

## GCs Name Favorite IP Lawyers

By **Bill Donahue**

*Law360, New York (February 10, 2015, 5:53 PM ET)* -- General counsel and other in-house attorneys from some of the world's biggest companies have named 25 intellectual property attorneys among the best lawyers for client service, an honor they earned by having a deep awareness of the interplay between the complicated technical, legal and business issues facing IP clients.

The 2015 BTI Client Services All-Stars report from The BTI Consulting Group Inc. (Wellesley, Mass.) named 354 total lawyers who offer elite service to clients, and 25 of them work in IP law, including litigation, prosecution and transactional work in patent, trademark, copyright and trade secrets law.

In 317 interviews with corporate “legal decision-makers” at companies with revenues north of \$1 billion, in-house attorneys singled out lawyers they said serviced them better than anyone about anyone else. BTI's criteria included a focus on client needs, thought leadership, business understanding, legal skills, good value for cost and legal results.

For IP attorneys working on things like complex pharmaceutical patents or complicated tech copyright questions, scoring high marks from GCs involved something additional: an ability to focus on the business and legal issues while also knowing a client's complicated technical issues.

“Especially in IP, these All-Stars are very good at bringing a business understanding, as well as a technical understanding, and then meshing those two areas together for clients,” BTI President Michael Rynowecer told Law360. “Being able to understand the role of a particular piece of IP — the role of the patent may play in their business, for instance — adds tremendous value for the client.”

When Law360 asked a few of the attorneys who were named in the BTI report about what approach they take with clients, they echoed Rynowecer's assessment about understanding a client's business, or, as Ropes & Gray LLP partner David M. McIntosh put it, learning to “see the world from their clients’ perspective.”

“Their goals become your goals,” said McIntosh, who was named in the BTI report. “Beyond that, you need to know what you are talking about, be there when they need you, see the big picture and sweat the details. Easier said than done, but that is what I try to do.”

Part of that involves something as simple as always answering the phone and always responding to emails, in an effort to give the client a clear view of what's going on with their matters.

"I'm ... big on candor and open lines of communication," said Frank Scherkenbach, a Fish & Richardson PC partner named on BTI's list. "Being transparent with clients, I think, makes them more comfortable being open with me, and as in any relationship, communication is key."

To achieve that kind of candor and transparency with IP clients, Erik R. Puknys — a partner with IP powerhouse Finnegan Henderson Farabow Garrett & Dunner LLP who was named on BTI's list — says he makes a point to personally introduce his key client contacts to everyone on the team that will be handling their matter.

"If we are handling a litigation, and the client has a question about discovery, I want her to feel free to call the person handling the day-to-day aspects of discovery," Puknys said. "The client gets her question answered more quickly, and she also becomes comfortable with the team we've put together."

The kind of team that partners put together for clients was a big factor in some of the choices for who ended up on the IP All-Star list, according to Rynowecer.

Corporate counsel are increasingly looking to get integrated IP services in a single package, he said — litigation, prosecution, transactional and counseling work, all handled by one integrated unit that understands their unique needs.

"There's a small but important trend of clients wanting to acquire more IP services from the single firm," Rynowecer said. "One thing that stands out about these IP All-Stars is that they seem to have a little bit better understanding of that than most. They're very good at going back into their firms and putting together a team that fits perfectly for clients."

John Normile, a Jones Day partner named in the BTI report, seconded that notion.

"IP clients today often have specialized needs, and being able to find the right fit from such a deep bench is what will continue to make ours one of the leading IP practices in the world," Normile said.

The BTI report also named IP attorneys including David E. Huang of BainwoodHuang LLC; Nathan Weber of Carter DeLuca Farrell & Schmidt LLP; Christopher L. Bernard of Clements & Bernard PLLC; Diane Siegel Danoff of Dechert LLP; Robert M. Conway of Duane Morris LLP; Rory J. Radding of Locke Lord Edwards; David E. De Lorenzi of Gibbons PC; Douglas J. Nash of Hiscock & Barclay LLP; John G. Froemming of Jones Day; Luke L. Dauchot and William A. Streff Jr. of Kirkland & Ellis LLP; Jayson L. Cohen of Morrison & Foerster LLP; William J. Lenz of Neal Gerber and Eisenberg LLP; Jay E. Heidrick of Polsinelli; Scott D. Baker of Reed Smith LLP; Christopher A. Seidl of Robins Kaplan LLP; Evan J. Foster of Saul Ewing LLP; Ash D. Patel of Thompson Hine LLP; Margaret J. Sampson of Vinson & Elkins LLP; Hans Rudolf Trueb of Walder Wyss; and Joseph Lucci and Kevin Kirsch of BakerHostetler.

--Editing by Christine Chun.