

Saul Ewing Collaborates with 50-Lawyer Firm to Expand into California



U.S. law firm Saul Ewing has announced its merger with Southern California-based firm Freeman Freeman & Smiley, comprising a team of 50 lawyers. This collaboration marks Saul Ewing's inaugural entry into the California legal landscape and expands its presence to include offices in Los Angeles and Orange County.

This strategic alliance bolsters Saul Ewing's reach, elevating its total lawyer count to over 400, operating across 18 offices throughout the United States. The expansion into California aligns with the trend of law firms targeting the region for growth, as evidenced by recent mergers with smaller firms in the area.

Notably, Detroit-founded firm Clark Hill made headlines with its augmentation in Los Angeles, having integrated a 10-lawyer entity, Barton Klugman & Oetting. Similarly, last month witnessed Womble Bond Dickinson, with roots in both North Carolina and the United Kingdom, absorbing two modest-sized firms in Northern and Southern California.

Statistics released by legal consultancy Fairfax Associates indicate a surge in law firm mergers during the first half of 2023, surpassing figures from both 2022 and 2021. The landscape has witnessed several firms capitalizing on this trend to expand their capabilities and market presence.

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Freeman Freeman & Smiley, renowned for its prowess in real estate, trusts and estates, caters to a diverse clientele, including those in financial services, technology, entertainment, food and beverage, and retail sectors. Saul Ewing expressed enthusiasm for the new partnership, highlighting the synergy between the two firms' expertise and specialties.

Jason St. John, Managing Partner of Saul Ewing, emphasized the significance of this step, describing it as a pivotal moment in the firm's growth trajectory. The merger appoints Steven Ziven, the former managing partner of Freeman, as the head of Saul Ewing's fresh Los Angeles office.

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Saul Ewing's legacy in California is underscored by its involvement in over 500 legal matters within the state over the past three years. The firm enjoys strong relationships with its core clients, who either have their headquarters or major operations in California. Saul Ewing's announcement garnered positive responses from some of these key clients.

Bolthouse Farms, a prominent California-based beverages company and a client of Saul Ewing, welcomed the merger, recognizing the enhanced value proposition it brings. Similarly, Topgolf Callaway Brands, a client of Freeman and a California-based entity, conveyed its support for the collaboration, acknowledging the strength and advantage it offers to clients.

Don't be a silent ninja! Let us know your thoughts in the comment section below.