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CDF LABOR
LAW LLP

LAWYERS
WITH AN
ENTREPRENEURIAL
SPIRIT

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LAW FIRM**

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CDF Labor Law LLP



*The annual listing of 10 companies
that are at the forefront of tackling
customer challenges*

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COVER STORY

By Alex Gonsalves

Lawyers must step out of their risk-averse roles and adopt a more disruptive entrepreneurial mindset to drive efficiency. But the shift is not going to be easy, even for millennial lawyers. It is because legal training and practice traditionally rest on looking at the past, like precedents and case law, rather than setting new benchmarks for the future.

Marie DiSante and Timothy Freudenberger, along with four other labor and employment attorneys practicing at leading AmLaw 100 firms, anticipated this gap back in 1994 when they co-founded CDF Labor Law LLP. The forward-thinking attorneys wanted to ditch the deep-seated, cookie-cutter approach of the legal space that they deemed impractical for the long run and build a more entrepreneurial legal culture that fosters creative legal thinking and offers the highest quality legal counsel in a timely and cost-effective manner. The result is the trailblazing law firm that California-based CDF is today with its notable accomplishments.

CDF LABOR

MARIE DISANTE
FOUNDING AND FIRM MANAGING PARTNER

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**ONE OF THE
BIGGEST
STRENGTHS
OF CDF LIES IN
EDUCATING ITS
CLIENTS TO TAKE
A PREVENTATIVE
APPROACH AND
AVOID POTENTIAL
COSTLY
LITIGATION**

LAW LLP

**LAWYERS WITH AN
ENTREPRENEURIAL
SPIRIT**

TIMOTHY FREUDENBERGER
FOUNDING PARTNER


The attorneys of the statewide boutique law firm are among the first to handle California wage and hour class actions and are one of the few to take numerous class actions to trial. CDF has built a deep trial-bench during decades of defending litigation challenges in courtrooms across the state.

The firm currently operates from its five California offices spanning the entire state, where it exclusively focuses on shaping California's labor, employment, and business immigration law landscape with its creative legal outlook. Most of its attorneys come from big law firms, and the firm takes pride in combining its big-firm, big-case background and niche of labor, employment, and business immigration law to offer exceptional quality and experience to clients with a much lower overhead.

summary judgment easily can cost \$125,000 for an employer and exceed \$250,000, if taken to trial. After the trial, if the employee prevails, an employer is also responsible for the employee's attorney's fees. But it's not just the monetary shock that employers should worry about. Their market reputation also may suffer a massive blow due to a lawsuit, whether they win the trial or not. That's why CDF's first stance to helping clients involves taking proactive measures and reducing the risk of employee litigation.

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**BEING RESPONSIVE
AND ALWAYS ADDING
VALUE ARE THE TWO
SALIENT FEATURES
THAT CDF HAS
INGRAINED INTO ITS
FIRM CULTURE FROM
THE START**



MARIE DISANTE
FOUNDING AND FIRM
MANAGING PARTNER

This approach is becoming especially significant amid the rising number of litigation matters following the pandemic and remote work model. Employers are facing more than usual workplace compliance issues related to the worker classification, wage and hour regulatory compliance and disparity, changing labor costs, and workplace safety, leading to an uptick in class actions.

“The volume of wage and hour-related litigation in California has gone exceptionally overboard in the last few years. Even the most well-intentioned employers are finding it difficult to remain 100 percent compliant,” says DiSante, founding and firm managing partner, CDF.

CDF tackles this by guiding clients through proactive and preventative measures to ensure their policies and procedures are up-to-date and in compliance with the ever-changing California employment laws. The firm works with clients to implement various types of employment-related policies and assists clients with internally rolling them out. Ensuring companies have the right policies and procedures in place can help minimize their exposure to potentially costly litigation.

In the Vanguard of Helping Workplaces Stay Productive and Rewarding

One of the biggest strengths of CDF lies in educating its clients to take a preventative approach and avoid potential costly litigation. Defending an employment lawsuit up to discovery and a motion for

Generating Awareness with Focused Blogs and Webinars

CDF also goes out of its way to communicate recent developments in the labor and employment law landscape through monthly webinars and frequent blog postings. CDF's webinars have strong traction and attendance from labor and employment law enthusiasts, not just its clients. These presentations advise companies on how to stay compliant with recent changes in the state and federal employment laws. Based on the question-and-answer feature incorporated into the webinars, it also receives great feedback, indicating that CDF is on the right track to help employers strategize on how to achieve a more compliant workplace and nip problems in the bud.

Complementing the webinars is CDF's award-winning blog California Labor & Employment Law blog. The blog is managed by an editorial board comprised of the firm's attorneys, under the guidance of Mark Spring, CDF's Sacramento office managing partner and chair of the firm's traditional labor law practice group. The blog postings cover every topic under the spectrum of labor and employment law, like employment discrimination, harassment, wrongful termination, wage and hour, traditional union matters, collective bargaining, unfair labor practices, and employment-based immigration.

In addition, CDF added an exclusive space on its website, a COVID Resource Center, that discusses recent COVID-19-related regulations and changes in the overall workplace health and safety regulations at the state, federal, and local levels.

"Many clients told us that our COVID-19-related updates were so organized that they had no trouble staying on top of things. Not too long ago, we also did a week-long education series on employment issues unique to the healthcare industry. In addition to having our attorneys write on various topics, we also invited experts from the industry to share their knowledge," states DiSante.

Client-Attorney Relationships Fueled by Responsiveness and Value

Being responsive and always adding value are the two salient features that CDF has ingrained into its firm culture from the start. Whether providing an immediate response to a client or getting back to them after thorough research, keeping clients updated is integral to CDF's responsive culture.

CDF has a dedicated team of attorneys specializing in advice and counseling to support the firm's mission of adding value to its legal services. While many of CDF's attorneys spend their time defending employers and their employment-related litigation in a courtroom, many other skilled attorneys are focused on responding to every client query, no matter how big or small. It can be helping clients strategize on how to attend a deposition, finding ways to defend an employment discrimination claim if it goes to trial, or helping them create an employee handbook on workplace policies. CDF's advice and counseling group plays a huge role in keeping client workplaces productive, safe, and rewarding.



TIMOTHY FREUDENBERGER
FOUNDING PARTNER

"When our clients see that we aren't wasting their money or spending time on things that aren't central to the resolution of their litigation matters, they find us reliable and trustworthy, and that provides the greatest value," says Freudenberger, founding partner of CDF.

A Diverse Team for Tackling Diverse Employment Law Challenges

CDF is constantly creating an environment of trust and transparency by fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion, inside and outside the organization.

Sixty-five percent of CDF's legal team is comprised of women and attorneys who are diverse, and the firm has been making inclusivity an integral part of its labor and employment legal service approach long before it was considered a trend. In addition, many leadership positions within the firm are held by women and people who are diverse, which distinguishes CDF from many other firms.

As CDF celebrates its 28th year-anniversary milestone, renewed vigor is sweeping through the team to continue offering outstanding legal service, winning results, and cost-effective solutions to the many legal challenges employers face every day. **HR**