

Rising Star: Gibson Dunn's Michael Diamant

Law360, Los Angeles (August 8, 2017, 3:59 PM EDT) – Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP's Michael Diamant has helped some of the world's largest companies navigate their way through white collar, compliance and anti-corruption matters, including Brazil's state-controlled oil giant Petrobras, earning him a spot as one of five white collar law practitioners under age 40 honored by Law360 as Rising Stars.

THE MOST CHALLENGING CASE OF HIS CAREER:

Diamant said the case at the top of his list of most challenging is Gibson Dunn's ongoing representation of Petrobras in the U.S. Department of Justice investigation of alleged Foreign Corrupt Practices Act violations involving more than 400 companies, a huge corruption scandal that reaches the highest levels of Brazil's government and led to the ouster of former President Dilma Rousseff last year.

As the company's day-to-day lead U.S. counsel in the matter, Diamant is the point man for communications with the DOJ and the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. He said the case is a tough one due to the enormously complex nature of the multi-faceted investigation and Petrobras' role as the country's flagship "instrumentality" as defined by the FCPA.

"It's an incredibly challenging case in that we are representing a Brazilian state entity dealing with U.S. enforcement authorities and requires being mindful of the unique place Petrobras operates within the Brazilian government," he said. "It belongs to the people of Brazil, so assisting that company is a unique honor."

Diamant said it has been a very different experience compared

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STAR



Michael Diamant
Gibson Dunn

Age: 39

Home base: Washington, D.C.

Position: Partner

Law school: Georgetown University Law Center

First job after law school: Associate at Gibson Dunn

with representing a U.S.-based company, with a plethora of extra factors to consider during the decision-making process.

“It’s multi-jurisdictional and also has the overlay of being a state instrumentality and part of the Brazilian government,” he said. “That’s been an enormous challenge but also an opportunity and honor to have that representation.”

HIS PROUDEST MOMENT AS A LAWYER:

Diamant said the proudest moment of his career thus far has been helping conclude a four-year monitorship of Siemens AG following a record \$800 million DOJ settlement to resolve allegations the company bribed foreign officials to secure contracts in Argentina, Bangladesh, Venezuela and Iraq.

“A decade out, [the settlement] is still viewed as a watershed of enforcement of the FCPA,” he said. “Coming off of the largest anti-bribery FCPA enforcement action in history, that was a major challenge.”

Gibson Dunn represented the independent monitor, former German Finance Minister Theo Waigel, helping him keep tabs on Siemens’ compliance with anti-bribery policies implemented as part of the deal.

“It was enormously gratifying after four years to attain that goal,” said Diamant. “It was a tremendous amount of work by everyone involved; I think that was a real success story, and I was proud to have played a role.”

WHY HE FOCUSES ON WHITE COLLAR:

Diamant said the day-to-day problem solving that goes along with being a white collar attorney is enormously exciting for him.

“The facts that we deal with are continually changing, so we can be faced with a new challenge every day which keeps it fresh and exciting,” he said.

He said he also likes helping clients who are often facing the most pressing legal problems of their lives.

“It’s very rewarding to feel that you can help your clients navigate those problems,” he said. “Ultimately we represent individuals and corporations that are faced with serious threats. To be in a position to help them conquer those problems is a privilege and also something that is really invigorating to do.”

HIS ADVICE FOR YOUNG ATTORNEYS:

“There is nothing more important than taking ownership, really throwing yourself into the work you’re doing, becoming one with your client and seeing the world through the client’s eyes and dedicating yourself to doing whatever the client needs to get the best legal outcome,” he said. “That’s when it really gets fun.”

— As told to Y. Peter Kang

Law360's Rising Stars are attorneys under 40 whose legal accomplishments belie their age. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2017 Rising Stars winners after reviewing more than 1,200 submissions. This interview has been edited and condensed.

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