

Global 20: Mayer Brown

By **Shayna Posses**

Law360 (August 20, 2019, 3:15 PM EDT) -- Mayer Brown LLP retained its spot on Law360's Global 20 list with another banner year that included guiding France's Societe Generale to a favorable settlement ending Libor-rigging investigations and advising some of the world's most influential companies on multibillion-dollar deals.

With offices in 13 countries across four continents, Mayer Brown's global presence is a critical part of its identity, so much so that every one of the firm's practice areas has a "significant international element," chairman Paul W. Theiss said.

"Mayer Brown is a global law firm, and many, many of our clients look to us to help them with their most complex global issues," he said. "On our end, the ability to provide world-class client service depends on us having international capabilities in each of our practice areas."

Even though Mayer Brown's 26 offices are spread across North America, South America, Europe and Asia, with 717 of its 1,691 attorneys working outside of the United States, the firm's lawyers are always in sync, Theiss noted.

"We work together very closely without regard to geographic location," he explained, pointing to that ability to work seamlessly across borders and time zones as something that sets Mayer Brown's global practice apart.

The firm's collaborative, team-oriented approach also extends to its relationships with clients, said Sally Davies, senior partner in Mayer Brown's London office. Mayer Brown is able to cultivate close-knit relationships in part because of its strength in the global market, she said, noting that the firm has more than 200 lawyers in each of its global hubs: Hong Kong, London and New York.



Mayer Brown

Global headcount: 1,691
 Total offices: 26

Offices by Region:
 North America: 8
 Europe: 5
 Asia-Pacific: 8
 Middle East: 1
 South America: 4

“That gives us a real weight in the global market, and I think it really enhances our credibility with our global clients,” Davies said.

Mayer Brown’s work for Societe Generale last year is demonstrative of that team-based approach, she said. Facing investigations for allegedly rigging Libor and Euribor, the Paris-based banking giant turned to the firm for help.

By working closely with the bank, Mayer Brown attorneys in the U.S. and France were able to help Societe Generale resolve French and American probes with a June 2018 settlement that involved penalties far below those imposed on other banks facing similar charges, according to the firm.

That matter is a perfect example of the firm’s attorneys working together and “servicing our global clients in a really joined-up way with a very successful outcome,” Davies said.

Over the past year, the firm also worked on a number of sizable transactions that brought together attorneys from around the globe.

For instance, Mayer Brown attorneys in the United States and Germany were involved in advising biopharmaceutical giant Bristol-Myers Squibb Co. on the intellectual property aspects of its \$74 billion acquisition of biotechnology company Celgene Corp.

That deal, which was announced in January, is expected to close in the third quarter of 2019, according to Mayer Brown.

An international team was also involved in guiding The Hartford Financial Services Group Inc. through the Connecticut-based company’s more than \$2 billion purchase of global specialty underwriter The Navigators Group Inc.

Mayer Brown attorneys from the U.S., U.K. and Belgium represented The Hartford in the deal, which was announced last summer and closed in May.

The firm took advantage of its 2018 expansion into Tokyo, as well, with Mayer Brown attorneys in Japan and the U.S. coming together to represent Tokio Marine Holdings Inc. in aspects of the \$1.5 billion sale of its reinsurance platform. Bermuda-based reinsurer RenaissanceRe Holdings Ltd.’s purchase of rival Tokio Millennium Re was announced in October.

Theiss noted that “the opening of our Tokyo office is emblematic of the way that the firm has approached global expansion, which is 100% at the request of our clients.”

The chairman explained that the firm has a long history of representing major Japanese players in global endeavors, so when clients expressed interest in Mayer Brown having an on-the-ground presence in Tokyo, the firm was happy to oblige.

Overall, the firm remains in “expansion mode,” Theiss noted, saying, “we are aggressively expanding in important markets, including most recently New York, London and Chicago, as well as California,” which is the home of its newest office: San Francisco.

Mayer Brown has also been bolstering its European and Middle Eastern offerings in light of Brexit, Davies said.

The firm has always worked together closely across Europe, but it's been even more focused on weaving those platforms together over the last two years to help clients navigate the potential consequences and uncertainties surrounding Brexit, she said.

“We’ve been doing that by really trying to support clients and give them the advice and information they need relating to business continuity and the risks that they’re going to face as a result of Brexit,” Davies said.

However, the challenges that come along with Brexit present opportunities as well, she added, saying, “that’s something we’re really focused on growing and expanding.”

That’s evidenced by some of the 41 lateral hires Mayer Brown made over the last year, like Robert John, who joined the firm’s growing corporate practice in Germany in late 2018, and Alain Farhad, who became head of the dispute resolution practice in the United Arab Emirates in the spring.

But at the end of the day, Theiss said, one of the main ways the firm thinks about success in meeting client needs is by looking at the extent to which clients turn to Mayer Brown for important global matters — and they’ve been seeing results.

“Every year, we see more and more of our clients working with us in several of our regions — and increasingly, in all of our regions,” he said. “To me, that means our partnership with our clients is a strong one, and we’re growing in a way that is driven by our clients.”

Methodology: Law360 surveyed law firms about their global attorney headcounts, office locations and cross-border and international work between April 1, 2018, and March 31, 2019. Headcount and office information is as of March 31, 2019, except where noted for individual firms.

--Additional reporting by Chelsea Naso, William Shaw and Adam Rhodes. Editing by Haylee Pearl.