

2017

THE NATIONAL LAW JOURNAL

# TRAILBLAZERS

ELITE BOUTIQUE



## MARC LEWIS AND PAUL LLEWELLYN

PARTNERS

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**PIONEER SPIRIT** Marc Lewis and Paul Llewellyn practiced at Latham & Watkins before founding their own boutique. “We both had tremendous experiences at Latham, but we wanted more,” said Llewellyn. “Among other things, we wanted complete autonomy in the types of matters we handled and the litigation strategy, coupled with the agility and nimbleness that a boutique setting provides.” They formed the firm specifically to win high-stakes, complex civil cases. The firm has grown to eight attorneys, and its clients include several members of the Fortune 500, including some of Silicon Valley’s best-known companies.

**TRAILS BLAZED** Lewis and Llewellyn identified aggressiveness and agility as paramount goals, and they treat every case as unique and staff each one appropriately. Cutting-edge technology powers the firm’s paperless practice, and it uses a Mac platform rather than a Windows-based system. “Our systems are also cloud-based,” explained Lewis, “so our attorneys can work from anywhere. It’s not uncommon that we have team members on the East Coast, in Southern California and overseas all at the same time. Everything on our technology platform is designed so we can be instantly responsive to our clients, wherever we are.”

The bulk of the firm’s work is done using billable hours, but under an improved model. Lewis said, “The death of the billable hour has been greatly exaggerated, but we do very clear forecasting and budgeting.” The firm uses a dashboard to identify spend for each matter. According to Lewis, “Our clients love that we can provide the spend on a particular matter in real time without waiting for the end of the month. Recently, I was talking with a client and could provide to the penny where we were at that very moment. She could decide on whether to file a dispositive motion based on what was left under the budget. It changes the game for us.”

The firm also frequently utilizes success-based bonuses and other alternative fee arrangements, even on the defense side. “We like having skin in the game,” said Lewis. “We also have a subscription or monthly fee for litigation. We sometimes start a litigation on the billable hour model but, once we have some data, convert to a fixed monthly fee, sometimes along with a success fee. Clients get the clarity they need. It’s unlimited litigation for that subscription.” This is part of the firm’s ability to customize approaches, according to Llewellyn. “We will work with clients to come up with something that makes sense. We also don’t mind changing the arrangement midstream.”

Along with their complex business litigation, Lewis and Llewellyn are dedicated to fighting the epidemic of sexual abuse in the United States. Said Llewellyn, “By providing the same aggressive and exhaustive representation that we provide to our Fortune 500 clients, the firm has successfully recovered millions of dollars on behalf of survivors of sexual abuse and in the process has driven changes at institutions that will help protect children from abuse going forward.” They became involved in sexual abuse cases after taking on a matter for a friend of the firm that many plaintiffs’ firms refused to handle. Said Llewellyn, “It was a high-profile case in the Bay Area. It settled for nearly \$3 million, and the publicity spurred the practice group. Now, we have a national reputation for handling these types of cases. We approach these like we approach our other matters—and we try to effect social change.”

**FUTURE EXPLORATIONS** The future is bright for boutique firms, particularly theirs. “Advances in technology, highly skilled outsourced document review teams and other innovative approaches mean that boutiques can take on virtually any litigation matter of any size or complexity, while delivering the agility, nimbleness and responsiveness that sophisticated clients demand,” said Llewellyn. “The traditional litigation model is often plagued by inexperienced junior associates, outdated billing practices and overstaffed legal teams, which can often result in bloated bills and an unfocused legal strategy. Effective litigation looks different today, and we intend to continue to be at the forefront of this revolution.”

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# Trial Lawyers. Problem Solvers.

**Lewis & Llewellyn was built from the ground up to deliver aggressive and agile representation to its clients worldwide.**

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Founded in San Francisco, the epicenter of the digital economy, the firm has been identified as a “a giant slayer” and an “international litigation powerhouse” by leading legal publications. The firm is honored to be awarded *Elite Boutique* status, and to have its founding partners recognized as *Trailblazers* by the National Law Journal.



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