

Global 20: Mayer Brown

By **Erin Fuchs**

Law360, New York (June 1, 2011) -- Mayer Brown LLP's mergers with established firms worldwide have given it on-the-ground global expertise, enabling its lawyers to collaborate on major deals including Caterpillar Inc.'s \$8.6 billion planned acquisition of Bucyrus International Inc., earning it a spot among Law360's Global 20.

Unlike some global law firms, Chicago-based Mayer Brown has not launched new foreign outposts with a handful of attorneys. Instead, it has combined with existing firms that already have strong ties to countries in major commercial and financial centers, such as Asia.

In fact, Mayer Brown has 300 attorneys in Asia, partner John R. Sagan pointed out.

"It is much more than a symbolic presence," he said. "We have got significant presence in a lot of jurisdictions." In addition to the attorneys in Asia, Mayer Brown has 425 lawyers in Europe and 850 lawyers in the Americas, including Brazil.

Mayer Brown's combinations with firms around the globe have broken new ground, said Herbert W. Krueger, chairman of the firm's management committee. In 2002 the firm, then known as Mayer Brown & Platt, combined with Rowe & Maw, in the first U.K.-U.S. law firm combination in which the U.S. was the larger firm, according to Krueger.

The only previous U.S.-U.K. combination at all was London-based Clifford Chance's 1999 combination with New York-based law firm Rogers & Wells, Krueger said.

Mayer Brown made another new leap in December 2007, when it became the first firm to conduct a major combination with an Asian firm, Krueger said. The firm combined with Johnson Stokes & Master, a more than 140-year-old firm with 260 attorneys and offices in China, Thailand and Vietnam, to form an entity known as Mayer Brown JSM in Asia.

Mayer Brown also set itself apart by becoming the first historically U.S. firm to form an affiliation with a Brazilian firm that practices local law, Krueger said. Because foreign firms cannot practice Brazilian law,

Mayer Brown became affiliated with Tauil & Chequer Advogados in December 2009 so it could assist clients with the foreign and Brazilian legal aspects of transactions.

Previously, in March 2001, Mayer Brown merged with Gaedertz, a 42-lawyer Frankfurt-based corporate firm specializing in mergers and acquisitions, antitrust, intellectual property and information technology. Mayer Brown's Tyrone Fahner said at the time that the firm was expanding in Germany because it had the world's fourth-largest economy.

Earlier in 2001, Mayer Brown had merged with a Paris corporate boutique called Lambert & Lee, and the firm had established its London office 25 years prior to that. The firm also has offices in Berlin, Brussels and Cologne.

In branching out into these regions, Mayer Brown has forgone the franchise model for a collaborative partnership with its foreign outposts. In doing so, attorneys from around the world share a single profit pool, Krueger said.

"It helps partners feel that they're all in the same boat," Krueger said. "And I think there's a better approach to global client relationships if you're really one firm in terms of how the incentives line up."

Krueger cited an example of the firm's collaborative spirit: While recently reviewing March data, Krueger discovered that partners in different geographic regions shared the credit for half of the 12 largest global matters.

Frequently, Mayer Brown lawyers from around the globe come together to work on major global transactions. For example, lawyers from eight practices in five offices, including Charlotte, N.C.; Cologne, Germany; and Chicago, collaborated on the Bucyrus transaction to expand Caterpillar's position in the global mining equipment industry.

A multinational team from Mayer Brown's Washington, Brussels and London offices is also representing warehouse leasing company ProLogis in a \$46 billion merger with AMB Property Corp. ProLogis said Wednesday that its shareholders had approved the merger, which would allow ProLogis to remain the largest industrial real estate investment trust in the U.S., according to Mayer Brown.

On the Asia front, a Mayer Brown team consisting of lawyers working in five practice areas out of from Hong Kong, New York and Chicago advised Zurich-based ACE Ltd. on the insurer's \$425 million acquisition of New York Life Insurance Co.'s Hong Kong and South Korean life insurance operations.

Mayer Brown has also taken its global expertise into project financing. Chicago and London partners led the firm in representing The Korea Development Bank, Export Development Canada and the Export-Import Bank of the U.S. in an \$850 million project financing for Minera y Metalurgica del Boleo S.A. de CV's mine in Mexico.

In addition to project financing and M&A matters, lawyers from Mayer Brown's offices have come together on global trade matters, as well. Lawyers from Brussels and Beijing are representing Chinese

telecommunications equipment producer ZTE Corp. in an anti-dumping case brought by the European Union over USB modems known as dongles.

According to Mayer Brown, the case is unusual because the EU is going after the company on two fronts: by bringing an anti-dumping case, as well as by bringing safeguard measures to shield EU producers from an unexpected rise in exports.

In order to work on complicated cases such as this one collaboratively, Mayer Brown's partners interact extensively with other lawyers in the firm across the globe.

Mayer Brown lawyers try to know as much about their partners as they do about the clients they serve to ensure they can recommend other Mayer Brown lawyers for reasons other than simply pure firm loyalty, Sagan said.

Mayer Brown encourages these relationships by forming global client teams for major clients, so lawyers in different regions where clients operate can communicate about the clients' needs. These teams enable the firm to serve global clients seamlessly, Krueger said.

"Clients are precious commodities. They're demanding, as they should be, and they don't want surprises," Krueger said. "And so it's important for the partners to know their partners and be confident that they are going to deliver the same level of service and quality wherever they are."

--Additional reporting by Melissa Lipman. Editing by Lisa Uhlman.

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