

Fish & Neave

[Joann Chang]

Having represented some of the most distinguished patent-seeking Americans of the last century, Fish & Neave has proved to be among the elite when it comes to intellectual property law.

Synonymous with *intellectual property* law, Fish & Neave has focused on intellectual property law and litigation, patents & trade secrets, and trademarks & unfair competition for over 100 years. With clients such as Alexander Graham Bell and the Wright brothers and cases such as the near \$1 billion Polaroid patent infringement case, Fish & Neave continues to dominate as one of the nation's top intellectual property firms.

Offices in New York, Palo Alto, and Washington D.C. house 184 Fish & Neave attorneys, giving the firm a national (and international) presence in intellectual property law. Numerous times, the firm has been hailed as "Patent Litigation Team of the Year" by Managing Intellectual Property as well as ranked second in the Vault's Top IP Litigation Firms. For those interested in intellectual property law, especially patent litigation, it doesn't get much better than a position at Fish & Neave.

While the firm recruits the standard top law school graduates, Fish & Neave is also willing to consider candidates with technical backgrounds. The firm even has a "Patent Agent Training Program," in which experts with science or engineering backgrounds are paid full salary and law school tuition in order to work at the firm and attend law school at night. However, despite the firm's willingness to overlook a nonexistent law degree, Fish & Neave nevertheless has one of the most competitive hiring processes among intellectual property boutiques.

Although 80% of the firm's work involves litigation, Fish & Neave manages to maintain

a casual and friendly workplace environment. A mixture of civility and unusually high responsibility seems to be the prevailing atmosphere for associates in the firm. Despite working longer hours after the dotcom crash, associates describe their work week as very manageable, usually averaging only 56 hours. Fish & Neave also has no formal departments in an effort to prevent internal divisions and to promote overall teamwork. Summer associates also praise Fish & Neave on their experiences with the firm. *Lzine's 2003* Summer Associate Survey, shows a high propensity for summer associates to describe their work as interesting and to accept a first-year position at the firm.

With the associate salaries being average among large law firms, one of the only areas that Fish & Neave seems to be lagging in is bonuses. Associates have been known to complain about their comparably small or sometimes nonexistent bonuses. But what the firm lacks in additional compensation, it tries to make up with other gestures of generosity, such as a skybox at Madison Square Garden and fancy holiday parties. Additionally, the firm pays for relocation fees as well as bar related expenses and the lack of a billable hours requirement is obviously a tremendous advantage in the quality of associate lives.