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GCs Name 28 Employment Attys That Keep Them Happy

By **Scott Flaherty**

Law360, New York (February 15, 2013, 1:21 PM ET) -- A deep understanding of business goals and a focus on maintaining close contact with clients are two attributes shared among 28 labor and employment attorneys whose client services stand out in the minds of in-house counsel, according to a recent survey.

Of 307 lawyers nominated by in-house counsel as standout providers of client service, a group of 28 attorneys specializing in labor and employment set themselves apart by keeping a close eye on changing trends in the regulatory and legal landscape, and by simply paying attention to clients' needs, according to the 2013 BTI Client Services All-Stars report from The BTI Consulting Group Inc. (Wellesley, Mass.).

Though a number of attributes define the attorneys singled out as client service all stars, one common focus, cited by several labor and employment lawyers who made BTI's list, was effective and close communication with clients.

Richard S. McAtee, a Jackson Lewis LLP partner who was also recognized on BTI's client service list last year, said he has found that it's important to be attuned to the pressures facing in-house counsel who often have to deal with an array of issues at once. Keeping those pressures in mind, McAtee's approach is to be "ultra responsive" to any questions a client might have, even if he can't fully answer them until later.

"I always make it a top priority to be very responsive," he said. "I see it as my job to make their job easier and make them stand out."

Beyond making clients feel valued, attorneys who keep in close contact with in-house counsel are also able to inform those clients of recent regulations or new legal standards that may affect their business, according to BTI President Michael Rynowecer. He said attorneys who keep abreast of the changing employment law arena — and who keep their clients up-to-date on specific issues that could impact them — are likely to stand out to general counsel.

"It's not just telling them what's coming down the pike, but being client-specific about it," Rynowecer said.

Charles B. Baldwin of Ogletree Deakins Nash Smoak & Stewart PC expressed similar thoughts to Rynowecer's, saying he has found that clients look to attorneys with a baseline of "superior legal skills," and pair those skills with in-depth knowledge of a client's business.

"Your goal should be to serve as a facilitator — not telling me no, but telling me how," he

said.

Coming up with creative and effective ways of solving a client's legal issues, Baldwin added, is part and parcel with keeping a watchful eye on developments in the industries his clients operate in, which could mean anything from reading trade publications to attending industry events.

A focus on a client's needs and goals is something Jennifer Rubin, a Mintz Levin Cohn Ferris Glovsky & Popeo PC employment attorney named on BTI's list, noted as important to her approach to client service. In some instances, those goals might need to be divined based on the existing relationship with a client or the specifics of a particular issue, but in other cases, Rubin said, it's important to sit a client down and force them to think in concrete terms about what they hope to achieve.

"My overall goal is to help my clients be successful. Sometimes clients don't know what they need and that's where I think I add value," she said. "We are in a service business. This is what we do."

For Paul Grossman, a Paul Hastings LLP employment partner who made BTI's list of client service all stars, serving clients can come down to basic things, like responding quickly to phone calls or emails, and making an extra effort to ensure that his clients feel valued.

"Client service is the very essence of practicing law," Grossman said. "The client comes first. The client comes before anything else. Every client is your most important client."

The labor and employment attorneys named as 2013 BTI Client Service All-Stars are: Leslie A. Lanusse of Adams and Reese LLP, William H. Pickering of Chambliss Bahner & Stophel PC, W. Jonathan Martin II and Timothy Riker Newton of Constangy Brooks & Smith LLP, William E. Corum of Husch Blackwell LLP, John M. Bryson, Richard Scott McAtee and Michael J. Soltis of Jackson Lewis LLP, Terrence J. Miglio of Keller Thoma PC, Andrew C. Liazos of McDermott Will & Emery LLP, Bruce M. Steen of McGuireWoods LLP, Thomas C. Sand of Miller Nash LLP, Jennifer B. Rubin of Mintz Levin Cohn Ferris Glovsky & Popeo PC, Charles B. Baldwin, Fred W. Suggs Jr., Stephen R. Woods and A. Craig Cleland of Ogletree Deakins Nash Smoak & Stewart PC, Paul Grossman of Paul Hastings LLP, John M. Stephen of Porter Wright Morris & Arthur LLP, Joseph Baumgarten of Proskauer Rose LLP, Betty S.W. Graumllich of Reed Smith LLP, David Israel of Sessions Fishman Nathan & Israel LLP, Nick C. Geannacopulos and Gerald L. Maatman Jr. of Seyfarth Shaw LLP, Geoffrey D. DeBoskey of Sidley Austin LLP, Robert T. Kofman of Stearns Weaver Miller Weissler Alhadeff & Sitterson, Lawrence Peikes of Wiggin and Dana LLP and Gregory D. Wolflick of Wolflick & Simpson.

--Editing by Andrew Park.

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