



William Mark Levinson
Partner & Co-chair Financial Services Industry Practice
Fox Rothschild
Los Angeles, CA

William Mark Levinson is a seasoned attorney primarily advising and guiding individual and corporate clients through a range of corporate, securities, real estate, and financing transactions. Levinson was nominated by "The M&A Advisor" as an award finalist for a complex public company spin-off that was listed on the NYSE and named to the *Los Angeles Business Journal's* "Who's Who in Real Estate Law" in 2013. Levinson is a trusted advisor known for his effective negotiating approach and routinely counsels financial institutions, real estate development companies, investment banks, entrepreneurs, and individuals. A graduate of Brandeis University and Yeshiva University's Cardozo School of Law, Levinson resides in Calabasas and is the proud husband of Carrie and father of Emily, Lauren, and Max.

| EFFECTIVE HIRING |

Picking the Right Legal Horse

Questions to ask yourself when hiring an attorney

Choosing an attorney can be a daunting task. There are countless lawyers to choose from, most of whom are bright, hardworking, and ethical. How do you choose the right lawyer for you and your matter? As one looks beyond the number of names on the letterhead, and the aesthetics

of your business. If a lawyer does not truly understand your business, they will be less able to quickly size-up challenges and hurdles that may arise as you pursue your business goals. A lawyer that understands your business will be one who can identify helpful strategies which promote and

“

It is also important to recognize, in a transaction with multiple lawyers and parties, a single lawyer can play a pivotal role in determining whether a problem is solved and whether a transaction ‘closes.’

”

of the office, consider the following three key issues.

1. Does your attorney understand your business goals and have the background and expertise to be your advisor? Whether one's goal is selling a business, borrowing or lending money, resolving intellectual property issues, estate planning, or otherwise, it is important to find a lawyer that understands, or will take the time to learn about, the complexities

produce success.

2. Effective lawyers need to be hard-working and responsive. Technology has transformed law firms and lawyers. The speed with which services need to be delivered and the emphasis on rapid response has changed dramatically since 2000. In 1982, when I began my practice in New York City, I would receive a letter – by U.S. Mail – or overnight delivery service – and have a few

days to digest the contents, consider the issues, research, and fashion a response. Later, I remember working with fax and telex machines (the original Twitter) to communicate with clients and parties around the country and the world. With telex machines, every letter cost money and messages were a clever stream of symbols and abbreviations! Now, of course, email and text have supplanted facsimile machines, and response time has shrunk to minutes or seconds! While technology makes your practice more efficient, it also means that you will be best served by a lawyer who is committed to working for you at a rapid, and sometimes stressful, pace.

3. Effective lawyers need to be excellent listeners, practical and demonstrate an unrelenting perseverance when working to achieve a client's objectives. Effective lawyers check their egos and listen to their

clients and all parties to a transaction. Whether one agrees with all that is said or not, it is crucial to understand what drives all parties in a transaction and where agreement resides. By listening well, one maximizes the opportunity to have a "meeting of the minds" when negotiating deal points, drafting documents, or otherwise reaching consensus. Finally, by listening and understanding all points of view, one can work and achieve goals far more efficiently and at less cost to the client.

It is also important to recognize, in a transaction with multiple lawyers and parties, a single lawyer can play a pivotal role in determining whether a problem is solved and whether a transaction "closes." Lawyers with strong business experience and strong communication skills are often the ones that think creatively and find "out-of-the-box" solutions that enable deals to reach the finish line.

Is it possible to learn all of the above information before hiring an attorney? It is not easy, but it is worth the effort. Here are five practical tips for ensuring you explore your options effectively.

- ▶ Meet with your prospective attorney in person and talk in depth about your business goals.
- ▶ Develop an understanding of the attorney's experience and business acumen.
- ▶ Consider the attorney's tenacity, creativity and problem-solving abilities
- ▶ Ask for examples of when these traits were tested.
- ▶ Finally, consider whether your rapport with the attorney is strong. After all, he or she will be far more than your scrivener. This attorney will be your sounding board, your problem solver, and your trusted counselor.

CONTACT ME

PHONE 310/228.2133

EMAIL mlevinson@foxrothschild.com

WEBSITE foxrothschild.com

ADDRESS 1800 Century Park East
#300
Los Angeles, CA 90067