

Morrison & Foerster LLP

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2007-2008 Vault Rankings

Best in Region

- #2 – Northern California
- #7 – Southern California

Best in Practice

- #2 – Technology
- #4 – Intellectual Property

Quality of Life

- #6 – Best Firms to Work For

Best in Diversity

- # 5 – Diversity with Respect to Minorities
- # 5 – Diversity with Respect to GLBT
- # 6 – Overall Diversity

THE SCOOP

Yes, in 1973 those hep cats in San Fran approved “MoFo” as Morrison & Foerster’s official nickname, accentuating the firm’s unconventional modus operandi. Still, the firm is distinguished by much more than its rebel epithet. MoFo complements its expertise in finance, life sciences, technology, IP and litigation with a long reach across the Pacific Rim. And, as one might expect from a firm with its roots in a city with flowers in its hair, the firm’s pro bono commitment is deep-rooted.

The following is independent Vault research

Fastest guns in the West

124 years and 14 name changes ago, Alexander Morrison and Thomas V. O’Brien founded the firm that became today’s Morrison & Foerster. Due to the philanthropic work of Morrison’s widow, the firm’s name is woven through the fabric of Bay Area community life. May Treat Morrison’s early 20th century bequests, augmented by her late husband’s law firm, are responsible for libraries, lecture series, endowed chairs at U.C. Berkeley and Stanford, scholarships and a planetarium at the California Academy of Sciences.

Despite the firm’s Northern California prominence, it wasn’t until the early 1960s that the firm ventured south, hopping on for the ride when one of its major San Francisco clients, Crocker National Bank, decided to open an L.A. office. In the second half of the 1980s the firm grew swiftly, sprouting offices across the Bay Area, and in 1987 merged with New York firm Parker Auspitz Neesemann & Delehanty. That same year, MoFo became one of the first American law firms to practice in Japan, unveiling a Tokyo office; a 2001 joint enterprise with Japanese firm Ito & Mitomi made Morrison & Foerster the largest international firm in Tokyo. The firm was also one of the first into China. Morrison & Foerster now numbers over a thousand lawyers in 18 offices around the world, and counts on its client list such companies as Apple, Bank of America, Hershey, Lucasfilm, Oracle, Sprint Nextel and Yahoo!.

In 2006 MoFo Chairman Keith Wetmore relocated to New York. Wetmore’s move underscores the firm’s commitment to nabbing weightier corporate transactions, as well as the increasing importance of the New York office, now 170 attorneys strong.

Big in Japan and China

The firm has over 140 corporate, technology and litigation lawyers in Japan and China and a household names client base, including Astellas, Fujitsu, Hitachi, Kirin, Matsushita, Minolta, Nikon, SOFTBANK, Toshiba in Japan and Carlyle, Goldman Sachs, Netease, and Warburg Pincus in China. In June 2006, Morrison & Foerster/Ito & Mitomi took honors for the “IT/Telecommunications Deal of the Year” at the Asian Legal Business Awards. The group served as counsel to the underwriters on the Japanese law aspects of Jupiter Telecommunication’s global IPO, listed on the Jasdac Securities Exchange.

Activities in China include representing China Resources Power Holdings during its August 2006 HK\$555 million acquisition of holding stakes in two PRC power plants. CR Power is one of the largest public power generation companies in mainland China. The firm also continues as outside international counsel for the organizing committee of the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing.

It’s a Dunn deal

In September 2006, the firm’s white-knight, white-collar team galloped in to defend ex-Hewlett Packard chairman Patricia Dunn. Dunn, who resigned from HP’s board in September 2006, was invited to testify before Congress following the company’s ill-fated

attempts to discover the source of a boardroom leak. In search of the boardroom bigmouth, HP investigators “misrepresented” themselves to phone companies in order to gain access to confidential call logs. Dunn had come under scrutiny for ordering the probe. Representing Dunn is litigator James Brosnahan, whose high-profile clients have included John Walker Lindh, the so-called “American Taliban.”

Green is gold

Sustainability is no longer a movement-it now represents a major market opportunity. Hot on the heels of the latest scientific studies, many firms are reshuffling their IP, corporate and environmental teams in anticipation of regulations related to climate change and significant natural resource constraints (such as energy and water). At Morrison & Foerster, a new cross-discipline “Green” Cleantech group has been formed to address the needs of multiple players and industries focusing on the strategies and technologies evolving in light of the regulatory and technology revolution in the U.S. and internationally around climate change, energy and other resource conservation and clean technologies, including advising venture capital and private equity firms interested in investing in alternative technologies. The firm also anticipates more work from alternative fuel, solar, carbon and other greentech companies, as well as the Fortune 500, which are investing billions in sustainability initiatives. All of these companies will need project finance, corporate, IP/patent, regulatory, land use and environmental services. Competitor firms presently honing their green game include Davis Wright Tremaine, Holland & Hart, Hunton & Williams and Latham & Watkins.

A vindication of the rights of man

In July 2002, the firm lived up to its reputation as defender of human rights by winning a \$54.6 million judgment against two former El Salvadoran ministers of defense, now living in Florida. This victory, affirmed by the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals in January 2006, was achieved on behalf of three torture victims, émigrés to the U.S. after El Salvador’s civil war, who were persecuted during the early 1980s by that country’s military. Plaintiffs have successfully recovered more than \$300,000 of this judgment from defendants. Also in January 2006, the firm won the Supreme Court’s unanimous affirmation that Congress does indeed have the power under the 14th Amendment to allow prisoners with disabilities to recover damages from states for violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The case centered on the injury allegations of a Georgia prisoner, who claimed that his treatment at the hands of the Georgia Department of Corrections violated the constitutional prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment as well as the Act’s prohibition on discrimination.

In 1986, The Morrison & Foerster Foundation was established to assist the firm’s partners in making the best use of their charitable resources. Since its founding, firm partners have donated a percentage of the firm’s annual net income to the Foundation which,

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in turn, makes charitable donations in its principal giving areas, including Children & Youth, Legal Aid, Scholarships & Fellowships, Food & Shelter, and Health and the Arts. Over the years, the Foundation has donated close to \$20 million to nonprofit organizations at the local and national levels.

GETTING HIRED

Why you? Well, why them?

"To be hired, you have to have outstanding academic credentials and you have to fit in," says a senior associate who defines fitting in as having "an easygoing, get-along-well manner." "They definitely look at only the top candidates academically, but once a candidate has gotten an interview, personality and an interesting background are extremely important," reports a New York associate. The firm is "more interested in well-rounded individuals than bookworms" and "likes to hire interesting and unique candidates, but in addition to being interesting and unique, you have to have demonstrated that you're a really good student and a hard worker as well." Morrison & Foerster has no specific grade cutoff, "but C's aren't very well received."

Interviewers expect you "to know why you want to be at MoFo and that particular office, and articulate that during interviews." "Candidates should be able to answer the 'Why MoFo?' question," agrees a source—but don't worry, "the answer doesn't have to be too deep." On the other hand, "If you can't figure out the basic answer, I wouldn't bother to apply," advises that insider. Naturally, "law review or moot court" are positives, and the "firm also likes to hire former law clerks." Things get a little tougher for would-be IP lawyers. For that practice area, "attending a good law school with good grades and having a desired technical background and even some prior patent law experience" are desirable.

OUR SURVEY SAYS

You're gonna love it at MoFo

Oh, how they gush at Morrison & Foerster. "I could not be happier at MoFo," says one happy lawyer. "My abilities and knowledge are stretched and challenged every day and my efforts are properly rewarded." "As far as a big law firm goes, I can't imagine myself working elsewhere," notes a San Francisco attorney. "The quality of the work and attorneys is excellent. It is still a business, which means you work hard and long hours." A senior associate praises MoFo's "superb quality of work and attorneys" as well as the "consistent opportunities to do cutting-edge legal work" and "great access to partners and work from across the firm." Some gripes get mixed in. "I love my job—the work that I get, the people that I work with," says a source. "My only issue is the unpredictability of the hours."

"I find my work interesting and challenging, and I enjoy working with the smart and inspirational people in my firm," reports an IP lawyer. "The

positive firm culture is also a key factor in my high level of job satisfaction." Associates love solving their clients' problems. "MoFo is a 'big case' firm," states one senior associate. "The matters it handles are generally of the highest importance to the clients and are often found in the headlines. It is enormously satisfying to know that when a client is really in trouble, they turn to you to solve their problem." "Most of the time, I really like the work I am doing," reports another insider. "Sometimes [we] have to staff projects that are less than entirely engaging; however, we also get to pursue our passions via our pro bono work, which is really great." Some are less impressed with the firm's pro bono system. "While this firm is known for its support of pro bono, I have not found the partners very supportive of such work. Each time I attempt to take a pro bono project I must struggle to get approval," gripes a junior associate.

The lefty firm?

Associates call Morrison & Foerster a liberal, collegial firm. "Politically, MoFo is definitely left of center, but most chose to be here because of that leaning," says one insider. Even those who don't share that outlook feel welcome. "Although the firm has a reputation for being very liberal (I decided it would be a good idea to take the gun rack and the 'Reagan Country' bumper sticker off my car when I started here), seriously speaking, I have found the political and social culture here to be very diverse," reports a senior associate. "My firm has a friendly and welcoming culture," notes a contact. "There is a strong level of support and camaraderie, especially among associates." "I am fortunate to work with the best and brightest in many fields—most are very savvy yet practical in their practices," observes a source. The firm seems to come to be abandoning its West Coast roots. "Although MoFo seems to be moving more toward a 'New York' attitude, overall the people who work here are extremely progressive, liberal and interesting," states one San Francisco lawyer. Still, things are pretty good right now. "Across the board, the associates at MoFo tend to be a pretty cool bunch," gushes an awestruck associate.

Humane targets

MoFo associates have it pretty good when it comes to hours. "The hours here are very reasonable for a law firm, and there is no face time required," notes a lawyer in the firm's D.C. office. "That said, I wouldn't mind more time with the family." The firm has a reasonable billing target, but some feel a little pressure to go beyond. "While the firm's billing requirement is 1,950, there is a great deal of pressure to work far more hours," reports a source. "MoFo is no different than any other elite law firm when it comes to billable hours," says a senior associate. "Associates are expected to work hard because that is what drives the profitability of all firms. But the hours are extremely reasonable. 2,100 hours is viewed as a good target. There is no expectation of 2,400-hour years." "I would love to have more free time for the same pay—who wouldn't?" asks a lawyer. "But, along with the high pay at MoFo comes an expectation that you work hard and make yourself available when needed. Partners encourage and respect vacation time, though." "I

would like to work fewer hours, but I am not willing to give it up at this point because the quality of work and the people I work with is very high, and the compensation is very good," says a litigator. "A major factor in wanting to work less is really the desire to have a less 'on-call' schedule because it is very hard to plan vacations and weekends off."

At the market

Compensation at Morrison & Foerster is the same story told at firms the world over. "The firm is not a leader, but they don't drag their feet once the market has been set, and pay the market salaries and bonuses without [an] hours requirement," says one junior associate. Hard work is recognized, as is good work. A source says there is "one bonus for hitting 1,950, another for hitting 2,100 and another for hitting 2,300. There was also a merit component thrown in." Despite all those bonuses, the firm does have its compensation issues, including the complaint that "benefits are very poor," specifically the cost of "health care coverage for families, though changes will be made for 2008." "In terms of law firms, we pay at the top of the pay scale with any major California presence," reports a contact. "And our New York office pays commensurate salaries with their elite New York peers."

MoFo U

There's plenty of learning going on at Morrison & Foerster. "The firm is very strong on offering frequent training and CLE programs," reports one source. "There is a very good formal training program that typically includes video teleconference presentations from a number of different firm offices," according to a second-year. "The litigation department has developed a very good training program over the past few years, including deposition clinics and mock trials," observes a lawyer. If there's an issue, it might be that there's too much of a good thing. "There are great training opportunities here. The greatest challenge is finding the time to attend them all," says a harried lawyer.

The firm for everyone

Diversity at Morrison & Foerster is "better than any large firm, I'm sure," boasts an insider. For example, "It is no secret that MoFo makes a point of hiring, mentoring and promoting women. This is not window dressing." "Our firm seems active in hiring women," observes another. "It provides good maternity leave benefits, with three months' paid maternity leave and three months' unpaid leave (though the firm is flexible in allowing the individual attorney to extend the period of unpaid leave). The firm actively facilitates attorneys' ability to work remotely in order to balance work and home life." Additionally, "The firm makes a significant effort to improve diversity through its recruiting practices," according to a source. How does the firm handle gay associates? Well, MoFo is "a San Francisco-based firm with an openly gay managing partner," as one insider states. "Gay and lesbian attorneys are warmly welcomed in our firm, and several senior partners in our firm are openly gay."