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— BEST LAW FIRM —

CORPORATE  
PRACTICES

## In It for the Long Haul

### MORGAN LEWIS' M&A TEAM INSPIRES TRUST FROM THE START

**By Ben Present  
Of the Legal Staff**

The M&A team at Morgan, Lewis & Bockius has a secret weapon: The rest of the law firm.

Because the 58 lawyers in the Pennsylvania M&A practice group have a tendency to stick around, working with clients from the inception of their business ventures through a strategic acquisition or transaction, the firm's other corporate practices tend to come in handy.

"It's our secret sauce for everything," said David A. Gerson, who heads up the Philadelphia business and finance practice for the firm.

If you ask Gerson, Morgan Lewis is synonymous with corporate counsel. Whether it's an emerging business plan, a private equity client or an M&A transaction, Morgan Lewis lawyers are able to see the big picture, predicting business outcomes beyond whatever deal is on the table.

That's not to say the deals on the table are small potatoes. In 2011 and 2012, lawyers guided online retailer GSI through a \$2.4 bil-

lion acquisition by eBay and represented pharmaceutical giant AmerisourceBergen Corp. through three transactions of half-a-billion dollars or more.

The finance and M&A team is also continuing to grow two leading subpractices: an outsourcing team and a group of lawyers working on emerging business and technology.

Whether it's a brand new arm of a company or one that a business is severing off, Morgan Lewis' outsourcing experts have come to be recognized as a national practice, Gerson said.

In the emerging business subpractice, Gerson added, Morgan Lewis focuses on guiding its clients — technology, life sciences and clean-tech companies — from the start-up phase through some type of strategic deal or acquisition.

**While the M&A group boasts no shortage of big-deal clout, it's still the firm's role as trusted day-to-day advisers that attorneys at Morgan Lewis say sets them apart.**

Take, for example, Aquion Energy, which Morgan Lewis represented in a \$30 million Series C venture round in September 2011. The sodium ion battery company is now developing a state-of-the-art manufacturing plant, expected

this year, which will create 500-plus jobs and churn out thousands of batteries a day.

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As Gerson put it: "It's one thing to hang out a shingle and say, 'We're going to represent emerging growth companies.' It's another to be able to have the resources under your roof to see ahead and integrate the things they're going to need as they expand on their path."

Clients agree.

"That's absolutely been our experience," said Brian D. Zuckerman, the senior vice president, general counsel and secretary for Pep Boys, a longtime Morgan Lewis client. "While they certainly have the depth and expertise in the sophisticated matters, they're also shoulder-to-shoulder with us for pragmatic business advice."

For example, Zuckerman said, when Pep Boys did a large-scale loan transaction, company attorneys did all the document work in-house but Morgan Lewis stepped in and coordinated all the necessary legal opinions.

"Some firms are kind of reluctant to do that kind of work," Zuckerman said. •

— FINALIST —

FINANCE  
AND M&A

#### Morgan Lewis' Pa. Finance/M&A Department

58 Department Size  
(Headcount)

18.5 Department as Percent  
of PA Headcount

19 Department as Percent  
of PA Revenue

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