

## Global 20: Mayer Brown

By **Jonathan Randles**

*Law360, New York (August 19, 2013, 10:15 PM ET)* -- Mayer Brown LLP continued to flex its international muscle in 2012 by advising Swiss food giant Nestle SA on its \$11.85 billion acquisition of Pfizer Inc.'s infant nutrition business, helping the firm land on Law360's annual Global 20 list for the third consecutive year.

Nestle's acquisition was one of the largest commercial transactions of 2012 and helped solidify the company's presence in the global baby-food market. The deal, which drew on a team of attorneys from the firm's U.S. and Hong Kong offices, is a testament to the international growth strategy Mayer Brown has followed for more than a decade.

The firm began its current push to expand internationally in 2001, ahead of most other U.S. law firms. Its growth strategy has focused on merging with smaller, local firms in other parts of the world, as opposed to opening a new office manned by a few partners.

"We think that by growing internationally the way that we have, we are able to present our clients with world-class capabilities and service wherever we operate, and our clients are increasingly recognizing the strength we have in every jurisdiction where we have an office," Mayer Brown Chairman Paul Theiss said Monday. "We think that gives us a significant advantage."

Through mergers over the past decade, Mayer Brown has picked up offices in Brussels, Germany, and Paris and expanded its presence in London. The firm's most recent expansions overseas include the openings of new offices in Singapore in November 2011 and Dusseldorf, Germany, in February 2012.

Meanwhile, the firm has a strong presence in Asia, with multiple offices in China, Thailand and Vietnam. It has also made inroads in Latin America: In 2009, it established an association with Tauli & Chequer Advogados, a leading law firm in Brazil.

Mayer Brown has added 8 lateral partners in Europe and 4 in Asia since April 2012.

In Asia specifically, the firm has concentrated its resources in the region's financial centers: Singapore and Hong Kong, according to Elaine Lo, a senior partner at Mayer Brown JSM and chairman of the Asia board. And unlike other U.S.-based international law firms in the market that tend only to focus on financial regulations and commercial transactions, Mayer Brown offers a full range of legal services, including intellectual property, real estate and other areas, Lo said.

Mayer Brown's Asian practice also has greater gender diversity compared to other law firms operating in the region, according to Lo. About 20 percent of the firm's partners and 30 percent of the firm's associates in Asia are women, she said.

As in years past, in 2012 Mayer Brown drew upon its expanded global reach to make waves internationally. A team of Mayer Brown lawyers in China, Germany, Belgium and the U.S. advised Hanergy Holdings Group Ltd., the largest privately owned clean energy developer in China, on the acquisition of two solar cell manufacturers.

A team of Mayer Brown attorneys in the U.S. and Hong Kong represented Sinochem Petroleum USA LLC, a subsidiary of Beijing-based Sinochem Group, in its \$1.7 billion purchase of a stake in about 207,000 net oil and natural gas leasehold acres in West Texas' horizontal Wolfcamp Shale held by Pioneer Natural Resources Co.

Mayer Brown also represented India-based Gulf Oil Corp. Ltd. in its agreement with private equity firm AEA Investors LP to acquire U.S.-based chemicals and lubricants manufacturer Houghton International Inc. for \$1.05 billion. And the firm's attorneys in Hong Kong served as lead international counsel to Italy's Fincantieri, the world's largest builder of cruise ships, on its \$1.2 billion transaction acquiring a stake in shipbuilder STX OSV.

The firm's attorneys in Hong Kong also advised CITIC Telecom, one of Asia's leading telecommunications service providers, on its \$1.1 billion acquisition of a 79 percent stake in Macau Telecom. When approved by regulators and shareholders, the transaction will increase CITIC Telecom's holding in Macau Telecom from 20 percent to 99 percent, according to the firm.

In addition, Mayer Brown is becoming more active in the Middle East and Africa. The firm represented Morocco on a \$1.5 billion offering of 10-year and 30-year notes that were listed on the Luxembourg Stock Exchange. The transaction marked Morocco's first U.S. dollar offering, and its first international offering since the Arab Spring.

The firm also represented by Turkish bank Turkiye Vakiflar Bankasi TAO in a \$500 million, five-year Eurobond offering, which marked the first-ever senior unsecured bond offering from a deposit-taking state bank in Turkey, according to Mayer Brown.

Mayer Brown attorneys in London and Paris continue to be involved in high-level matters in both Africa and the Middle East, Theiss said. And while there are currently no plans to expand the firm, Mayer Brown's clients are also showing interest in Myanmar and Mongolia, according to Lo.

Theiss credited the firm's success internationally to partners buying in to Mayer Brown's culture of teamwork, saying the firm is built around the notion that "we are one partnership across the world".

"Our partners have done a terrific job of recognizing that by working together across practice areas and across jurisdictions, we are able to bring superior results and superior value to our clients," Theiss said. "It's something we have been talking about in the firm for some time now. It's really gratifying to see the way our partners have embraced that approach."

--Additional reporting by Carolina Bolado. Editing by Elizabeth Bowen.