

When attorney Warren Goldenberg goes to work in the morning, he's likely to be working with companies from all over the world seeking financing in the US. On the same day attorney Mark Avsec might be helping a music production company finalize a deal with Coca-Cola. And attorney David Goodman could be on a conference call with an international team from Brussels, Kiev and Shanghai. Meanwhile attorney Gerry Cowden is helping a technology company move to the next level by securing financing. It's an average day for this diverse group of attorneys. The only thing that might surprise you is that all of them are located in Cleveland, Ohio.

LAW CENTRAL Cleveland has one of the largest concentrations of lawyers in the US, **BUT WHY?**

BY JAMES KROUSE

Cleveland is home to some of the country's most established law firms. According to the Ohio State Supreme Court, there are roughly 14,000 attorneys living in the Cleveland area. That's one lawyer for every 198 people. To put that into perspective, California has one lawyer for every 227 people and New York City one for every 100. So what's a town like Cleveland doing with so many lawyers?

The answer lies both in the city's manufacturing past and its connection to the global economy today. Back when Cleveland was the fifth largest city in America and a manufacturing powerhouse, a need for attorneys grew along with the vast industrial machine that fed the steel mills and auto industry. Today, that industrial landscape has changed but legal infrastructure is still going strong.

GLOBAL AND NATIONAL CONNECTIONS

Many attorneys in Cleveland have national and even international connections. As in all businesses, easier travel and advances in communication have made global connections easier. For firms like Squire, Sanders & Dempsey L.L.P., one of Cleveland's largest law firms, this has meant expanding out to other markets and opening offices around the world.

"We have offices in 32 countries, but we function as one law firm," says David Goodman, a senior partner at Squire, Sanders and head of the Cleveland office. "Our main office here is very much connected to the world as a result."

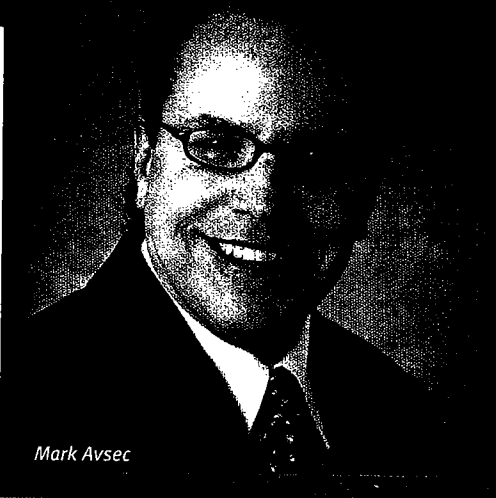
For Warren Goldenberg, who is a partner and the co-chair of the Intellectual Property (IP) Group at Hahn Loeser and Parks, law is global because business is global: "Technology companies have to be global and get to market quickly in order to recoup their heavy R&D costs. Our practice is connected globally as a result to help our clients compete all over the world."

Goldenberg works with emerging companies helping them gain access to funds as well as large companies to work out national and international agreements around technology transfers and funding.

Cleveland's attorneys are also helping the local economy tap into global opportunities both by helping local companies access worldwide markets as well as helping foreign companies set down roots in NEO. More directly, a "law industry" funded by a national and global client base employs a large supporting infrastructure in the area.



Warren Goldenberg



Mark Avsec



David Goodman

The legal community also helps the local economy grow through public financing. David Goodman, a public finance lawyer, has helped governments and companies structure financing for everything from infrastructure to incubation: "We work with local and regional governments to seek traditional public finance such as bonds, but we also help them tap into some of the newer arsenal of economic development tools to foster business and build public works."

CREATIVE CAPITAL

Many opportunities for NEO attorneys are the products of homegrown innovation. And the ideas flowing from the arts and technology need legal support to grow.

Mark Avsec is a partner and vice-chair of the IP Practice Group of Benesch, Friedlander, Coplan & Aronoff, with offices in Cleveland, Columbus, Philadelphia, Delaware and Shanghai, China. He is also a musician and songwriter – talents that inform his legal work in everything from recording contracts to copyright infringement. Avsec grew up in Cleveland's Slovenian neighborhood and had a flourishing career as a session musician, songwriter and music producer. It took a copyright lawsuit brought against him (he fought and won) to turn him onto law.

Avsec is still a working musician, touring with Donnie Iris about a dozen times a year and occasionally playing with The James Gang and Joe Walsh. "There is a flourishing arts and music scene here. I do work with many of the area's premier arts organizations and creative content companies, as well as recording artists, record labels and management companies. I also tap into the tech companies based here," says Avsec.

Avsec's knowledge of IP is a tremendous asset, particularly to tech companies that have made the exchange of information easier and more legally complicated. For example, he works with a Cleveland company called OverDrive, which has developed technology allowing libraries to lend audio books, films, and music CDs to their patrons online.

Cleveland's homegrown innovation in a wide

range of industries supports the need for large volumes of legal work. Gerry Cowden, who is a founding partner at Cowden & Humphrey, works with companies like Superior Dairy. Superior, located in Canton, has introduced an innovative milk container that cuts shipping and labor costs by half and reduces water usage by 60-70%.

COWDEN SEES GROWTH IN THE CLEVELAND MARKET THROUGH TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES MOVING TO THE AREA OR GROWING UP HERE. "THERE ARE A LOT OF STARTUP COMPANIES HERE IN CLEVELAND, BUT THERE ARE ALSO EXISTING COMPANIES THAT WE WORK WITH TO HELP OPEN OVERSEAS MARKETS AND ESTABLISH JOINT VENTURES."

Goldenberg, also the CEO of CardiInsight Technologies, a medical device company, sees growth potential for the area in medical technology: "The Cleveland Clinic is a tremendous asset to the area in terms of attracting businesses in the medical arena. The environment is right for raising capital, creating research agreements and making connections with the renowned thought leaders."

MIDWEST STATE OF MIND

These attorneys could live and work anywhere but have chosen Cleveland as their base - some because it's home and others because they recognized the benefits such as a lower cost of living, easy commutes and access to world-class culture. But the Midwest ethos also has its appeal.

"We have a very service-based approach, which can be different and refreshing to clients outside of the Midwest," says David Goodman. "We not only have that culture here, but we try to export it to our offices around the world. People from this office often end up working all over the world and we encourage them to transplant a little bit of the Midwest. It's just good business." □

For more information: www.cowden-lpa.com, www.hahnlaw.com, www.beneschlaw.com, www.ssd.com



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