

The 4 Firms That Scare General Counsel The Most

By **Aebra Coe**

Law360 (September 18, 2019, 3:20 PM EDT) -- Four law firms strike fear in the hearts of their litigation opponents more than any other in the industry, according to a report released Wednesday that dubs the firms the “fearsome foursome.”

General counsel and other in-house leaders name-dropped, without prompting, Kirkland & Ellis LLP, Latham & Watkins LLP, Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan LLP and Skadden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom LLP more than any other law firms when asked which they would least like to see as opposing counsel, according to a report by BTI Consulting Group.

“Clients tell [us] these are the firms they most fear seeing on the other side of the table because they are relentless, very smart, and play to win — and win big,” the report said.

The report released Wednesday was compiled based on interviews BTI conducted between January and August with more than 350 legal decision makers — such as heads of litigation, general counsel and chief legal officers — at large organizations with \$1 billion or more in revenue.

According to BTI President Michael Rynowecer, two of the firms have been on the list every year for the last decade: Kirkland and Quinn Emanuel.

Other law firms that garnered mentions from corporate clients as fearsome opponents in litigation include Boies Schiller Flexner LLP, Fish & Richardson PC, Gibson Dunn & Crutcher LLP, Jones Day, McKool Smith PC, Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP, Morrison & Foerster LLP, Wachtell Lipton Rosen & Katz, Wheeler Trigg O’Donnell LLP and Williams & Connolly LLP.

THE FEARSOME FOUR

Kirkland & Ellis
 Latham & Watkins
 Quinn Emanuel
 Skadden

HONOR ROLL

Bartlit Beck	Ice Miller
Choate Hall	Manko Gold
Covington	Much
Cravath	Norton Rose
Crowell & Moring	Reed Smith
Davis Polk	Robbins Geller
Dechert	Susman Godfrey
Dentons	Weil
Duane Morris	WilmerHale
Hogan Lovells	

“The things we heard about these law firms is that they have killer instinct. They go for the jugular,”

Rynowecer said. “Not only do they understand complexity, but they relish complexity. And they all seem to hunt in packs. One client described them as endless teams of excellent people who all have the same killer instinct.”

Representatives of the firms that landed at the top of the list emphasized teamwork when asked what has contributed to their success in litigation

“Our way of practicing is intensely collaborative — lawyers are always sharing ideas on what is new, what has worked and how to win,” said name partner John Quinn of Quinn Emanuel. “This creates a dynamic ‘hothouse’ environment in which the best litigation minds are always bringing forward cutting-edge ideas and approaches.”

According to Kirkland partner Mark Filip, his law firm’s litigation department is built on the diversity of its lawyers, the depth of its attorney teams and the breadth of their experience.

“In terms of experience, we have deep trial and government investigations experience handling enterprise risk-level matters, which allows us to understand where complex matters are likely to go and be prepared before events unfold,” he said.

Latham litigation and trial department chair Michele Johnson pointed to her firm’s partnerships and teamwork with clients as an aspect of its success.

“We’ve cultivated a formidable litigation department by partnering with our clients to understand their commercial goals and then fight tirelessly for them, in front of judges and juries, as well as in the boardroom,” Johnson said. “As their roles evolve, we’re able to team with them to find creative, efficient and effective solutions to their most complex and cutting-edge challenges.”

--Editing by Alanna Weissman.

AWESOME OPPONENTS

Boies Schiller
Fish & Richardson
Gibson Dunn
Jones Day
McKool Smith
Morgan Lewis
Morrison & Foerster
Wachtell
Wheeler Trigg
Williams & Connolly