

## Global 20: Reed Smith

By **Bibeka Shrestha**

Law360, New York (June 13, 2011) -- A series of smart mergers helped Reed Smith LLP quickly expand its international capabilities and offer superior cross-border support to some of the world's largest multinationals — including Johnson & Johnson, General Electric Co., Bank of America Corp. and Bank of New York Mellon Corp. — in 22 offices across three continents, winning the firm a spot on Law360's Global 20 list.

Reed Smith can boast that it counsels 13 of the world's 15 largest commercial and savings banks, eight of the world's 15 largest oil and gas companies, and the world's three largest pharmaceutical distribution and wholesale companies.

It was these very companies that drove the firm to venture outside the U.S. border.

Gregory Jordan, global managing partner at Reed Smith, said it became clear that if the firm wanted to hold on to its clients, it was going to have to cultivate a worldwide presence. BNY Mellon, in particular, was a major motivating factor in Reed Smith's move to London in 2001.

"Over the past few years, one of the biggest projects in the firm has been the representation of BNY Mellon in London in connection with the Lehman [Brothers Holdings Inc.] bankruptcy," Jordan said. "Absent our expansion, this would simply not have been possible."

Founded in the 1870s, Reed Smith opened its first international office in London through a merger with Warner Cranston in 2001. The firm then debuted offices in Paris and Munich in 2005, both of which were later expanded through a subsequent merger with London-based Richards Butler in January 2007.

The Richards Butler merger ushered in 250 lawyers working throughout the European Union and led to new Reed Smith offices in Piraeus, Greece, and Abu Dhabi and Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. Reed Smith says it is one of only a handful of global firms to support international corporations doing business in Greece and Greek companies conducting businesses internationally.

By 2008, Reed Smith became one of the five largest firms in Hong Kong through a merger with Richards Butler's Chinese affiliate, which also brought Reed Smith a Beijing office.

Now, 34 percent of the firm's attorneys are found outside the U.S., with 317 professionals based in London, the firm's largest office and where nearly half of all work is done for international clients.

Michael Pollack, the global head of strategic planning for Reed Smith, readily admits that international expansion has taken a lot more work than simply snapping up lawyers already established in foreign lands. While implementing mergers, Reed Smith expends a great deal of energy facilitating smooth and ongoing communication among far-flung firms.

"We don't just do a merger and open up an office and let it sit," said Pollack, who now spends half his time in Hong Kong, a relatively new locale for the firm. "We work very hard to make sure it's integrated, that all of these offices are well-connected."

Ellen Bastier, head of Reed Smith's renewable energy practice in San Francisco, can attest that the firm's high level of cross-border communication makes it rare for attorneys to blindly refer precious clients to attorneys in Abu Dhabi, Paris or elsewhere.

Bastier added that Reed Smith attorneys take great care to convey clients' individual needs — whether its preferred communication methods or favored risk styles — to colleagues across the globe.

"There's a lot of behind-the-scenes work we do to keep each other educated about those specifics," Bastier said. "Every client has their own way of doing things. We like to make sure they get done that way."

According to Pollack, Reed Smith operates as a single firm, with one partnership and one profit pool, while all 12 of its practice groups are global. Soon, the firm will add a renewable energy industry group to its existing life science and health care and financial services groups.

Bastier said cross-border work in the renewable energy practice had been particularly bustling, with foreign companies becoming increasingly interested in renewable energy projects in the U.S.

She is currently helping a Singapore client with a strategic investment in a U.S. technology company, while also working with colleagues in Paris to assist a French affiliate of a client on a renewable energy project in Turkey.

Reed Smith's increasing ability to serve the same clients in different jurisdictions has been crucial in cementing and growing client relationships, Pollack said.

As a result, cross-national work has become a fixture at the firm.

For example, an international team of Reed Smith attorneys assisted SKF USA Inc., a global supplier of rolling bearings and seals, in hammering out an agreement to buy Lincoln Holdings Enterprises for more than \$1 billion.

The global platform also made possible Reed Smith's representation of Kazakhstan's government for more than 11 years, including in an ongoing arbitration of a \$1.5 billion dispute with a BTA Bank shareholder who claims that the country unlawfully nationalized BTA, one of its largest banks.

Meanwhile, a partner in Reed Smith's London office is now leading a team advising HSBC Holdings PLC on recovering from Middle Eastern companies that have defaulted on loans in worldwide litigation in which the AHAB partnership claims that more than \$9 billion was fraudulently borrowed in its name from 118 banks.

Reed Smith attorneys in the U.S., the European Union and Asia have also teamed up to represent the world's second-largest shipbuilder, South Korea's Daewoo Shipbuilding & Marine Engineering Co., in a nearly \$50 million acquisition of wind turbine manufacturer DeWind Inc.

And in China, Reed Smith attorneys represented Wind Point Partners in simultaneous acquisitions of Global Tube Form and Peora Tube Forming Corp. in September.

Cross-border sports financing work has also landed on Reed Smith's lap over the years.

A London-Silicon Valley team represented YouTube LLC co-founder Chad Hurley in financing the U.S. Formula 1 team, while a London partner formed a five-office team to advise Oracle Racing and its affiliate, the America's Cup Event Authority, on evaluating venues for the 34th America's Cup, eventually negotiating a host city agreement with San Francisco.

Attorneys across the U.S. and in London also collaborated in repping long-time startup Cybersource, a provider of electronic payment and payment security solutions to online merchants, in its \$2 billion sale to Visa Inc.

In 10 offices around the world, Reed Smith also represents Vestas Wind Systems and its U.S. and Canadian subsidiaries in the sale, financing, construction and operation of hundreds of wind power projects worldwide.

In 2010, the firm helped Vestas land a deal to deliver and maintain turbines in Europe, North America and South America for Portuguese utility EDP Renovaveis SA, as well assisted an effort to expand production capacity in the U.S. The agreements are said to total billions of dollars.

As for what comes next, Reed Smith is keeping its options open.

Pollack said the firm had its eye on active energy markets in Canada, Brazil and Australia, but was also hoping to expand in Asia as well as strengthen its presence in Germany, France, the U.K. and the Middle East.

"We're probably not done quite yet," he said.

--Editing by Chris Giganti.

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