

US law firm of the year

WINNER

Debevoise & Plimpton

**Martin Frederic Evans, presiding partner;
James Scoville, London managing partner**
Bold hire caps fantastic year



(L-R) James Scoville and James Kiernan of Debevoise & Plimpton, with William Nell of Graham Gill

HIGHLY COMMENDED

DECHERT

**Barton J Winokur, chairman;
Steven Fogel, London managing partner**

As a business, Dechert is an outstanding performer. Not only has it been one of the fastest-growing international firms in London over the past decade on a headcount

2007 saw a number of high-profile deals and cases come to fruition for Debevoise & Plimpton.

basis, but its global turnover and profits growth on a compound basis over five years has easily eclipsed that of most of its peers.

HELLER EHRMAN

**Matthew Larrabee, chairman;
Brian Smith, London managing partner**

Heller Ehrman established its debut European office on the back of the audacious hire of a top-notch, five-partner technology team. The relocation of competition and real estate/hospitality specialists from the US completed the unusual office, which has also quickly established itself as a first port of call for venture capital work in the City.

Though historically not a firm that seeks the limelight, a number of recent achievements have converged, suggesting elite New York outfit Debevoise & Plimpton is among the boldest and most forward-thinking of the global players.

In particular, the profile of its London office came on in leaps and bounds in 2007 when it hired the former Attorney General, Lord Peter Goldsmith QC, to head its European litigation offering, one of the most genuinely innovative moves that any US firm has made in recent years. Lord Goldsmith's appointment was one of three partner-level hires in London in 2007, the most it has ever done in one year and an impressive achievement for a firm with a rigid worldwide lockstep.

Debevoise has also set a benchmark for US firms in London by being what is believed to be the first to hire a full-time pro bono manager. Florence Brocklesby joined the firm from Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer at the end of 2006.

On the fee-earning front, 2007 was also the year that a number of the firm's high-profile deals and cases finally came to fruition. Foremost among these was the culmination of the long-running and unique Eurotunnel restructuring, in which Debevoise's London and Paris offices featured in a prominent role, acting for two of the leading creditors, Oaktree Capital and Franklin Mutual. From its German office, meanwhile, it advised the audit committee of Siemens on its worldwide investigation into allegations of corruption, and in Moscow it was counsel to energy company RAO UES on the reorganisation and spin-off of OGK-5 and TGK-5.

SKADDEN, ARPS, SLATE, MEAGHER & FLOM

**Robert C Sheehan, executive partner;
Bruce Buck, head of Europe**

No US firm has won this award more than Skadden Arps and no US firm continues to worry Europe's elite transactional firms more than this, the US's biggest biller. Ever present on Europe's largest cross-border M&A transactions, in 2007 its average deal value across the continent topped over €2bn for the second year running.

STEPTOE & JOHNSON

**Roger Warin, chairman;
Brendan Patterson, London managing partner**

2001 was a difficult year for entering the London market via a merger with a technology firm. Nevertheless, Steptoe & Johnson has since proved that it has ample stomach for a fight. The firm has doubled its London turnover in five years, successfully diversifying the range of services it offers to form a quiet, successful City office.

SULLIVAN & CROMWELL

**H Rodgin Cohen, chairman;
Bill Plapinger, London managing partner**

The quality of Sullivan & Cromwell's work and client list wins plaudits the world over. Its M&A prowess, particularly in Europe, continues to go from strength to strength, and the hire of Tim Emmerson from Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy in London in early 2007 is a clear marker for its ambitions.

London, Europe and beyond...



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