

From the Boston Business Journal:

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IP Law

Local law firms expect to bolster IP staffing in 2011

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From boutique-sized IP-only firms to legal Goliaths for whom intellectual property law makes up on a fraction of their overall business, Boston-area firms appear poised to add to their ranks of IP attorneys in 2011.

According to Boston Business Journal research, the number of patent attorneys in the city's top 25 largest IP firms rose to 935 in 2010, up from 922 in 2009 though still down from 2008 levels of 942. Interviews with partners in several firms suggest they remain on the lookout for talent.

Lando & Anastasi LLP in Cambridge added new partners last year and will likely add another four attorneys in the new year. The firm has also added six support staff in its IP practice in the past year.

"The bottom line is we're looking at growth of more than 10 percent," said partner **Peter C. Lando**. "We're seeing strength in all of our practice areas — pharmaceuticals, chemical and materials, electrical and computer software. All of our technology sectors are growing."

The new hires at [Lando & Anastasi](#) were brought into the litigation area, a place where several firms say they are looking to add talent.

Because it is an IP-only firm and all 29 of its attorneys work in the patent arena — it filed for more than 1,000 and received more than 500 patents in 2009 alone — the firm is able to attract attorneys from other firms, Lando said.

"In our seven years we have hired from many of the firms here in town, including some of the bigger firms," he said.

Brown Rudnick LLP in Boston could add 50 percent to its IP headcount by the end of 2011 compared with two years earlier, said **Thomas C. Meyers**, a Boston-based IP partner. The 100-attorney firm has six attorneys in its patent group.

"We are always looking for good talent, but we are most interested in patent lawyers with experience in the life science sector, as well as intellectual property litigators," Meyers said.

Growth at [Brown Rudnick](#) is being driven by clients perfecting biotech tools as well as those in what Meyers calls the "omics" fields — firms focused on genomics, proteomics or interactomics.

Overall, the competition for top talent remains fierce and will likely only get more intense, especially for attorneys who bring not only IP experience but a demonstrated understanding of the strategic and business applications of IP law.

"There are a lot of attorneys available, but far fewer who understand the business aspects of IP," said Meyers. "Attorneys are attracted to our practice because we focus on using intellectual property to create enterprise value instead of focusing only on technology."

Greenberg Traurig could grow its patent and related practices by 25 percent to 30 percent in the next year, said intellectual property co-chairman **Chinh Pham**, who said the firm enters 2011 "currently in a hiring mode."

Recent Boston-based hires, he said, have come both locally and from other markets. "The growth we are seeing is on a local level and Boston is among the places where we are looking to add to our capabilities," he said. "We're looking for attorneys who not only need to be talented but because we are a very entrepreneurial firm, we're always looking for folks that have business bent as well," he said.

Those attorneys who have demonstrated a track record of helping clients turn their intellectual property into a competitive advantage and a revenue source will always be in high demand, said **Joshua Krumholz**, a partner with [Holland & Knight LLP](#) in Boston.

"The best attorneys are usually valued highly and treated well by their firms," Krumholz said. "It's a very competitive area, but we've been very happy with the successes we've had."

Krumholz said Holland & Knight's IP practice has already grown significantly in recent years and that growth will continue in 2011. The firm has 24 Boston attorneys in its intellectual property practice, including 7 patent attorneys, out of 116 total attorneys.

"We're actively interviewing and recruiting attorneys now and are in various stages of discussion with people we hope to bring on board and that is something we are interested in continuing," he said. "We've had a good year we want to continue that upward curve."