



The Thomson Reuters Institute

*proudly presents*

**The 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Law Firm COO & CFO Forum**  
*Charting Chasms and Crests in the Current Legal Landscape*

November 2-3, 2023

Conrad Washington  
950 New York Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20001

Co-Chairs

**Jeffrey P. Connor**, *Chief Financial Officer*, McGuireWoods LLP  
**James Jones**, *Senior Fellow, Center on Ethics and the Legal Profession*, Georgetown University Law Center  
**Gretta Rusanow**, *Head of Advisory Services, Law Firm Group*, Citi Global Wealth at Work

PROGRAM (all times local)

**Day One**

**Thursday, November 2**

**8:00am - 9:00am**      **Breakfast and Registration**

**9:00am - 9:15am**      **Opening Remarks**

**9:15am - 10:45am**      **Of Mountains and Valleys: The State of the US Legal Market**  
On a cautious descent from the prosperous peaks of the past few years, the legal market seems to be settling back into a timid yet resilient pace. Declining demand enjoined with record-low productivity have created crevices in profitability. Posed against rising expenses and the impact of inflation on rates, is the industry now facing unfavorable conditions in its trek through the tumultuous economy? If so, how long should law firms expect such conditions to last? Join us for our annual, data-driven examination of the threats and opportunities impacting the legal landscape.

Presenters:

**James Jones**, *Senior Fellow, Center on Ethics and the Legal Profession*, Georgetown University Law Center  
**Gretta Rusanow**, *Head of Advisory Services, Law Firm Group*, Citi Global Wealth at Work

**10:45am – 11:00am**      **Morning Break**

**11:00am - 12:00pm**

**Thursday Keynote Panel**

**“Oh, What Tangled Webs...”: Instability on the World’s Political Stage**

In response to an attack that some are comparatively identifying as the nation’s 9/11, Israel has declared war on Hamas. As Israel, Gaza and the surrounding region deals with the pains of war, the UN warns of a pending ‘abyss in the middle east’, noting that the new conflict threatens a region settled upon a delicate sense of calm atop past political volatility. Mixed with the embers of the pandemic, a sustained strain on supply chains, rising global inflation, and a continued war in Ukraine, is this latest conflict further evidence of the fracturing mantle of international accord? Join us as we welcome a panel comprised of political journalists and analysts in a conversation around the current state of affairs and what potential effects might be seen in the business landscape given political tensions amid the world’s more influential nation-states.

Moderator:

**Axel Threlfall**, *Editor-at-Large*, Reuters

Panelists:

**John Sinclair Foley**, *Finance Editor*, Reuters Breakingviews

**Heather Timmons**, *White House Editor*, Reuters

**Richard Wike**, *Director*, *Global Attitudes Research*, Pew Research Center

**12:00pm - 1:00pm**

**Networking Luncheon**

**1:00pm - 2:15pm**

**Breakout Sessions**

*In these facilitated breakouts, Forum participants will have the opportunity to share practical ideas with leading firms and industry peers.*

Breakout #1:

**Winding Vines of Ivy: Exploring Trends in Continued Partnership Growth**

Though costs are rising, and business opportunities have been squeezed, the competition for top talent continues to entwine itself around the legal industry. Per the Citi Law Firm Leaders Survey, firms have reported the anticipation of growth among their equity partners, which marks a shift from years past. Such growth is expected primarily via internal promotions with lateral moves coming in a close second. These trends might be attributed to the ability of making more informed hiring decisions or an increased focus on the integration of laterals. Yet is it possible that this is simply a ‘catch up’ from promotions paused during the pandemic? Is growth being seen in non-equity positions as well?

Moderator:

**Jeremy Linehan**, *President*, Profit Recovery Partners, LLC

Panelists:

**LeeAnn Black**, *Chief Operating Officer*, Latham & Watkins LLP

**Greg Hamman**, *Chief Data Officer*, Decipher Investigative Intelligence

**Trevor Varnes**, *Chief Financial Officer*, Perkins Coie LLP

Breakout #2:

**The Forest Through the Trees: Navigating Data Privacy Regulation Changes**

California’s consumer protection law went into full effect on January 1<sup>st</sup> with other states following suit in the enactment of their own protections. With the US Congress’

consideration of the American Data Privacy and Protection Act last year and expectations that a bill will be passed soon, a national mandate on data privacy could be on the horizon. Given the rise in cyberattacks in the legal industry, increased privacy investigation continues to weigh heavily on law firms. Under such mounting pressure, how are firms reacting to increased regulation in this space? Given that domestic changes to data privacy fall alongside those already mandated by the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), what additional actions are firms pursuing to balance regulatory pressures from two differing fronts? Join us in a discussion about the evolving changes within privacy regulation and ensuing effects for law firms.

Moderator:

**Philip Kelvin**, *Co-Founder and CEO*, Tranch

Panelists:

**Daniel Garrie**, *Co-Founder*, Law & Forensics LLC

**Laura Long**, *Chief Operating Officer*, HansonBridgett

**Joseph J. Palermo**, *Chief Operating Officer*, Crowell & Moring LLP

Breakout #3:

### **A Climate Changed: Exploring Improvements in Billing and Collections**

According to TR's Financial Insights, though they had made steady progress upwards, realization rates have either leveled or dropped in different areas of the market over the last year. In a related observation, the Citi Hildebrandt Client Advisory found that collection cycles have lengthened by 3.7%, due, in part, to client payment delays. Though some firms are falling back into pre-pandemic billing and collections behaviors, others are exploring potential improvements such as increased headcounts in billing and collection staff or inviting progress payments from clients to boost realization numbers. Join us as our expert faculty discuss improvements being made in billing and collection efforts, how new AI tools may make things better (or worse) for firms when it comes to pricing pressures and explore other ways firms are focusing on boosting realization rates.

Moderator:

**Warren McCann**, *Funding Director, Corporate Counsel*, Law Finance Group

Panelists:

**Christopher Ende**, *Chief Revenue Officer*, King & Spalding LLP

**William E. Sansone**, *CPA, Partner*, Withum

**David C. Zimbrick**, *Chief Financial Officer*, Ogletree Deakins

**2:15pm - 2:30pm**

**Break**

**2:30pm - 3:30pm**

### **River Deep, Mountain High: Navigating Strategic Pathways to "Future Proofing" Law Firms**

In between the rocky heights of an unstable geopolitical stage and uninhibited economy, law firms are riding in a river canyon of rapid changes, all while navigating swells of unbridled technological growth and ever-evolving workforce trends. While smaller firms found themselves in smoother currents, larger firms found it more difficult to navigate their titan-sized operations around the rocky waters of the past few years. Given the continued swift shifts in the industry currents, should firms be looking towards the shore of specific strategies like focusing on specialization, hiring highly skilled staff, reducing office spaces and retooling technology or would it be wiser to immediately insulate their vessels from unseen economic undercurrents? Join us in a strategy-focused discussion on balancing current issues of urgency alongside the greater goal of 'future proofing' one's organization.

Moderator:  
**David Chun**, *CEO*, Equilar

Panelists:  
**Jeffrey P. Connor**, *Chief Financial Officer*, McGuireWoods LLP  
**David Schaefer**, *Co-Chief Operating Officer, Managing Director*, Calibrate  
**Kate Stonestreet**, *Global Chief Operating Officer*, Baker McKenzie

**3:30pm – 3:45pm**

**Break**

**3:45pm – 5:00pm**

**Breakout Sessions**

*Please join us for three simultaneous roundtables intended to foster robust conversation among attendees.*

Breakout #1:

**The Money Tree: Investments in Professional Talent Development**

For the past several years, the competition to attract top legal talent has been nothing short of fierce. Law firms have been forced to adopt costly and creative methods in attracting laterals and associates to the firm, but what changes, if any, are being employed around law firm staff? The 2023 State of Legal Market Report noted a decline in total number of staff positions, an increase in the total cost of professional staff and an increase in cost per staff, suggesting that firms may be cutting support staff to invest in those with targeted skills. Given such shifts, what roles are firms targeting for new hires and how are firms approaching investments in professional talent development, especially if they are elevating staff to new roles from within? In what ways, if any, are these investments expected to save firms money in the long run? Join us in an exploration of hiring trends and talent development focused on professional staff, aimed at creating greater efficiency for the firm.

Moderator:  
**Jen Sander**, *Director, Enterprise Marketing, Events & Operations*, Thomson Reuters

Panelists:  
**Esther D. Bowers**, *Chief Practice Innovation Officer*, Honigman LLP  
**Jennifer Korff**, *Chief Operating Officer*, Brown Rudnick LLP  
**Bob Seabolt**, *Partner and Chief Operating Officer*, Scott+Scott LLP

Breakout #2:

**The New Temperature of a Cold War: Cybersecurity Concerns in Turbulent Times**

Cybersecurity has been a top priority for law firm C-suite officers for some time, but such threats constantly evolve. Fraud tactics have become more sophisticated and are targeting sensitive areas, such as payment systems, with more fervor than ever. Given the polarized geopolitical stage, analysts warn of the possibility of increased threats such as cyber espionage, but in what ways, if any, are new threats expected to target law firms specifically? Join us as we welcome C-suite leadership and cybersecurity experts in a frank discussion around the current landscape of potential threats within the legal industry.

Moderator:  
**Daniel Garrie**, *Co-Founder*, Law & Forensics LLC

Panelists:  
**Bob Bratt**, *Chief Operating Officer and Executive Director, US Operations*, DLA Piper LLP

**Kelly Geary**, *National Practice Leader, Executive Risk & Cyber/Professional Service Claims & Coverage Leader*, Epic Insurance Brokers & Consultants  
**Carol Rubin**, *Chief Operating Officer*, Jenner & Block LLP

Breakout #3

**An Epic Odyssey: The Role of Firm Leadership in Client Management**

In an ever-evolving legal landscape, law firm leaders are becoming increasingly vital in the decisive nuances of client relations. As loyal clients ask firms to do more from less, it is important for firm leadership to consider how pivoting their firm's operations towards more efficient support alternatives and strategically managing their client accounts will not only deepen their own acumen of the relationships with their clients but widen the firm's competitive edge. Join us to explore ways in which law firm leaders can foster a culture that prioritizes long-term client relationships over transactional engagements, leverage support options and cutting-edge technology to streamline processes and increase efficiencies, and how shifts in internal operational strategies can create opportunities for tailored client experiences.

Moderator:

**Michelle Connolly**, *Chief Marketing Officer*, Epiq

Panelists:

**Steve Bell**, *Principal*, LawVision

**Travis Larson**, *Chief Administrative Officer*, Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP

**Rob Morris**, *National Chief Operating Officer*, Borden Ladner Gervais LLP

**5:00pm – 6:00pm**

**Thursday Night Reception**

Please join us for cocktails and canapés as we wrap up the day's proceedings.

**Day Two**

**Friday, November 3**

**8:30am - 9:30am**

**Partner Talks & Breakfast**

*Please join us for consecutive 12-minute presentations designed for law firm executives.*

Partner Talk #1

**Shared Assets: Enhancing Financial Efficiency in Law Firms through Maximizing Partner Satisfaction**

Set between the pressures of increased competition, rising talent cost and evolving client demands, the continued pursuit of cost-savings strategies for law firms is crucial. One often untapped area of fiscal conservation centers on increasing opportunities for partner satisfaction through key partnership owned benefits. This session aims to provide valuable insights and practice recommendations for law firm leaders looking to enhance partner retention efforts while offering effective retirement supports that optimize financial efficiency for both partners and the firm alike.

Presenters:

**Mike Cohn**, CLU, ChFC, *Area President*, Cohn Financial Group, LLC

**Ann Marie Liotta**, CPA, *U.S. Wealth Strategist*, Cohn Financial Group, LLC

Partner Talk #2

### **Global Impact: Exploring Business Continuity and Growth through Offshoring Strategies**

Accelerated by the pandemic, reaching people across the world is now as easy as sending an email or instant message. From financial powerhouses to top AmLaw firms, leading organizations are embracing global teams and support structures. This presentation will take a brief dive into the benefits of offshoring and how global teams can not only reduce operational costs, but also positively impact organizational culture, market share, and profits.

Presenter:

**Murray Joslin**, *Executive Vice President, Creative & Business Solutions*, Integreon

Partner Talk #3

### **Is the Handshake Dead?: Exploring Client Trends in Data Driven Relationship Building**

Data is King and seemingly isn't losing that crown any time soon. This fact has led to clients choosing legal representation based on data driven decisions (predictable bills, the right experience, etc.) which is a far cry from the relationship driven decisions of the past. With this pattern continuing to grow, especially with the increased reach of Generative AI, will the human touch ultimately lose out to technology?

Presenter:

**Ashley Gibbs**, *Director of Product Advisors*, Litera

Partner Talk #4

### **Gold Standard: How to Build a Successful, Cost-Effective Support Model**

Challenges around administrative support were accelerated by an increase in hybrid operations and will be, yet again, by a wider adoption of AI. Even in the face of such risk, most firms are still unable to get the right task to the right resource. Their difficulty in assessing the true utilization of their support staff continues to linger, all while administrative burdens on attorneys is increasing. How will firms meet the future without the right support services model? Utilizing benchmark data would empower firms to uncover time and cost-saving opportunities within their administrative functions. Join us in an exploration of how firms that embrace data-driven decision-making to structure a new, measurably successful, and cost-effective support model that is future-ready.

Presenter:

**Rob Mattern**, *President and Founder*, Mattern

**9:30am – 9:45am**

**Break**

**9:45am - 10:45am**

### **Neural Networking: The Growing Influence of Artificial Intelligence in Law Firms**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been on the horizon for several years, but with the wider trial of Chat GPT, almost everyone with a connection to the internet can now utilize it. Though developers note that the technology is still in its infancy, most are saying that we should expect AI solutions to fall alongside everyday tech like search engines in matter of months (*not years*). However, some firms have already flagged security and ethical concerns over using AI tools on client matters. Given the frustrations of on-going fits and starts within legal tech and challenges to compete for top tech talent with the rest of the market, is the legal industry ready and willing to adopt AI, especially as its presence becomes more pervasive within current industry tools? If so, how are firms utilizing the technology and where do considerations such as the crossroads between ethical use and implementation meet?

Moderator:

**George Casey**, *Principal, Data Scientist, Advanced Analytics*, RSM US LLP

Panelists:

**Andrew Gastwirth**, *Chief Innovation Officer*, DLA Piper

**Kate Orr**, *Global Head of Practice Innovation*, Orrick Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP

**Mike Raposa Jr.**, *Senior Vice President – North America*, RR Donnelley

**Zach Warren**, *Technology and Innovation Insights Lead*, Thomson Reuters

**10:45am – 11:00am**

**Break**

**11:00am - 12:00pm**

**Winds of Change: Exploring the Continued Evolution of a ‘New Normal’ Legal Workforce**

Earlier this year, the Biden Administration ended federal emergency pandemic supports, signaling an unofficial ‘return to normal’ in the US. Yet the very definition of ‘normal’ has been vastly altered by the pandemic. Two years later the legal industry, like others, is still trying to navigate issues of security and space alongside cultural changes and new client needs, continues to grapple with challenges inherent to new ways of working. With the pressure to mentor and train associates, create collaborative client teams and remain attentive to work/life balance, firms still find themselves navigating employee relation roads never traveled. Join our expert faculty as they explore issues and solutions of human capital management in a continuously evolving ‘new’ workplace.

Moderator:

**Fred Kohm**, *National Managing Partner for the Services Industry*, Grant Thornton LLP

Panelists:

**Anthony Davies**, *Chief Revenue Officer*, Forrest Solutions

**Mat Rosswood**, *Chief Operating Officer*, Kramer Levin Naftalis & Frankel LLP

**Allan Thompson**, *Chief Administrative Officer*, Mayer Brown