

Utah's Maschoff Brennan Goes Bicoastal in Merger With Another IP Boutique

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By Dan Roe



What You Need to Know

- Intellectual property-focused boutiques Maschoff Brennan and Mauriel Kapouytian Woods finalized their merger on Jan. 1.
- The combined enterprise will have a bicoastal footprint and an expanded lawyer head count.
- The deal comes at a time when midsize firms are increasingly showing interest in scaling up to compete with Big Law for client relationships.

Park City, Utah-headquartered **Maschoff Brennan** finalized its merger with New York-headquartered **Mauriel Kapouytian Woods**, expanding their intellectual property capabilities to both coasts.

Because both firms primarily focus on IP and technology work, the combined enterprise will serve a niche market with 45 lawyers that span six offices. The newly named **Maschoff Brennan Gilmore Israelsen & Mauriel** will have three offices in California, two in Utah and one in New York.

Although their footprints are expanding, leaders on both sides of the deal emphasized that the quality of lawyers at both firms is what really attracted them to the table.

“For us, the attorney and the operational fit were big factors,” Mauriel Kapouytian co-founder Michael Mauriel said. “We started having difficulty just scaling, not so much from an attorney standpoint, but just everything that goes behind making a law firm really operate well. ... They had the kind of infrastructure built from a management standpoint, a staff standpoint and a technology standpoint that would have taken a few more years for us to build.”

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Geographic reach and operational efficiencies appear to be important motivating factors for midsize firms to consider a combination, and the desire to merge among firms is only expected to increase this year.

Most recently, New York-based Barclay Damon expanded to almost 300 lawyers when it absorbed D.C.-based Shapiro, Lifschitz & Schram in an effort to “accelerate growth” and expand into the D.C. market to boost its regulatory practice on the federal level.

Miami-based **Mark Migdal & Hayden** opened its first office outside Florida in Los Angeles after acquiring two lawyers that were running their own banking litigation practice in the area, a practice that Mark Migdal had been eying.

While billing rates at Big Law remain high, a lot of these smaller firms are looking to strike while the iron is hot, offering a value proposition to clients that are looking for more rate flexibility, even luring some Big Law talent for the same reason.

When looking for clients and talent alike, midsize firms tend to hype up their rate flexibility as the differentiator between them and Big Law. In Maschoff Brennan’s case, the firm offers a promise that senior partners will be involved in cases regularly along with junior lawyers thanks to the firm’s rate flexibility, according to Mauriel.

With that in mind, the freshly merged firm is hoping to continue scaling and gain market share.

“We are certainly not resting on our laurels, and we are looking, as we always are, for additional opportunities or other markets that we have an interest in,” Maschoff Brennan name partner Eric Maschoff said. “We’re interested in ... expanding our geographic base into

markets that seem to make sense, and there are some out there. I don't think we're done.”

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