

The 4 Firms In-House Counsel Fear The Most

Four firms strike fear in the hearts of corporate counsel more than any others thanks to their relentless approach to high-stakes litigation and a knack for building legal teams that go for the jugular, according to a new survey.

Jones Day, **Kirkland & Ellis LLP**, Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan LLP and Skadden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom LLP carry those traits in abundance, according to a survey by The BTI Consulting Group (Wellesley, Mass.), and were recognized as the “fearsome foursome” firms in the BTI Litigation Outlook 2014 report.

Drawing on hundreds of interviews with general counsel and law department heads, these firms stood out as those most likely to trigger dread in opposing counsel for their tenacity and their ability to anticipate their legal opposition’s strategy, said BTI President Michael Rynowecer.

“They have a take-no-prisoners attitude, and they don’t contemplate not winning,” Rynowecer said. “They bring the right people, the right chemistry. It’s all about the level of commitment, and not just in courtroom strategy, but in getting the right resources together.”

Kirkland & Ellis and Skadden appeared in previous “fearsome”

lists from BTI in 2012 and 2010, with Jones Day among the group last year. BTI also recognized four firms — Boies Schiller & Flexner LLP, Cravath Swaine & Moore LLP, Hogan Lovells US LLP, and Jenner & Block LLP — for an “Awesome Opponent” citation.

The recognitions were based on about 300 one-on-one interviews with litigation heads, general counsel and other law departments leads conducted between March and June, according to BTI. The represented companies had an average annual revenue of \$14.3 billion.

Kirkland & Ellis

Kirkland litigators helped further their reputation in the U.S. Supreme Court this year with the reversal of an appeals court ruling against client Mutual Pharmaceutical Co. that a generic-drug user can bring a state-law design defect claim against the manufacturer, the high court’s first major decision on generic-drug manufacturer liability since the 2011 *Mensing* ruling.

In October, Kirkland also won an en banc Federal Circuit ruling that the U.S. Congress’ efforts to withhold judicial salary adjustments previously established by law violated the Compensation Clause of Article III of the Constitution, overruling a precedent on the same issue in *Williams v. United States*.

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“Our litigators work very hard to serve our clients’ objectives, so it’s great to be recognized by corporate general counsel for the quality of our work,” said Jay Lefkowitz, a senior litigation partner in the firm’s New York office.