

Morgan Lewis Nabs Former Orrick Employment Atty In NoCal

By Rachel Rippetoe

Law360 (June 29, 2021, 3:47 PM EDT) -- Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP has hired an employment attorney from Orrick Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP for its San Francisco and Silicon Valley offices, the firm said Monday.

Michael Weil, who was at Orrick for more than 18 years, joined Morgan Lewis as a partner in its employment practice. Weil has experience handling class actions, cases involving high-stakes trade secrets and restrictive covenant disputes.



Michael Weil

Weil told Law360 that he has worked with several Morgan Lewis attorneys over the years on various labor and employment matters and said he has "always been struck by how collaborative they work together as part of a larger team."

"Morgan Lewis is a labor and employment powerhouse," Weil said. "With California consistently keeping employers on their toes with changing regulations, coming to a firm that has the infrastructure set up to counsel companies through these changes was incredibly appealing."

At Orrick, Weil has successfully blocked the class certification in an action brought against CVS Pharmacy Inc. by an employee. Weil also helped successfully defend Oracle Corp. and Oracle executive Adrian Jones in Hewlett-Packard Corp.'s California state-court case accusing Jones of stealing trade secrets by downloading the contents of his laptop before resigning from HP and joining Oracle.

Weil said that Morgan Lewis has a "tremendous growth story" with its labor and employment group, having added several partners coming from major employment agencies.

In October 2020, Morgan Lewis launched its workplace government relations practice with experts from the nation's three major labor and employment agencies — the U.S. Department of Labor, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the National Labor Relations Board.

"From a newcomer perspective, the firm definitely seems to be on an upward trajectory and something I'm very excited to be a part of," Weil said.

Weil said the pandemic has fueled most of the recent trends he's seen in employment litigation, adding that he has been working on numerous employee-poaching and mobility disputes, driven by employees

moving to different cities and states after working from home during the pandemic.

"Northern California clients have also been tapping into a nationwide talent pool of lateral hires and allowing those hires to work remotely, which often requires Northern California employers to grapple with the laws of many other states, not just California law," he said.

This particularly affects clients in the technology, biotechnology and life sciences sectors, he said.

Weil said he expects the next few years to be "truly transformative" for employers, with post-pandemic cultural shifts driving expanded discrimination and diversity guidelines.

"It will be a sea of change for most industries," Weil said. "The global pandemic changed everything for employers who are now faced with navigating return to workplace protocol and all that entails with workplace safety."

Weil graduated from the UCLA School of Law, where he also earned an undergraduate degree.

"The California employment legal landscape has seen many changes stemming from the pandemic and regulatory and legislative updates," Grace Speights, head of Morgan Lewis' global labor and employment practice, said in a statement Monday. "Michael will join a team of 80 labor and employment lawyers across five California offices to help companies manage the state's increasingly complex legal, compliance and human resources challenges."

The firm also added another labor and employment partner this week, Vivien Yu, who was previously at Baker McKenzie. Yu will join the firm in the Asia Pacific later this summer as a partner focused on assisting multinational companies in creating and maintaining immigration and mobility programs for their workforces.

Morgan Lewis has more than 375 labor and employment lawyers across the world.

--Additional reporting by Carolina Bolado and Alexis Shanes. Editing by Gemma Horowitz.