

# Innovative Solutions

An Interview with Anna T. Pinedo,  
Partner, Morrison & Foerster LLP

**EDITORS' NOTE** Anna Pinedo was named to Crain's New York Business' *Forty Under 40* list, and to Hispanic Business' *100 Most Influential Hispanics* list, as well as a leading capital markets lawyer by Chambers USA, Chambers Global, IFLR 1000 Guide to Leading Lawyers, and The Legal 500. She is a member of the American Bar Association's Committee on the Federal Regulation of Securities and a member of the Task Force on the Future of Securities Regulation. Pinedo works with a number of organizations focused on Hispanic and women's issues and is a former recipient of the National Organization for Women's Women of Power and Influence Award. Pinedo received a BSFS from Georgetown University and a JD from the University of Chicago Law School.



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layoffs, and that's always difficult and disruptive. It has also affected the level of risk they're willing to take or what kinds of deals they're willing to do. So for every transaction we do, there's a lot more worrying and a lot more time spent analyzing risks and rewards before clients decide to go forward with a deal. On the new products side, the popular business press has written much about how some of the credit crunch is the result of financial innovations, and I don't think that's true, but it does create an atmosphere of conservatism or cautiousness.

**How often does your work cross international borders?**

Almost all of our offerings are international. A lot of our derivatives and new financial-product work is London-based or -originated,

that helps us track our own precedents and manage our internal intellectual capital. It's a knowledge management system. We invest a lot in those kinds of things, with the hopes of saving our clients money and saving our associates' time, because we won't need to reinvent the wheel each and every time.

In addition, because we're international, we tend to staff deals across offices; technology enables that with video conferencing, for instance. More and more, clients are interested in having dedicated extranets, where we share posted material on a secure network to communicate back and forth with our clients. Of course, we're always carrying our BlackBerrys and phones and are dangerously addicted to those.

**How did you first become interested in law?**

I had thought about going into the State Department, and I went to Georgetown's School of Foreign Service, but I decided early on that law would be more interesting to me. In law school, I knew I wanted to do something transactional as opposed to related to litigation. I never dreamed of being in the courtroom or giving a closing argument. I was always interested in economics and commercial transactions.

**Are sufficient opportunities available for women in the legal profession? And how important is a diverse workforce to Morrison & Foerster's culture?**

Vault has ranked us as the number one firm for diversity for five out of the past six years. So that's part and parcel of our culture. However, there are still very few women partners at major law firms, and there are even fewer women partners who do the kind of work that I do. Many women leave the profession early. Generations of associates come in trying to find a work/life balance, so they don't expect to make partner. There are likewise very few women in managing director roles at investment banks, although I've run across a handful who have had long, successful careers in banking.

**What would those who have worked closely with you say of that experience?**

I would hope they have enjoyed it. I like to give people a lot of responsibility. Because I do a million things at the same time, work on many deals with lots of different clients, and travel a lot, working with me can be challenging, but I try to make sure people have fun. I enjoy what I do a great deal. So I hope that comes through. ●

I work with those clients to come up with new financial products.

**COMPANY BRIEF** Founded in San Francisco in 1883, and with more than 1,000 lawyers in 17 offices around the world, Morrison & Foerster LLP ([www.mofo.com](http://www.mofo.com)) offers clients legal services in business and litigation. The firm is distinguished by its expertise in finance, life sciences, and technology; its litigation skills; and its reach across the Pacific Rim, particularly in Japan and China. The firm was also named to Fortune's 2006 list of Best Companies to Work For, as well as American Lawyer's A-List (2004-2008), and for many years running, it has been among Vault, Inc.'s top-rated law firms for diversity.

**What are your key areas of focus at Morrison & Foerster?**

I spend most of my time doing securities and derivatives work. Most of the clients I work with are investment banks or other financial institutions. I work with those clients to come up with new financial products that achieve a particular economic goal or have a beneficial regulatory or tax effect, or we come up with a new securities-offering methodology. That is a niche our firm has carved out for itself – developing new financial products and innovative solutions.

**How much of an effect has volatility in the financial sector had on your practice?**

We don't have a mortgage-backed securitization practice. So, happily, we've been a little insulated from that, but it has clearly affected our clients. A lot of investment banks have had big

so I spend a lot of time working with bankers based in London, as well as with my partners in London.

**Does your financial expertise lend itself best to certain industries?**

It works across industries. Over the years, I have spent a lot of my time doing securities work for financial institutions, banks, insurance companies, specialty finance companies, consumer finance companies, and community banks, but I have also done a lot for technology and biotech companies. The issues are different for each sector, but all of them are in need of cash for one reason or another. So from that perspective, there are similar concerns and issues.

**How does technology impact your practice?**

Internally, the firm is very reliant on technology. We have some proprietary technology systems, including Answer Base, which has won a number of awards. It's a Google-like system