



Built for Change

An Interview with Richard A. Rosenbaum,
President, Greenberg Traurig, LLP

EDITORS' NOTE *Richard Rosenbaum has been a member of Greenberg Traurig since 1985. Originally in the South Florida market, he returned to his roots in 1996 to build and manage the firm's New York office, now approximately 300-lawyers strong. Rosenbaum has also played a key role over the years in developing and overseeing a dozen of the firm's other U.S. offices and its overseas operations in Europe and Asia. He is a long-term member of the firm's Executive Committee and counsels clients in the real estate, entertainment, media, technology, investment, and finance industries. He obtained a BA from the State University of New York, Stony Brook, in 1975 and a JD from St. John's University School of Law in 1982.*



Richard A. Rosenbaum

COMPANY BRIEF *Greenberg Traurig, LLP (www.gtllaw.com), is an international, full-service law firm with more than 1,800 attorneys and governmental affairs professionals in the United States, Europe, and Asia. The firm was selected as the 2007 USA Law Firm of the Year by Chambers and Partners. The firm has strategic alliances with the following independent law firms: Olswang, in London, Brussels and Berlin; Studio Santa Maria, in Milan and Rome; and Hayabusa Asuka Law Offices, in Tokyo.*

Are you happy with the awareness and understanding of Greenberg Traurig today, and has the message of the size and scope of what the firm provides effectively gotten out?

Greenberg Traurig is a very large and diverse firm and has been one of the fastest-growing firms in the country for a number of years. We are extremely well known for being a business-oriented, client-focused law firm, and certain sectors and certain locations are especially prominent. We have been in New York for about 14 years, and our name recognition has been steadily growing here.

Is it challenging to differentiate in this market, and can you really show in your space what makes a certain brand unique?

We have focused very much on keeping bureaucracy to a minimum and staying nimble and adaptive to change notwithstanding our size. So the number one area in which we've

differentiated ourselves is in culture. Number two, we have stood out for quality and for market penetration, especially in certain industries and locations. No other law firm has our kind of diverse platform in the U.S. growth markets and major financial and government centers or our penetration in the real estate, media/entertainment, government, and Latin American areas. Our focus on the middle-market corporate client has also distinguished us.

Within the firm, there's a focus on "built for change" as part of the Greenberg Traurig culture. What is the meaning of that, and how does it penetrate the firm?

Our size, unusually broad practices and locations, and diversity of our professionals help us quickly adapt to every change. We also empower individuals on the ground to make decisions that affect their practices and their businesses without going through a long-winded political process or a rigid obstacle course to get what they need done.

You have a concept, "3D lawyer." What does that mean? And how important has that been in terms of attracting talent?

A "3D lawyer" is one with a strong business sense, one who can understand that our clients come here to get solutions to their problems in the real world and not just provide an academic answer. This attracts a unique breed of high-quality talent to the firm.

Is it critical to have consistent messaging and seamless service globally, or are your messages and service offerings based on the local market?

There are things that are unique from market to market in terms of the nature of a practice, pricing, and the like, and we take those into account. However, you need to impose institutional standards of quality and your value system so that the brand consistency is there. To do that, we have strong national practice groups in each of the disciplines to integrate and maintain the highest-quality standards and to deal with any issues we see in that regard. We also have a Commitment to Excellence Program, which involves about 80 of our lawyers throughout the practices who make sure that training is occurring and that quality standards are being met.

How critical are corporate responsibility and community involvement to the firm? And from a leadership point of view, how important is it for you to have engaged people in those areas?

A commitment to the community has been an integral element of our firm in every market since its earliest days. As we have gone into each community from coast to coast, and even overseas, we have made that point. We have individual lawyers in the firm who devote a substantial amount of their time to pro bono work, and we have people involved in every aspect of the culture and the charitable activities of every community we're in.

Do you worry, given the economic challenges in the U.S., that New York is losing its edge to places like London and parts of Asia? And does New York have the competitiveness to keep its leading position as a financial capital?

With the government risk in many places and the cyclical nature of many other markets, New York is going to be a hard place to beat, especially given the talent base and creativity here. But there is an understanding that with all the wealth and business opportunities that have been created in the world, we have to adjust. And we have to create relationships and networks throughout the world. New York will always be a major center, so important to the whole firm.

How challenging is it for you personally to still have the time for regular client interaction? And do you consider that to be a key focus for you?

My personal relationship with clients has continued to be advisory and relationship oriented. I deal with their major issues and strategic planning. This allows me to best understand their changing needs.

As you look to the future, what are the key goals that you and the firm must accomplish in order to continue your growth?

I feel like our best years, particularly for this law firm, are in our future, and so we are constantly focused on what we can do better. And it isn't going to be about me. We are a firm that is about many people. My job is to enable, empower, and effectuate the ideas of so many others; to not be an obstacle to what they are doing; and to continue to aggressively build the law firm in every respect, particularly here in New York. ●