Good Company: Honigman Miller Schwartz and Cohn LLP

Top Michigan law firm shares tips for achieving longevity, growth

When Jason Honigman and Jack Miller founded Honigman Miller Schwartz and Cohn LLP, they established their firm on the principle that it would provide clients with the best possible legal service by attracting the very best lawyers and staff, then challenging them with highly sophisticated work and rewards based on their performance. More than 60 years later, this system of meritocracy and the resulting customer service it generates have been keys to making Honigman one of the most prominent business law firms and top workplaces in Michigan.

"Clients have confidence in Honigman because of its exacting standards, commitment to excellence and providing value to its clients," says Chairman and CFO David Folytn. "Honigman is a premier business law firm with an excellent national reputation for assisting clients with complex legal issues and helping them achieve their business goals."

The firm earned the No. 1 position in the United States as legal adviser for banks and thrift deals, according to SNL Financial, a prominent source for banking data and news; while its Corporate/M&A, Litigation and Real Estate practices were ranked first in Michigan by Chambers USA: America’s Leading Lawyers for Business. Honigman also leads all Michigan law firms in the number of attorneys named as 2011 Super Lawyers and Rising Stars.

Earning High Rankings

Today, the firm operates an international practice from its offices in Detroit, Oakland County, Lansing, Ann Arbor and Kalamazoo. With more than 230 attorneys and 350 staff, it has more lawyers and employees located in Detroit than any other law firm. Attorneys practice in more than 50 different areas of business law, with 15 of the firm’s key practice areas ranked among the nation’s most prominent law firms by U.S. News Media Group and Best Lawyers. The firm also was named to Detroit Free Press Top Workplaces 2011.

"Honigman prides itself on knowing its client’s business and interests, and by providing excellent, creative, pragmatic, timely and cost-effective results," Folytn says. “The firm devotes itself to earning the loyalty of its clients by placing the highest priority on their interests and acting in concert with them to attain the desired business outcomes.”

Good to Know

- Honigman Miller Schwartz and Cohn LLP is a nationally recognized law firm headquartered at 666 Woodward Ave., 2290 First National Building, in Detroit. The firm also has offices in Oakland County, Lansing, Ann Arbor and Kalamazoo.
- The firm will be hiring law students and recent graduates in 2012. It’s also seeking experienced attorneys for its corporate law practice.
- To find out more about the firm and its career opportunities, call 313-465-7000 or visit www.honigman.com

For six decades, Honigman Miller Schwartz and Cohn LLP has been one of the country’s leading law firms and it never had to leave its Michigan home to do so, according to Chairman and CEO David Folytn.

"Honigman successfully competes with some of the nation’s leading law firms due to the recognition of its extraordinary skill, client service ethic and its Midwest cost structure. Being located in Michigan, where expenses are not as high as in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and other large city locations, is an advantage," says Folytn, adding the firm’s Midwest roots also have been an asset when recruiting talent from top law firms in places such as New York, Boston and Washington, D.C.

"Over the last three years, Honigman has recruited 99 attorneys, who bring with them established talent and skills, as well as success in handling highly complex legal issues," he says.

The firm also has added 18 attorneys who joined shortly after law school graduation from Michigan schools, such as the University of Michigan and Wayne State University, helping keep exceptional young talent in the state, Folytn adds.

"Others, from law schools such as Harvard University, University of Pennsylvania, University of California Berkeley, Northwestern University and Indiana University, have been enticed to return to Michigan or move here for the first time to enjoy a Midwest lifestyle," Folytn says.

Job Opportunities

The firm’s commitment to hiring and retaining the best will continue in 2012. This summer, Honigman plans to hire 12 law students to work at its firm with the hope that they join Honigman’s ranks once they graduate, and will hire eight recent grads in September.

To meet strategic growth needs, particularly in its corporate law practice, which includes Intellectual Property, Mergers and Acquisitions, and Private Equity, the firm also will continue to recruit talented, experienced attorneys.

"While other companies have been forced to cut back employees and benefits, Honigman has made an unprecedented commitment of time and financial resources to ensure the success of its attorneys and staff," Folytn says.

That includes providing internal candidates the opportunity to advance their careers while remaining at Honigman, where current staff members fill 60 percent of open positions.

The firm also launched an in-depth study of its retention and recruiting programs, which resulted in developing a list of core competencies used to recruit and provide a basis for understanding the professional and personal development each person needs to be successful. That has led to leadership training, team building and executive coaching and numerous other professional development educational programs that give staff the tools they need to succeed.

The firm also is committed to the communities it serves and supports more than 100 charitable events and programs annually. Attorneys also undertake pro bono projects and serve on various nonprofit organization boards.

"Staff and attorneys alike are proud to be a part of Honigman’s long tradition as a downtown Detroit business and a generous contributor to improving the lives of others throughout Michigan," Folytn says.