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A SPECIAL REPORT

OBLON, SPIVAK, MCCLELLAND, MAIER & NEUSTADT

EDITOR'S NOTE

This year's Midsize Hot List shows the agility of law firms with 50 to 150 attorneys in ducking the recession's blows—or at least bouncing back more quickly than many big-firm competitors.

Lower hourly rates remain the greatest advantage that midsize firms offer, but it's not all about the money. The firms included on this year's list have demonstrated the ability to snag big clients by offering specialized services and to hold on to smaller clients through bread-and-butter practices including estate planning and employee benefits.

The National Law Journal's Midsize Hot List includes 20 law firms that have thrived amid the downturn. From among

the stacks of nominations we received, we selected firms that experienced a string of successes and that showed innovative ways to run their operations despite the economy.

We've highlighted two firms—Minneapolis-based Bowman and Brooke and Shartsis Friese of San Francisco—to illustrate what it takes to get ahead as a midsize law firm in a market increasingly dominated by large-firm competition.

We recognize that many firms could have made the list. That said, those included here show not only that bigger is not necessarily better, but that midsize is often the right size. —LEIGH JONES

MIDSIZE HOT LIST



OBLON, SPIVAK, MCCLELLAND, MAIER & NEUSTADT

For Oblon, Spivak, McClelland, Maier & Neustadt, 2009 was a year of firsts—more than 4,000 of them. The 106-attorney intellectual property heavyweight became the first firm to obtain more than 4,000 U.S. utility patents in one year.

Oblon Spivak's client list includes Toshiba, Toyota Motor Co., Mitsubishi Electric Co., Mitsubishi Chemical, BASF, Ricoh Corp., Sony Corp. and L'Oréal.

The firm handles the largest percentage of U.S. patent work originating in Japan for Ricoh, Sony and Toshiba, and serves as the exclusive provider of U.S. patent prosecution services for Sony Europe and Sony China.

The firm has made several strategic moves, including opening an affiliate office in Tokyo. Based in Alexandria, Va., it also has streamlined practice groups into two core areas—patent prosecution and litigation. With several disciplines organized under these main areas, the firm has a greater ability to cross-sell among current clients and attract new ones. It also has two new blogs, The ITC 337 Law Blog, created in response to the growing area of international trade litigation, and the Patents Post Grant Law Blog, a forum for discussing patent re-examination issues. —RICHARD ACELLO

