

Freedom Within A Framework

An Interview with Richard A. Rosenbaum, Executive Chairman, Greenberg Traurig, LLP

EDITORS' NOTE Richard Rosenbaum is the Executive Chairman of Greenberg Traurig, a unified international law firm of more than 2,850 attorneys in 49 locations around the globe. He has long been considered a thought and change leader in the broader legal profession. He joined the firm in 1985 as its 90th lawyer and has since been integrally involved in forming and successfully executing the strategies that have led to the firm's growth and unique culture across the United States, Europe and the Middle East, Latin America, and Asia. He closely guards the firm's long-term core values while still aggressively navigating ever-changing times. Rosenbaum has always put the firm's clients and people first, understanding that a law firm leader works for them, first and foremost. He is proud of his work in founding the firm's renowned and wide-ranging "commitment to excellence" program, which ensures that all these values remain core to the firm's daily practice and global brand for many years to come.



Richard A. Rosenbaum

FIRM BRIEF Greenberg Traurig, LLP (gtlaw.com) has more than 2,850 attorneys in 49 locations in the United States, Europe and the Middle East, Latin America, and Asia. The firm is a 2024 BTI "Leading Edge Law Firm" for delivering on client expectations for the future and is consistently among the top firms on the Am Law Global 100 and NLJ 500.

How do you describe Greenberg Traurig's culture?

A strong culture is the cornerstone that defines Greenberg Traurig. It's been at our core since we began in Miami in 1967 and has been woven through every step of the firm's

evolution. Our culture is built on empowerment, collaboration, meritocracy, and respect for the individual, and is a significant factor in what sets us apart. Greenberg Traurig's lawyers and professional staff are given freedom within a framework, which isn't just a tagline or catchy slogan; our thoughtfully crafted, decentralized structure empowers our lawyers on the ground to think independently, use business sense, and build trust among colleagues and clients, all while embracing a sense of purpose.

This kind of team building doesn't happen in a vacuum. Rather, we meticulously and patiently bring together the sharpest minds from varied backgrounds around the world who share our passion for hard work, resilience in the face of challenges, and creativity in exploring new strategies. When you bring business-minded people together united by this paradigm, the results can be spectacular.

How critical has it been to maintain culture as Greenberg Traurig has grown in size and scale?

Unlike many firms, we've chosen organic growth over mergers or acquisitions that might dilute who we are. This approach, which has been our strategy for more than half a century, can be time-consuming and challenging, but it has allowed us to bring in stellar lawyers across the globe that understand the unique opportunity and platform we offer. Each Greenberg Traurig location, each practice, each shareholder and associate who joins us becomes part of a culture rooted in excellence and connection. It's the ideal balance between individual autonomy and being part of something bigger than us. This deliberate approach allows us to remain agile,

build loyalty, and serve our clients with precision and efficiency. This is how we stay true to who we are, no matter how much we expand.

I've always believed that the strength of an organization lies in its ethos and values, not just its size or revenue. As we've grown as one global firm with more than 2,850 attorneys across 49 locations, preserving our culture has been essential to our success. Growth without a supportive culture is hollow.

Our expansion has always been intentional and strategic. We don't chase trends or seek growth for its own sake through mergers. Instead, we identify the right people and teams in the markets we feel are ripe to explore. Whether that's opening offices in Munich, Germany; San Diego, California; the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; or the United Arab Emirates, we focus on lawyers who have roots in their region, are respected in their field, and share our values. This organic approach ensures that we remain united in purpose, even as we broaden our global reach. Each new Greenberg Traurig location continues to strengthen our ability to serve our global client base across virtually every industry.

How important is it to balance the advances in technology with the need to keep the human touch and personal relationships that Greenberg Traurig is known for?

Through every decade, we have embraced cutting-edge technologies for the benefit of our clients. That is the lens through which we look at every tech breakthrough. While LLMs and AI are ubiquitous now, we were exploring their efficiencies before many had the first clue how to utilize them. There is no question that technology is transforming the legal profession at a rapid pace, but as much as it's a game-changer, it's only part of the equation. The human touch, the relationships

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we build, the trust we earn, and the empathy we show are irreplaceable. We are always mindful of the risks associated with new technologies. We apply thorough review, create appropriate policies, and provide training to ensure these tools are used properly and efficiently.

Several pillars exemplify the firm’s core values. These include Commitment to Excellence, Collaboration, Critical Judgment, Client Focus, Respect for the Individual, Business Acumen, Meritocracy, and Innovation. These principles help ensure that as we adapt to the efficiencies of new technology tools, we never lose sight of the personal connections that define who we are. Clients come to us not just for novel legal strategies, but for thoughtfully pragmatic counsel and steadfast personal guidance. Technology provides incredible tools, but it’s the human interaction that makes the difference. We immerse ourselves in each client’s industry and truly understand their pain points in a way that machine learning is incapable of grasping. That’s what distinguishes us and will always remain at the heart of Greenberg Traurig.

While Greenberg Traurig is focused on attracting the highest quality talent, how important is cultural fit in the hiring process?

Bringing in quality talent is the lifeblood of any firm, but talent alone isn’t enough. At Greenberg Traurig, cultural fit is essential. We hire people who not only excel in their practice areas, but also align with our values and ethos. They share our commitment to excellence, teamwork, and putting the client first. There’s a reason why many of our attorneys have been working with us for years and have such close camaraderie with their teams. I’d much rather bring in someone who is culturally aligned and a great attorney than a rainmaker who alienates people around them.

When opening a new office, we hire lawyers who are part of their community and understand the local business environment. We empower our leaders in each market and take the time to build offices person by person, making sure each lawyer is the right fit. Our decentralized structure plays a significant role in this as well. Part of what attracts people to Greenberg Traurig is the ability to tailor their legal strategies to the specific needs of their clients while staying connected to the broader vision of the firm. More than that, we’ve always been a place where unconventional paths are celebrated, where determination and grit matter as much as pedigree, and resilience drives everyone. Whether someone went to law school at night, was the first in their family to attend college, or overcame other personal challenges to reach where they are today, each of these stories resonate deeply with us. They reflect our belief in meritocracy and our conviction that success comes from a dedication to serve our clients first and foremost.

Will you discuss Greenberg Traurig’s commitment to invest in diverse talent?

Diversity has, unfortunately, become a controversial subject for some. We don’t see it that way at all. Greenberg Traurig was built as a firm where every individual is welcomed, respected, and can carve out success through our freedom within a framework. And with 49 locations in 15 countries, we bring a spectrum of approaches and strategies for our clients. Regardless of what happens outside the firm, we’re not changing our position about inclusion at all. This is a mindset that’s been woven through our DNA since our founding in 1967.

We foster an environment that values individuals from all backgrounds, experiences, and cultures. This ensures that Greenberg Traurig

remains a place where legal talent thrives based on merit and dedication. What makes a team diverse is diversity in perspectives, which fuels innovation – part of what enables the firm to stand apart from the pack. When the sharpest minds from different backgrounds come together, we can accomplish incredible things for our clients. The underlying values that define who we are will never change.

What do you tell young people about the type of career the legal profession offers?

The legal profession is far more than a career; it’s a platform for discovery and impact, one that quite literally changes lives and aspires to reach the greater good. When someone asks me what the most important qualification for a lawyer is, I always come back to a singular thought: passion for results. That is what drives us through the highs and lows of our careers – and rest assured, there will be both.

Law teaches you how to think critically, write persuasively, and approach problems with creativity. These invaluable skills can open doors to countless opportunities, whether you choose to practice law or pursue other paths like corporate leadership or public service.

I would also advise them to use technology as a tool. Let it empower your efficiency, but never rely on it too much.

I encourage young people to find what resonates for them and explore ways where they can make a difference in their community. The legal profession offers a unique opportunity to advocate for justice and shape meaningful change. It’s a field where people from all backgrounds can succeed if they have the grit to do so. For those willing to put in the effort, the possibilities are endless, not just for personal success, but for making a lasting impact on the world. ●

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