



Sidley Austin, LLP

[By Douglas May]

Sidley Austin, LLP (formerly Sidley, Austin, Brown & Wood, LLP), one of the world's largest law firms, is a legal powerhouse with several branch offices spanning the globe. The firm has offices in Beijing, Brussels, Chicago, Dallas, Frankfurt, Geneva, Hong Kong, London, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, Shanghai, Singapore, Sydney, Tokyo, and Washington, DC.

Employing more than 1,600 lawyers, Sidley Austin is one of the world's premier law firms. Sidley combines experience, in-depth knowledge, and quality to supply a broad range of legal services to meet the needs of its clients.

Sidley's global network of offices provides integrated multi-jurisdictional and cross-jurisdictional legal services, and Sidley lawyers work collaboratively to offer outstanding service to the firm's local, regional, national, and international clients. It is a full-service law firm, with vast experience in transaction and litigation matters. As the sixth-largest U.S.-based corporate law firm with offices in 16 cities worldwide, Sidley generates more than \$1 billion in annual revenue.

Established in 1980, Sidley's Los Angeles office has more than 150 lawyers and is among the top 10 largest law firms in the city. Located at 555 W. Fifth Street in downtown Los Angeles, its client list is envied by its peers. The firm's clients include Fortune 100 and 500 companies, financial institutions, professional firms, associations, and individuals in a diverse range of industries.

In addition to corporate law and finance, the firm's areas of expertise include litigation, real estate, commercial and intellectual property, taxation, securities, trusts and

estates, healthcare, and bankruptcy. The firm's website states, "Each of our local practice groups...work[s] closely with [the] other[s] as well as with our other U.S. and overseas offices to ensure that our clients' expectations are not only met but exceeded."

The California team has been involved in a number of Chapter 11 cases, acting for shareholders and secured and unsecured creditors. Richard Havel, who holds a J.D. from the UCLA School of Law, heads the Los Angeles team and has a solid Chapter 11 practice; he often acts for equity groups and hedge funds. Sally Neely, a graduate of Stanford Law, is another Sidley lawyer universally known as a "wonderful" bankruptcy attorney.

Sherwin Samuels, senior counsel for Sidley Austin, has been involved in many important cases for the firm. Samuels earned his undergraduate degree from Harvard University and obtained his law degree from Boalt Hall at the University of California-Berkeley at the young age of 23. He went on to become one of the top lawyers in the nation. He is most proud of the case involving the Starwood Hotels resorts, which helped the organization go from "a struggling, beaten-down company with a total market capitalization of less than \$10 million in 1994...to the current market cap of \$15.6 billion."

The events that transformed the company were the involvement of Barry Sternlicht and the Starwood Capital Group and the resulting reorganization and recapitalization of the company, which involved its acquisition of other huge resorts and hotels, including The Westin Hotels, the Sheraton, the St. Regis, and Caesars Palace and the Desert Inn in Las Vegas. Sidley Austin was involved in all of these transactions, and Sherwin Samuels was the principal client contact, both as outside counsel and inside for about six months as interim general counsel. Samuels's main focus is "assisting companies and their boards," and his efforts clearly transformed this into a landmark case for Sidley Austin and helped generate billions of dollars for Starwood Hotels and Resorts.

The firm often appears at the top of various industry rankings. In 2005, the BTI Consulting Group named Sidley to its Client Service Hall of Fame, and Sidley was also named "No. 1 Power Elite Firm" for the same year. The firm was placed in 14 categories on *The American Lawyer's* Corporate Scorecard, landing in number-one positions as issuer's counsel in equities offered by U.S. corporations, issuer's and underwriter's counsel for investment-grade debt, and underwriter's counsel for REIT debt. Another recent honor was the 2005 Catalyst Award, conferred in recognition of the firm's initiatives to retain and promote women attorneys.



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Some famous alumni have been involved with Sidley Austin in recent years. Barack Obama was a summer associate in the Chicago office and met his wife, Michelle Obama (an associate at Sidley at the time), during his time at the firm. John Zeglis, the former chief executive officer of AT&T Wireless, was an associate and partner in the Chicago office during the late 1970s and early 1980s. David S. Tatel, a judge for the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, started his

legal career at Sidley. Newton Minow, the chairman of the Federal Communications Commission under President John F. Kennedy, was a partner in the Chicago office from 1965 to 1991 and continues to serve as senior counsel to the firm.

Sidley Austin has also established itself as a premier California law firm that devotes time and capital to the communities it serves. The firm participates in a variety of pro bono and charitable activities including

“sponsoring, public-interest law fellowships at UCLA and USC law schools, and numerous public-interest fundraising events.” Sidley combines the personal attention of a medium-sized office with the sophistication, resources, and power of one of the world’s largest firms and offers superior personal and results-oriented service to members of the community.