



Cooley Godward

[Jefferson Byrd]

The bubble may have burst for the dot com industry, but Cooley Godward remains a leader in the high tech practice.

Cooley Godward's information technology specialty dates back to the 1950s. In the 70s and 80s, the firm established itself as one of America's preeminent technology law firms by taking the most powerful biotech companies public. From San Francisco, Cooley relocated to the Silicon Valley, the high tech capital of the world, in the early 80s, opening offices in Palo Alto and Menlo Park. The firm expanded in size and focus from a regional specialist firm to a full-service national firm, riding the crest of the exploding computer industry at the end of the 20th century.

In the 90s, the firm more than doubled in size, growing to over 700 attorneys. Profits per partner quadrupled. Cooley Godward is still ranked number one in representation of life science companies. They handled Adgenix's initial public offering in 2000, the largest biotech IPO ever. The firm also oversaw the \$4.5 billion merger of MMC and AMMC, the largest semiconductor acquisition ever. Cooley successfully defended internet giant eBay against competitor Bidder's Edge, and cell phone company Qualcomm against Ericsson. In the last ten years, Cooley has been behind 230 IPOs worth an estimated \$20 billion, making it one of the top firms nationally for public offerings.

As the founder of the West Coast's first venture capital partnership, Cooley has helped many small businesses off the ground. The firm's clientele includes two-person start up companies and *Fortune 500* powerhouses like DirecTV, Nintendo, NBC, and TiVo. Salaries at Cooley Godward rose to meet the demand in the 90s. Associates could expect

\$125,000 plus a healthy bonus right out of law school.

When the dot com tide ebbed, Cooley Godward was among the many businesses to feel the pinch. The weakening of the national economy caused Cooley to suffer over a hundred layoffs between 2001 and 2003. Hardships withstanding, the firm managed to cut corners and retain its powerful roster of clients. Cooley was able to take advantage of the troubles in the high tech industry by bolstering its litigation practice during the litigious times that followed. The firm today employs over 500 attorneys in 20 industries. Recently, more than a dozen of Cooley's attorneys ranked high on *Chambers USA's Guide to America's Leading Business Lawyers*.

Through adversity, Cooley has tried to maintain its laidback demeanor. The partners pride themselves on providing a "lifestyle firm" environment, and despite the setbacks endured since the crash of the high tech market, they still offer a high quality of life for associates. A casual atmosphere is usually advocated in Cooley's offices. Though the social calendar is not as full as it once was during the heyday of the end of the last century, a rich variety of social interactions is available at the firm. The partners have been characterized as relaxed and down-to-earth, and an open-door policy is maintained.

Cooley has taken measures to further its reputation as host to a progressive work environment. The firm employs industrial psychologists to resolve issues of intergroup

communication and encourage hospitable behavior. The liberal stance on maternity leave and flexible work arrangements taken there makes Cooley popular with working parents. The firm has also established itself as a firm hospitable to gay and lesbian attorneys.

The hiring practices are not nearly as rigid as those of conservative law firms of comparable size. During the soaring economy, Cooley's demand for attorneys increased drastically, then fell with the recession. Still, the firm considers important factors besides grades. Credentials from a top-tier school would benefit a candidate, but real world experience, professionalism, and overall intelligence are more significant qualifications for a prospective Cooley associate.

Jobs

Cooley Godward currently has openings in San Francisco, Palo Alto, San Diego, Colorado, and Washington DC, including opportunities for experienced corporate, bankruptcy, real estate, employment and litigation attorneys. More information regarding attorney positions at Cooley Godward can be found in the LawCrossing job database.