

Kasowitz, Benson, Torres & Friedman LLP

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LOCATIONS

New York, NY (HQ)
Atlanta, GA
Houston, TX
Newark, NJ
San Francisco, CA

MAJOR DEPARTMENTS & PRACTICES

Litigation

- Antitrust • Appeals • Arbitration/ADR
- Complex Commercial •
- Environmental • Insurance Coverage •
- Mass Tort & Product Liability •
- Plaintiffs' Representation • Real Estate
- Securities/Corporate • White Collar Crime

Creditors' Rights & Bankruptcy
Employment Practices & Litigation
Intellectual Property
Matrimonial & Family Law

THE STATS

No. of attorneys:

Firmwide: 273
New York: 234

No. of offices: 5

Summer associate offers (2007):

Firmwide: 10 out of 11
New York: 10 out of 11

Managing Partner: Marc E. Kasowitz

Hiring Partner: Aaron H. Marks

UPPERS

- Early involvement by junior associates in depositions and trial preparation
- Friendly co-workers

NOTABLE PERKS

- Monthly attorney cocktail parties and birthday celebrations
- Summer outing
- Firm sponsors Take Your Kids to Work Day

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT

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Director of Legal Recruiting
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The following is independent Vault research

THE SCOOP

Founded in 1993, Kasowitz, Benson, Torres & Friedman LLP is a baby on the legal scene. The firm, however, has grown very quickly and now employs more than 270 lawyers. Kasowitz Benson prides itself on being an "entrepreneurial firm, where highly-talented lawyers are committed to pursuing creative, aggressive and winning approaches to clients' most challenging legal matters."

The firm received several honors in 2007. Kasowitz Benson was recognized as a leader in the areas of commercial litigation, white-collar criminal defense and bankruptcy by Chambers USA. Aaron Marks, a partner in the New York office, was recognized as one of 50 of the nation's most accomplished litigators under the age of 45 in the January 2007 issue of *The American Lawyer*. Among other representations, in March 2006 Mr. Marks obtained, on behalf of client Liggett Group, what is believed to be the fastest-rendered jury verdict in the history of cigarette manufacturer litigation.

In 2007, Kasowitz Benson kept itself busy with several large matters. In September, a New Jersey judge denied motions to dismiss—initiated by a group of prominent hedge funds—in a lawsuit Kasowitz Benson brought on behalf of Fairfax Financial, the Canadian insurance giant. The lawsuit, which seeks \$6 billion in damages, claims that the hedge funds unlawfully manipulated Fairfax's stock through the use of manufactured analyst reports and other deceptive practices. The firm also represents Comcast Corp. in multiple certified class actions in which plaintiffs allege that Comcast has unlawfully monopolized various regional markets. Kasowitz Benson made further news with its ongoing representation of toy manufacturer MEGA Brands, Inc.; MEGA has been sued by numerous parents after children were harmed (and one killed) after ingesting magnets that fell out of the company's MAGNETIX building set. The firm represents MEGA in its lawsuits against the company that originally created and manufactured MAGNETIX as well.

GETTING HIRED

Insiders report that Kasowitz Benson has traditionally been very discerning when hiring associates. According to a midlevel, "The firm is extremely selective and only accepts candidates with the 'it' factor." Another associate, however, says that "recruiting seems to have relaxed their rigidity a bit" because of firm growth, but "hopefully they are realizing that better applicants/associates are sometimes students

from lesser ranked schools, but with better grades." For the most part, we're told that the firm is still just as choosy, but the growth factor has contributed to a heavier focus on lateral hires.

OUR SURVEY SAYS

Hours at the firm are normal for New York, we're told. "It's not a lifestyle firm, but I don't think it markets itself as one either," says an insider. "Officially, there is no official number of billable hours for associates. However, we're told from the beginning that the 'unofficial' number is 2,100. It would be nice to have a little more guidance so that I could have a little more control over my life outside the firm," informs an associate. A junior attorney adds, "Hours are important, and I think people who plan on staying at the firm for the long haul push to put in a lot of hours, but those of us who care less about making partner don't seem to be harassed into billing more."

While Kasowitz matches market-level base compensation—"small-firm atmosphere, with market compensation! Not bad!"—many associates take issue with the unclear, merit-based bonus payout. "Bonuses are not lock-step, so it's hard to tell how you're doing compared to the rest of your class," says an associate. Another common complaint is "the deferred compensation—raises are not paid for the first six months of the year (and are then given in a lump sum in June)," we're told. Though associates do wish for a bit more bonus clarity, one rookie looks on the bright side: "We get market, or a little above, and in the grand scheme of things, that's pretty super."

Insiders' impressions about Kasowitz Benson's firm culture vary widely. A midlevel associate reports, "The firm culture has gone through some growing pains in the last few years, changing from a place where everyone knew everyone to a place where that's just not the case. Associates do hang out outside of work for happy hours on an informal basis, but it's usually a certain subset of people. The partnership is largely collegial with each other and sometimes with associates, giving the firm a pretty friendly atmosphere." In contrast, another midlevel complains, "There are a few different 'cliques' that socialize together, but that's about it." Perhaps the truth is that life at Kasowitz Benson is what the associate makes of it; a senior associate says, "There is plenty of socializing for those that want it, but no face time or pressure for those who don't."