

MIDSIZE HOT LIST

A SPECIAL REPORT

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AXINN, VELTROP & HARKRIDER

Now in its 15th year, Axinn, Veltrop & Harkrider has established itself as a serious player in the antitrust and intellectual property fields. Operating from offices in New York, Washington and Hartford, Conn., the firm has not significantly changed its headcount since 2010 — 53 then, compared with 55 now. Still, the firm drew business from big names during 2011, especially within the technology and pharmaceutical industries.

For example, Google Inc. hired partners Michael Keeley and John Harkrider to protect confidential business data provided to the U.S. Department of Justice during its investigation of AT&T Inc.'s proposed acquisition of T-Mobile USA Inc. Google turned over the information in response to a government demand, and in September the Axinn Veltrop team demanded the right to review any documents that the government might consider releasing publicly. The motion is pending.

It was not the first time Google sought the firm's counsel. Axinn Veltrop guided the company through the Justice Department's April 2011 approval of its acquisition of ITA Software Inc. And the firm represented Google in its \$12.5 billion acquisition of Motorola Mobility Inc., which faced intense scrutiny from both U.S. and European antitrust officials.

Elsewhere, the firm represented French businessman Bernard Tapie during negotiations to buy Full Tilt Poker Ltd. for \$80 million after the government seized the alleged Ponzi scheme. Partner Behnam Dayanim handled the assignment. The two parties signed an initial acquisition agreement in September 2011, contingent on a resolution of the accusations against the company.

Pharmaceutical companies are regular clients. Axinn attorneys replaced a firm that had been working on an intellectual property dispute between Pfizer Inc. and Actavis Group for eight years. Retained by Actavis roughly 18 months before trial, a team led by partner Francis Morrison reached a settlement two weeks into the trial after having secured the exclusion of several Pfizer expert witnesses.

Not all was smooth sailing in 2011. In January, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit rejected the firm's argument on behalf of Omnicare Inc. that UnitedHealth Group Inc. and PacifiCare Health