

Competition team of the year

WINNER

Slaughter and May

John Boyce; Bertrand Louveaux

Flying the flag for British Airways

When a marquee client of the firm is frequently subject to an intense level of regulatory scrutiny, a pre-eminent antitrust practice is non-negotiable. BA has shrewdly relied on the talents of Slaughter and May's stellar team for some time and 2010 was a standout year for the practice. Not only did Boyce and Louveaux succeed in getting unconditional Phase I clearance from Brussels for BA's long-awaited merger with Iberia but most notably persuaded the European Commission to clear the airline's transatlantic joint venture with American Airlines and Iberia.

After two failed attempts to secure a transatlantic deal with US counterpart AA in 1997 and 2001, it was a case of third time lucky for BA. Slaughter and May teamed up with AA advisers Jones Day, and Clifford Chance for Iberia to offer commitments sufficient to address any competition concerns raised by the alliance, adopting the impressive stance of engaging with the European Commission to understand its concerns. The airlines' advisers even encouraged the Commission to issue a formal Statement of Objections, allowing the legal team to focus on the most serious competition concerns. All this was achieved despite the fiercely voiced concerns of rival operators, most notably Virgin Atlantic.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

BRICK COURT CHAMBERS

Jonathan Sumption QC

When the Competition Commission needed heavyweight advocacy to convince the Court of Appeal to overturn a crucial verdict from the Competition Appeals Tribunal, it looked no further than leading set Brick Court. Sumption QC brought his considerable talents to bear, successfully restoring the Commission's earlier ruling that required BAA to sell Gatwick, Stansted and either Edinburgh or Glasgow airports.

CLIFFORD CHANCE

Jenine Hulsmann

Competition issues were at the centre of the Everything Everywhere combination between T-Mobile and Orange, the most high-profile development in the mobile telecoms industry for a number of years. Hulsmann's role in acting for

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T-Mobile owner Deutsche Telekom involved intense negotiation with the EU and UK competition authorities and the UK telecoms regulator, Ofcom, all within a tight 35-day clearance schedule.



(L-R) Kim Archer of NetworkMMP with Slaughter and May's John Boyce and Anna Lyle-Smythe

FRESHFIELDS BRUCKHAUS DERINGER

Alex Potter

There are few rivals to Freshfields' outstanding European antitrust practice. Further evidence of the firm's considerable experience on complex, multiple parallel merger control proceedings could be seen in its role advising Sara Lee Corporation on an in-depth Phase II investigation in Europe to clear the sale of its international household and bodycare business to Unilever. The five-month review covered over 70 affected product markets in different countries across Europe.

GREENBERG TRAURIG MAHER

Stephen Tupper

Tupper has hit the ground running since joining GTM as a lateral hire in 2009, most notably representing Bristol Water in a crucial bet-the-company appeal to the Competition Commission last year. Following submissions from the GTM team, the Commission reset price-setting limits previously established by the regulator Ofwat, establishing the leading price review precedent in the regulated utility sectors in the process.

SIDLEY AUSTIN

Stephen Kinsella

Kinsella and his team provided crucial proactive commercial advice to allow its client eBay and other online sales platforms gain a 'first mover' advantage in promoting legislative reform. By leading an extensive Brussels-based campaign on behalf of the client, Sidley ensured the 2010 update to a European Regulation on vertical agreements was sufficiently amended to provide far more advantageous conditions for online retailers.

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Managing Partners Network

NetworkMP is delighted to have sponsored the Competition Team of the Year.

Congratulations to the winners, Slaughter and May, and to all the runners up.

GCs are taking on an increasingly strategic management role, while Managing Partners and marketers face continued financial pressures, demanding clients and a market that is both consolidating and – with ABSs imminent – diversifying at the same time. The Winmark Looking Glass report covers significant input from General Counsel from companies with an average revenue of in excess of £1bn, Managing Partners and Marketing Directors covering 6 of the top 10 and over a third of the top 100 law firms in the UK. To find out more, please contact:

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NetworkMP

NetworkMP is the leading network of Managing Partners. It has a wealth of insightful and innovative solutions and benefits from the economies of a shared intellect and free advice. To learn more, please contact:

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