

Missions & Visions

MORRISON FOERSTER



David A. Ephraim

San Francisco-based Morrison & Foerster opened an office in Boston earlier this year, expanding the firm's technology, life sciences, finance, emerging companies and venture capital practices. David A. Ephraim, managing partner of the Boston office, recently sat down with Lawyers Weekly to discuss the good things he sees in the future, with practice synergy and proactive collaboration among the firm's 17 offices worldwide already delivering tangible benefits to clients.

Q: You joined Morrison & Foerster's Boston office earlier this year. What in particular attracted you to the firm?

A: The synergy of our practice with the MoFo platform and MoFo's culture. The speed of progress in technology, life sciences and new business models, and rapid responses to that progress in the regulatory environment, have created many new concerns as well as opportunities for our clients. These companies increasingly need more specialized advice that connects across various practice areas and often geographies. MoFo has a robust presence in many legal specialties and geographies, which is essential for our clients' current needs as well as their future growth. Providing this strategic advice efficiently is very important, and the breadth of MoFo's domestic and global platform results in significant efficiencies to our clients because they can leverage the experience we have representing other similarly situated MoFo clients.

Just as importantly, we were attracted to MoFo because of its outstanding culture of collaboration, client-first focus and dedication to social responsibility. The firm's international presence provides a tremendous opportunity to be well-informed and collaborate with our lawyers domestically and internationally on new and evolving issues facing our clients, so we can proactively advise our clients on issues impacting their businesses and industries.



David A. Ephraim
MANAGING
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Q: How does your practice connect with Morrison & Foerster's platform, and what added benefits have your clients realized since you moved?

A: The initial group of 24 commercial finance attorneys at MoFo Boston have a strong commercial lending practice focused on the technology, life sciences and fintech sectors as well as leveraged lending and subscription lending. Clients are already benefiting tremendously from the depth and breadth of experience that we have across our interconnected practices and geographies.

Q: What do you think Morrison & Foerster brings to Boston that sets it apart from other firms?

A: First, nearly all of the MoFo Boston attorneys are long-time Boston attorneys from a number of excellent firms and have

including intellectual property, technology and licensing transactions, and data privacy and data ethics work related to personalized medicine, personalized food and the use of gene editing in plant breeding.

Q: How is technology impacting the practice of law?

A: Technology is evolving so quickly that in many cases laws have not yet been written to regulate new developments. For example, AI (Artificial Intelligence) creates both legal and ethical predicaments given that there isn't yet a clear framework for making decisions about how it is deployed. MoFo spends significant resources monitoring technological advances, innovations and market forces that our clients face in order to counsel them as effectively as possible. We also keep a close eye on what regulators are saying to anticipate the shape of

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deep connections to Boston and its various communities. MoFo brings to that a global network of lawyers from California to Asia who represent many of the companies that change the way we work and live. This connection across different practice areas and geographies helps our clients succeed domestically and internationally.

Second, there are a lot of similarities between the Boston tech and life sciences ecosystem and the ecosystem MoFo is a major part of in Silicon Valley. That exposure and experience allows us to provide a tremendous amount of valuable knowledge, synergy and advice to our clients in the technology and life sciences space.

Q: Do you anticipate Morrison & Foerster continuing to build its presence in Boston?

A: Yes. Boston is a well-known powerhouse in technology, life sciences, venture capital and private equity, which fits in well with MoFo's strengths in those areas. We already have over 35 lawyers in Boston. The growth and anticipated needs of our clients will determine office growth, but based on the current demand from our clients we are looking to add more partners and associates in the near future.

Q: You mentioned that you regularly act in the life sciences and tech industries. What trends are you seeing here particularly that players need to be cognizant of?

A: The life sciences and technology industries continue to converge. Boston area universities, start-ups and companies are leaders in this massive confluence of technological advancements. Underlying this significant shift in life sciences technology is the use of data and data analytics. We are seeing a huge growth in legal work related to life sciences data analytics,

future laws and enforcement activity. We proactively share with our clients what we have learned to give them advantages in their markets and to help them comply with the regulatory framework and avoid negative press. MoFo's vision is a culture of getting there fast and being a go-to resource so that our clients will have an advantage over their competition and avoid legal pitfalls.

At MoFo, we also continuously focus on how we, as lawyers, can best harness technology to deliver value in providing legal services. Incorporating new technology into the practice of law has become increasingly important as firms seek to differentiate themselves and create more efficiencies for their clients.

Q: What do law firms need to consider in order to provide as much value as possible to clients?

A: Clients increasingly face complex issues, and those issues may intersect multiple disciplines. Value to clients is getting solutions quickly and seamlessly from lawyers who regularly analyze and provide solutions to similarly situated companies or in similar industries. The more experience a law firm has with a particular problem or issue means efficiencies for the client, as well as more creative and nuanced solutions. Having significant experience in a diverse array of legal services, so the client can benefit from those practice synergies, is key to providing advice to clients.

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