and benefits of litigation, at the start of a case and throughout the litigation.

“Even a stunning victory as a litigator is a loss for a client if the costs to get there exceed the recovery or savings,” he said.

Client-driven litigators know how to deliver results in ways that meet the client's definition of a win, which goes far toward building coveted client relationships, the litigators said.

“Winning cases or settling them on favorable terms is the most important thing that keeps clients coming back,” Gilbert said. “Almost as important is providing clients objective, candid assessments of their risks and opportunities so they can make informed decisions about handling disputes.”

Evan R. Chesler, litigation partner at Cravath Swaine & Moore LLP, said understanding and delivering on those outcomes when expected, along with seamless communication, form the basis to building long-term client relationships.

“You have to be a true partner with your client and you've got to make sure you and your client is aligned on decision making as to what the litigation options are and what the tactical deployment options are,” he said. “When things change, you've got to be in communication with your client so you can react quickly and everyone's invested in the outcome.”

Paula J. Morency, a litigation partner at Schiff Hardin LLP in Chicago, said she hones her litigation skills at every opportunity, whether it's in the courtroom or while teaching trial advocacy, to convey to clients that they can trust in her expertise.

“Skill and confidence in the courtroom are essential, but the most valuable litigation advice requires a keen understanding of what a dispute means for the client's overall corporate strategy,” she said. “Accordingly, I pay very close attention to my client's business goals and industry pressures.”

Charles Faruki, litigation partner with Faruki Ireland & Cox PLL, said it all boils down to what he calls the three R's — reputation, relationship and results — and an almost religious approach to constant communication.

“Good results breed more business,” he said. “With business clients, it's important to make sure their expectations are reasonable and good and you need to communicate the range of things that can happen and make sure they have a realistic evaluation of the case.”

The all-star litigators on the BTI list include Bartlit Beck Herman Palenchar & Scott LLP's Philip S. Beck, Hamilton H. Hill, Eric R. Olson and Donald E. Scott, Bickel & Brewer's William A. Brewer III, Borden Ladner Gervais LLP's Christopher D. Bredt, Bracewell & Giuliani LLP's Glenn A. Ballard, Cravath Swaine & Moore LLP's Evan R. Chesler, Crowell & Moring LLP's Douglas W. Sullivan, Debevoise & Plimpton LLP's Sean Hecker, DeForest Koscelnik Yokitis Kaplan & Berardinelli's Walter P. DeForest III, DLA Piper's Paul J. Hall, Duane Morris LLP's Sandra A. Jeskie, Dykema Gossett PLLC's James P. Feeney, Faegre Baker Daniels LLP's Ryan M. Hurley and Kim J. Walker, Faruki Ireland & Cox PLL's Charles J. Faruki, Fasken Martineau's Gerald L.R. Ranking, Frost Brown Todd LLC's Adam P. Hall, Fulbright & Jaworski LLP's Layne E. Kruse and Michael W. O'Donnell, Gibson Dunn & Crutcher LLP's Thomas H. Dupree Jr. and John A. Herfort, Goodwin Procter LLP's Mark S. Raffman, Gordon & Rees LLP's Fletcher C. Alford, Jeffrey D. Cawdrey and Laura Leigh Geist, Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP's Joshua G. Vincent, Holland & Knight LLP's Scott D. Ponce, Jenner & Block LLP's David A. Handzo and Lindsay C. Harrison, Jones Day's G. Lee Garrett Jr., Kirkland & Ellis LLP's Eugene F. Assaf, Thomas A. Clare, Richard C. Godfrey, Steven D. McCormick, Leslie M. Smith and William A. Streff Jr., Leonard Street & Deinard's Michael G. Taylor, Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP's Steven A. Reed, Ongaro Burt & Louderback LLP's David R. Ongaro, The Perry Law Firm's Daniel F. Kaplan, Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP's David T. Dekker, Polsinelli Shughart PC's Roy Bash, Rose Law Firm's Amy Lee Stewart, Schiff Hardin LLP's Paula J. Morency and John N. Scholnick, Sidley Austin LLP's Paul E. Veith, Skadden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom LLP's John H. Beisner, James R. Carroll, Allen J. Ruby, Charles W. Schwartz, Michael Y. Scudder Jr. and Daniel E. Stoller, Venable LLP's Dino S. Sangiamo and Weil Gotshal & Manges LLP's James W. Quinn, among others.

--Editing by Andrew Park.

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