A fresh look at new trends

Welcome to the Financial Times North America Innovative Lawyers report for 2015. Legal professionals on the continent are changing, and this year’s report, the sixth in the series, reflects how lawyers serve and lead business.

A practice focused on sustainability earns a partner the top award. Winner catches the mood of an age and attract and retain more business. Page 10 & 11

Adopting cutting-edge capabilities will cut costs, enhance efficiency. From a focus on health to partnerships with tech companies, firms are leading, planning and must show it. Page 5

A skilled manager of change. Flexibility and business skills are desirable traits in modern legal profession as cyber security, privacy and data, robotics and the convergence of finance and technology. Page 19

Fresh ideas flourish north of border. Inventive approaches in Canada include guidance through complex system and lower-cost models. Page 19

Telecoms are shaken up down south. Mexican regulations in flux make agreements tricky. Pages 19 & 10

Poison pill proves to be a deal breaker. Fending off hostile bids requires arcane delaying tactics. Pages 20 & 21

Standing up for little guy who bet the farm and won. Lawyers are thinking creatively to find successful ways to challenge legislation. Pages 22 & 23

Complex deals from Texas to Arkansas via Greenland. Enabling projects has become more complicated. Pages 24 & 25

Lawyers give a voice to the silent. Emotions ran high as victims of trafficking won victory. Page 27

Low firms in recent years that some feel innovation is necessary. But this year firms have shown the way they can facilitate a cause to finance. This year we restricted the number of nominations on each firm to enable, protect, and expand the impact for a maximum score of 30. In the small steps that encourage big changes, and when they are, they help our clients. The legal profession is in a position to push the legal business into rewarding new frontiers. Personal-thinking lawyers can take powerful positions in business and lead them at their right, as the 2015 report shows.

Gillian Tett
U.S. managing editor

Methodology

Shortlists for the FT North America Innovative Lawyers 2015 cover the US, Canada and Mexico and comprise submissions in each section. Firms were invited to submit under three headings:

- Legal expertise: core how lawyers innovates to create, protect, and expand clients’ businesses. bedrooms of law practice innovating in compliance and technology, new delivery models, forward-thinking firms and future development.
- Social responsibility: total score for entries from both votes and programme.
- Corporate votes: lowest scores for originality, rationale and impact for a maximum score of 10.

For this report, 2% admissions and nominations were reviewed, and RSG Consulting interviewed and sought feedback from clients, lawyers and experts. Submissions were received from 60 law firms, and 65 in-house teams were researched. Research was carried out by the RSG researchers between August and November 2015.

Judges
A panel decides the winner for the Legal Innovation of the Year award, from a list of 10: Michael Magowan, FT associate editor, Robb Jaggi, deputy, FT Innovative Lawyers. Bob Kugel, chief executive, RSG Consulting, Lindsay Fortuna, FT general counsel, RSG Consulting.

Contributors

Brenda Brown, FT contributor
Jane Croft
FT two stars correspondent
Lindsay Fortuna, FT legal correspondent
Anton Mosselmans, FT USA and corporate finance correspondent
Sarah Murray, FT contributor
Rena SenGupta, Chief executive, RSG Consulting
Michael Jaggi, FT associate editor
John Wobber
FT Mexico and Central America correspondent
Robb Jaggi
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Editor
Harris O’Neill
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Derek Westwood
Tables designer
Andy Mears, Emily Lewis
Picture editors
Mark Durran
Sub-editor

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Jami McKeon calls law firm leadership a “contact sport.” It must be a game she has mastered — Morgan Lewis & Bockius is a challenge to manage. She pulled off one of the largest lateral hiring deals in recent US history and then formed a partnership with leading Singapore law firm Stamford Law to give her firm a significant position in Southeast Asia.

As a young litigation partner, she was one of the first to experiment with alternative fee mechanisms, which now account for more than 25% of the firm’s billing arrangements. She 13 years ago she moved to the west coast to ease the firm’s acquisition of the Brobeck Hale & Dorr partners. This experience of bringing in a batch of partners stood Ms McKeon in good stead to welcome 700 Bingham McCutcheon lawyers into Morgan Lewis in 2014.

Many law firms do not have a process for bringing recruits on-board — with the result that they often fail to deliver on their potential. Ms McKeon instead made sure that the Bingham McCutcheon lawyers were welcomed into the heart of the firm from the start. Before this, of course, she had to convince her own partners that the move was worthwhile. “It was a bold, transformative and risky thing to do,” she says. “It was a risk either way. If you do not take advantage of an opportunity, that itself is a risk.”

With the Singapore deal, when Ms McKeon first spoke to Stamford Law's Suet Fern Lee by video conference, the chemistry was immediate. Ms McKeon flew to Singapore three days later and the two rapidly decided their firms would form a strong combination with benefits for both. Achieving a licence to practise in Singapore is hard, and local firms tend to be wary of their international counterparts.

Profile

Jami McKeon

Handling a merger was a tough test, explains

Reena SenGupta

A skilled manager of change

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Legal advice has to demonstrate it can drive ahead

Members of the profession are leading, planning and executing original ideas and deals, explains Reena SenGupta

The legal profession needs to innovate. Technology is having drastic effects on all knowledge workers, globalization is increasing. The pace of business and the demands of clients are rising.

The FT Innovative Lawyers reports show the way forward for firms operating at the high-performance end. The first US report in 2015 had few examples of innovations that increased efficiency in the client experience. But the new report shows firms such as Latham & Watkins to have smart models of delivering legal services central to their business. Enterprises have combined with the advice companies – for example, Procorus and LexisNexis – to craft not only the delivery of advice but also the context of that advice through better collection and analysis of data.

These initiatives are a sign of the times. But they are not reflective of the North American profession as a whole, which still remains behind that of the UK in terms of “business of law” innovation or the impetus of the leading US firms to change the status quo. For example, it is still largely unusual for hourly rates to differ in Europe. Alternative fee arrangements are the majority of almost all mandates.

For many top US firms, business is back normal after the financial crisis. They can charge premium rates. Their clients, who are less concerned about the cost of legal services, are ready to pay: the product delivered is often worth it. Importantly, while the North American market might lack innovation at an institutional level, North American lawyers are more entrepreneurial.

For the FT Innovative Lawyers report, the ranking of which the index of best-performing firms in the FT North America Innovative Lawyers 2015 report is based, we have assessed individual legal innovation in North America. To use the analogy of a car, in most regions, lawyers sit in the back behind their clients and other advisers, who are doing the driving. Innovative lawyers in Europe are those who have leapt into the front to drive a deal or dispute. In the US, however, the top firms operate comfortably behind the wheel.

Therefore, in North America, lawyers have somehow they have gone a step further. In real terms, it means perhaps taking a lead role in designing a transaction – something relatively unusual but happening more frequently. So, it is a legal solution and leadership that has made business happen and which clients identify them as the critical factors in their success and source of competitive advantage.

The North American report for 2015 shows lawyers working to enable, expand and protect their clients’ businesses. Stands out examples include White & Case, which enabled the complicated financing of FortisIO’s natural gas facility in Texas, Sullivan & Cromwell for Standardpaper stock that indirectly protected New York’s status as a global banking centre, and Cravath, Swaine & Moore for IBM’s, which helped to expand Bard Moser’s business in alternative legal services.

In terms of legal expertise, North American lawyers have a rich diet of work to feed their creative legal muscles
The small steps that encourage big changes in commitment

Business of Law: From a focus on health to partnerships with tech companies, firms want to change the culture, says Lindsay Fortado

Think about their health. The more steps they accumulate, the more the firm would donate to the charity of their choice. The effect raised a total of $150,000 for Save the Children, Doctors Without Borders and other beneficiaries of the firm’s global wellness manager. "Which is why it’s so important to get people moving," Mr Goldberg says.

Latham is one of the few law firms to employ full-time health professionals to focus on the health of its staff.

It is another way that a profession, notoriously unwilling to experiment, is pushing the boundaries.

Submissions to the 2013 North America Innovations Lawyers report included examples of firms exploring possibilities, from creating practices areas to seeking input on business management and developing new technologies.

Some firms, such as Dentons, are creating tech-friendly companies to produce and market new technology, and Latham & Watkins, which hired Vivian Chiu from Goldman Sachs, and Paul Phillips from the tech giant PwC, and Crowell & Moring, are pushing their people to explore different mindsets and offer solutions to traditional law firm legal problems. Crowell has set up Innovation Lab, an online tool for staff to tell lawyers, "we have encountered this issue at a client and here is our solution", and the data and ideas are shared across the firm’s 700 lawyers.

The firm’s global wellness manager. "Which is why it’s so important to get people moving."

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Firms throw off caution and enter the digital arena

While the corporate world has been quick to harness technology such as data analytics and cloud-based computing, the legal sector has been slower on the mark. However, with eyes on increasing efficiency and delivering services to their clients in new ways, law firms are strengthening their digital capabilities.

“Use of more advanced technologies to understand and analyse data has exploded,” says Tim Mendelson, special counsel at Paul Hastings. “But the legal profession has been relatively slow to make use of data that can make or break their clients’ data dependability.”

One reason for the late arrival of law firms to the digital arena is that being entrepreneurial and experimental does not always come naturally to a sector whose approach tends to be governed by caution. “Lawyers are trained to be somewhat risk-averse and to help clients avoid risk, so that mindset might not lead to the most cutting-edge developments,” says Tim Insoll, a litigation and data analytics, information governance and eDiscovery expert brought in by Paul Hastings to develop its data analytics capabilities.

However, as the legal business becomes increasingly competitive and complex, firms need to make use of the routine legal work in-house, low firms are recognizing that they need to adapt to technology to cut costs, both for themselves and for their clients. “Firms need to look at how to use technology to make their operations more efficient and effective,” says Sarah Murray, chair of the Canadian Law Research Institute at the University of Ottawa.

Business of law Adopting cutting-edge capabilities will cut costs, enhance efficiency and attract and retain more business, says Sarah Murray.

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Law firms are responding by coming up with new technology tools to help their clients win the compliance battle. At Baker & McKenzie, for example, a cloud-based legal compliance service called iG360 allows clients to move from an intermittent practice at Baker & McKenzie, says the service head Theo Ling, partner and head of the Canadian employment and labour practice.

The tool can reduce the burden of the reporting process, too, by using data visualization, which means the need to wade through dozens of printouts of spreadsheet tables. “It reduces the time and makes facts and figures that are relatively easy for humans to interpret with, says the service head Theo Ling at Baker & McKenzie, for example, a cloud-based legal compliance service called iG360.

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However, he does not see technology replacing the human aspect of law. By enhancing efficiency and offering new ways of delivering services, it gives lawyers more time to do what they do best, he says.

“You can use all that data and still to predict how a case may or may not come out,” says Tim Mendelson, a litigation and data analytics, information governance and eDiscovery expert brought in by Paul Hastings to develop its data analytics capabilities.

The platform helps clients make decisions on matters such as hiring independent contractors or determining their over-time exempt status. It also provides employment documents, such as independent contractor agreements and non-disclosure agreements.

Meanwhile, data analytics in helping lawyers use predictive analysis to plan their legal strategies, based on previous data such as types of allegations brought against companies and previous decisions in different courts.

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Sean McConn, partner at DLA Piper in Canada, won the small firm category of the FT North America Innovative Lawyers report. As an individual, McConn was also named as a leading authority on intellectual property and the law of robotics and artificial intelligence. McConn’s practice is embedded in a culture of excellence, where lawyers are encouraged to pursue their passions in areas that coincide with clients’ needs. This approach allows McConn to provide commercially focused solutions to complex challenges in a highly innovative and think big manner.

Individuals

A practice focused on sustainability earns a partner the top award, writes Michael Skapinker

North America Innovative Lawyers 2015

Winner

Susan Mac Cormac

Partner at Morrison & Foerster

Social responsibility and the environment have been at the core of Susan Mac Cormac’s career since she was a young woman at Harvard Business School. Now she is in the thick of it. “We are in a moment where sustainability and corporate social responsibility are really resonating,” she says.

Now the firm is leader in clean tech and sustainable development. Two other initiatives are ranked in the top five: plastic caps for cola bottles and a paperless report on corporate social responsibility.

“Our firm is really leading in these areas,” she says. “We are at the forefront of things.”

- Financail Times

Winner

Luis Conant

Partner with CaseSmart

A critical part of CaseSmart helps clients to balance their costs.

CaseSmart, a practice focused on sustainability, is one of the top three firms in the country. In 2015, it was named a leading authority on corporate social responsibility by the Financial Times. In the past year, CaseSmart has been working on large-scale projects, including the development of a sustainability platform that enables clients to quantify and optimize their environmental impact.

- Financial Times

Winner

Michael D Haefeli

Charmain Haefeli

Recognised as one of the top three lawyers in the US for her role in the development of the purpose corporation, Charmain Haefeli has had a long and successful career in law. She is known for her innovative approach to legal work and has been a driving force in the development of new legal structures.

- Financial Times

Winner

Deborah Bird

Partner, Cooley

As a lawyer who has advised many foundations and non-profit organizations, Deborah Bird appreciates the challenges her clients face in trying to do more with less. On her appointment as managing partner three years ago, she took the opportunity: “The firm responded to clients’ needs for value and efficiency. It was new as one of the first top firms in the US for clients who were not able to be attributed to the traditional model.”

Beyond the sci-fi cool factor, there are many legal issues. After 20 years of legal work, she is now focused on leading the team to shape the future of CaseSmart.

- Financial Times

Winner

Michael Rhyu

Partner, Cooley

Michael Rhyu, who uses her science background to good effect, has been named a leading practitioner in patent litigation. From her time as a law student, her goal was to work for impact litigation. Today she continues to use her science background to good effect, working on cases that make a difference.

- Financial Times

- Financial Times

- Financial Times

Peter, Cooley

Robert Geene Smere

Director, Senior Counsel

ColdSteel & Co

Robert Geene Smere has set out to understand and lay the foundations for patent litigation. From the early days, he found that he was well-suited to the task, and has since worked on some of the most forward-thinking legal education programmes in intellectual property. In 2007, he served as co-founder of the KSR International (“KSR”), which adds to the fundamental question of what constitutes innovation and therefore not eligible for patent. In common with many legal innovators, he has a multidisciplinary background and first trained as an industrial engineer.
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Having the courage to speak out is hallmark of sound counsel

In house Flexibility and business skills are desirable traits in modern legal advisers, says Reena SenGupta

The general counsel behind the brand is Eileen Reilly of the 2015 FT North America Inhouse Legal Team of the Year at Ansell in the San Francisco Bay area. Ansell, the full-service medical-to-aerospace conglomerate, has been named “The Lawyer of the Year” by Corporate Counsel magazine.

Ansell, a family-owned company, has seen a 15% rise in revenue over the past three years, and expects to see 30% growth over the next five to six. The company is now engaged in the sale of its medical division and working on the delivery of its first new product since 2000.

Ansell’s counsel, which has been named one of the “Most Innovative” in-house legal teams, is in charge of managing a $260 million legal division.

In 2015, Reilly led the company’s legal department through the sale of its medical division to Medical Supply Partners, a private equity group. She also oversaw the sale of Ansell’s glass and plastic business to Anglim Developments, and the sale of its medical division to Medical Supply Partners.

Ansell’s legal team has been named one of the “Most Innovative” in-house legal teams by Corporate Counsel magazine. The team has been recognized for its efforts in streamlining the company’s legal processes, as well as its efforts to improve the company’s compliance and regulatory practices.

One of the team’s priorities is to reduce the number of outside counsel by 25%, which has resulted in a 15% decrease in legal fees.

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Canada

Inventive approaches include guidance through complex system and lower cost models, says Brenda Broun.

The Canadian legal market has traditionally been dominated by a handful of larger firms. However, recent years have seen smaller firms stepping up to service clients ranging from prominent to new-entrants.

At the same time, some of the larger, more traditional firms are starting to pay more attention to innovation. For example, they include lower-cost models and solutions that guide clients through the complex legal resources and filing systems.

The market also has seen growth in 2016 with innovative trends. Notable is the Still moving service, offering a train ticket service to AT&T in the US for $20,000, the innovative Canadian service that was developed by Axess Law.


equality

Dealmaking can be fraught at the best of times, and the shake-up in telecoms is one of the more complex environments for lawyers to navigate.

Putting together such a deal did not take a single lawyer; it involved over 20 members of the Mexican legal community.

Mr Tan and his team correctly forecasted that the Mexican government would go along with the deal, and they were able to get the necessary approval from the Mexican government.

This meant the firm had to come up with a structure to assuage lenders’ concerns about the potential legal and regulatory risks.

In the case of the Mexican government, the firm was able to negotiate a deal with the government to get the necessary approval.

So, how are we?

Pillsbury is proud to be recognised by Financial Times for our work in structuring first-of-its-kind transactions and guiding clients in cutting-edge areas like cybersecurity, blockchain technology and drones. Our clients are innovators. They deserve the same from their law firm.

Learn more at pillsburylaw.com.

Four ideas flourished in the North American Legal Industry

Fresh ideas flourished north of border

Mexico

Telcos and energy deals are harder if rules are in flux, says Julie Webber.

Declining demand can be brought to the best of companies, particularly those with a strong track record, but the operating environment in Mexico is far from ideal.

“Dealing with the Mexican government is often like dealing with a tax consultant,” said Julie Webber, senior partner at Pillsbury.

In the past, Mexican companies have had to navigate complex tax laws that changed frequently. This has made it difficult for companies to plan for the future and make long-term investments.

But AT&T’s entry into the telecoms sector is one of the biggest opportunities the firm has ever had in Latin America.

The deal is an example of lawyers providing commercially relevant advice to clients in complex situations.

But the developments also show a steady trend of new technology being applied in Mexico.

For example, the law firm is currently working on a deal to construct a wind farm in Mexico.

The deal is being used to test out new technology that could be used in other countries.

The firm says it will use the experience from this deal to help future clients.

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Declining demand can be brought to the best of companies, particularly those with a strong track record, but the operating environment in Mexico is far from ideal.

“Dealing with the Mexican government is often like dealing with a tax consultant,” said Julie Webber, senior partner at Pillsbury.

In the past, Mexican companies have had to navigate complex tax laws that changed frequently. This has made it difficult for companies to plan for the future and make long-term investments.

But AT&T’s entry into the telecoms sector is one of the biggest opportunities the firm has ever had in Latin America.

The deal is an example of lawyers providing commercially relevant advice to clients in complex situations.

But the developments also show a steady trend of new technology being applied in Mexico.

For example, the law firm is currently working on a deal to construct a wind farm in Mexico.

The deal is being used to test out new technology that could be used in other countries.

The firm says it will use the experience from this deal to help future clients.

So, how are we?”

Pillsbury is proud to be recognised by Financial Times for our work in structuring first-of-its-kind transactions and guiding clients in cutting-edge areas like cybersecurity, blockchain technology and drones. Our clients are innovators. They deserve the same from their law firm.

Learn more at pillsburylaw.com.
### Poison Pill Proves to be a Deal-Breaker

**Exposure:** Fending off hostile bids requires lawyers to use all manner of arcane delaying tactics, writes Arash Massoudi

Corporate raider, famed for bundling the will of shareholders and forcing the hand of executives, suddenly acquired nearly 30 per cent of your stock and is aiming to deal with a controversial industry rival determined to buy your company. What do you do?

Boston-based Allen & Overy turned to lawyers at Latham & Watkins and Weil, Gotshal & Manges to help fend off a bid from a rival bidder. The firm responded to the poor performance of 401k retirement plans by helping to create a legal template for applications for unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) licensing. The bid set in motion a months-long struggle for Time Warner Cable’s interests of the company. The combined impact of these protective measures meant a takeover of Mylan would be extremely difficulty, taking months if not years. As a result, Teva decided to pursue Allergan’s generics business and Mylan continued its pursuit of Perrigo, which ultimately came to nothing in November.

### EXPANDING CLIENTS’ BUSINESS

**Firms**

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**Cross-Cutting Issues**

- Lawyers have been busy sorting out complex jurisdictions to buy your company.
- The combined impact of these measures meant a takeover of Mylan would be extremely difficult, taking months if not years. As a result, Teva decided to pursue Allergan’s generics business and Mylan continued its pursuit of Perrigo, which ultimately came to nothing in November.

### North America Innovative Lawyers 2015

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**Expanded Clients’ Business**

The combined impact of these protective measures meant a takeover would have taken months, if not years.
Standing up for a little guy who bet the farm and won

Expertise

Law firms are thinking creatively to find successful ways to challenge legislation, reports Jane Croft

The financial crisis and FSAs Consulting will present the inaugural FT Innovative Lawyers Summit in London on June 25.

The aim is to bring together the best minds in the legal industry to discuss and debate the most pressing issues of the day. Speakers will cover topics ranging from corporate and compliance work to international laws, general counsel, private practice partners and other professionals. And, of course, it will be an opportunity to meet old friends, make new ones, and enjoy a very special dinner and drinks reception.

We are currently recruiting speakers and welcoming expressions of interest in any of the following areas:

- Protecting clients’ business
- Firm
- Originality
- Rationale
- Impact
- Total innovation score

Highly commended

Sullivan & Cromwell 9 9 10

NorthAmericaInnovativeLawyers2015

The firm, led by announces that the firm’s innovation score is based on excellence in all three areas of law.

The first place, based on excellence in all three areas of law.

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Complex deals from Texas to Arkansas via Greenland

**Expertise** Firms can play an increasingly central role in unlocking investment for projects to materialise, explains Lindsay Fardato

Financial Times Tuesday 8 December 2015

**Discover Hidden Cities online** The PT Weekend Hidden Cities online hub created in partnership with Google, lets you explore the world’s most exciting capitals through the eyes of local creative professionals and journalists.

PT Weekend Tuesday 1 December 2015

**North America Innovative Lawyers 2015**

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The firm represented lenders on the financing of the Black Island windfarm, navigating complex construction and regulatory challenges and securing competitively attractive terms for the project.

**Standing Commended**

**Eric Richards** The firm explained a novel public-private partnership to finance the replacement of 558 bridges in Pennsylvania. Commended Andrew Fraiser.

**Eli Katz** The work was KfW’s largest financing in the world, involving the financing of the Los Ramones pipeline from Texas to Mexico. Highly commended.

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Social Responsibility Emotions run high as victims of trafficking celebrated victory, writes Sarah Murray

Social Responsibility - Project Cases

Firm

Social Responsibility - Project Cases

Firm

Originality

Rationale

Impact

Total

innovation score

Highly commended

Commended

Standout

Sarah Murray

Shalom Youth Village, a home for Rwandan orphans, and is the largest trafficking case in US history, forcing together lawyers from top US firms to file individual lawsuits against a Mexico-based company, which charged them vast fees for the services of lawyers who would otherwise not benefit, it adds that this kind of work is growing as more lawyers look for opportunities not only to make a living, but also to contribute to solving social problems.

"But if you can also provide services to those with no legal aid lawyers and lawyers in private practice via career fairs and access to legal recruiters. It helps legal aid organisations to operate more efficiently through workshops that train them on ways to improve their business processes.

The firm helped Indian tribes win punitive and compensatory damages of more than $14m in a trafficking case, providing services to the largest trafficking case in US history, forcing together lawyers from top US firms tofile individual lawsuits against a Mexico-based company, which charged them vast fees for the services of lawyers who would otherwise not benefit, it adds that this kind of work is growing as more lawyers look for opportunities not only to make a living, but also to contribute to solving social problems.

While US law firms have a long tradition of public service, lawyers in private practice are increasingly finding a way to contribute to solving social problems.

The firm's Public Service Initiative, staffed by three full-time lawyers, argues for reform to the argument from labour rights to child rights.

The firm is being hailed as a leader in the field of human rights pro bono practice, and it is not always easy to find opportunities for corporate or corporate lawyers.

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Which firm is one of only two to be ranked in the top ten in these awards across all regions*.

*White & Case was one of just two firms to achieve a top ten ranking in all regions covered by the FT’s Innovative Lawyers Awards in 2014.