

The 9 Firms GCs Most Recommended To Peers In 2022

By Xiumei Dong

Law360 (December 1, 2022, 7:02 AM EST) -- Even amid inflation and growing economic concerns, BigLaw firms have continued to provide superior client services, with nine standing out from the crowd as the most recommended firms by corporate leaders, according to a report released Wednesday.

More than 340 general counsel and other in-house legal officials surveyed for BTI's Most Recommended Law Firms report identified, without prompting, a total of 113 law firms, which were then ranked as either "most," "highly" or "frequently" recommended.

The nine law firms that stood out above the rest are, in alphabetical order, Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP, Gibson Dunn & Crutcher LLP, Jones Day, Latham & Watkins LLP, Littler Mendelson PC, McGuireWoods LLP, Ogletree Deakins Nash Smoak & Stewart PC, Reed Smith LLP and Ropes & Gray.

Among those top firms, only five — Gibson Dunn, Jones Day, Latham, Littler and McGuireWoods — also made it to the top rank in the 2021 report, which identified 11 law firms as "most recommended" by in-house leaders.

The Top Nine Most Recommended Firms

- Faegre Drinker
- Gibson Dunn
- Jones Day
- Latham
- Littler
- McGuireWoods
- Ogletree
- Reed Smith
- Ropes & Gray

Source: BTI Consulting

According to Michael Rynowecer, president of BTI Consulting, several reasons have led to the swap of the top law firms, including high turnover in law firms and corporate counsel offices, firms running at high capacity, and clients' expectations changing as a result of changing geopolitical and economic climates.

"So, when you take the turnover in both law firms and client offices, the changing regulations and the change in client expectations, you've got a lot of room to step up and really earn recommendation and show how well you can do," Rynowecer said.

With economic uncertainty continuing to loom heading into 2023, Rynowecer said he expects clients to seek more counseling services and advice on managing their overall portfolio instead of mitigating work.

"There's a real thirst for learning on how to handle the new [situations], learning what to expect, what else is going to be coming down the pike," he said. "And that hasn't been as prevalent in prior years as it is right now."

Rynowecer added that clients are also increasingly seeking their outside counsel for legal project management assistance as they deal with high caseloads.

BTI's survey of in-house contributors from companies with \$700 million or more in revenue was conducted between March and September. According to the report, 70% of the respondents cited superior client service as their reason for making an unsolicited law firm recommendation — 3.5 times more often than any other single factor.

Additionally, 40% of these top in-house legal officials included a firm's ability to understand their business as a key component of client service, the report said. It noted that clients had learned that law firms with the skill to quickly assess business risk can attain a better outcome.

"It's easy to hire a law firm to handle a matter or a specific problem," Rynowecer said. "But [clients] very much want law firms who make investments, who take the time to understand the subtlety or the kind of nature of the risks that they face as opposed to just looking at one small aspect of the risk they face.

"So that's a new component of client service that has really emerged in the past 18 months," he added.

--Editing by Marygrace Anderson.