

## Competition Group Of The Year: Weil Gotshal & Manges

By **Nadia Dreid**

*Law360 (February 5, 2024, 5:57 PM EST)* -- Weil Gotshal & Manges LLP helped tech behemoths like Apple Inc. and Microsoft Corp. knock out antitrust challenges left and right last year, tangling with competition enforcers around the world and coming out on top, earning the firm a spot as one of Law360's 2024 Competition Groups of the Year.

If a big tech company was fighting a merger challenge last year, there's a good chance they had Weil in their corner, even though the 1,100-attorney-strong firm has less than 100 lawyers who are focused primarily on antitrust matters.

Weil partner and antitrust practice co-head Michael Moiseyev chalked the firm's success up in part to its ability to get the job done even when it meant coordinating with regulatory bodies around the world. That, he said, is what makes the firm "a top-tier destination for companies with really large and complex transactions."

That's because Weil's growing European antitrust practice allow them to work so seamlessly that they are "really just an extension of the incredible team we have here in the United States," Moiseyev said.

If anything, the attorney said that the last year has made it clear that the firm's antitrust practice was in demand "on a global level for the most significant antitrust class actions for larger companies.

But that's not all.

"We handled all three of the [Federal Trade Commission's] litigations this year and produced very successful results for both Microsoft and Meta," Moiseyev said. "And we really upped our effort to grow the international piece of our practice, which has really paid dividends over the past year."

One of the firm's biggest wins last year was on behalf of Meta Platforms Inc., formerly Facebook Inc., which faced an FTC challenge to its proposed acquisition of virtual reality startup Within Unlimited Inc., which Meta won after a seven-day bench trial.

A joint effort with Kellogg Hansen Todd Figel & Frederick PLLC, the firms helped fend off what Moiseyev described as FTC Chair Lina Khan's "first effort to implement an agenda that aimed to crack down on big tech companies."



"The deal had all of the elements that she had been agitating against," he said. "It was acquired by a big tech company, it was a nascent company in the metaverse, it was a small startup."

Weil was there every step of the way, from the initial regulatory filings to California federal court, where a district judge ultimately refused to issue an injunction, paving the way for the deal to close and the administrative complaint to be dropped.

The firm has also had its hands in the closing of one of the most controversial tech mergers of the last few years: Microsoft's acquisition of gaming titan Activision Blizzard Inc., maker of the popular Call of Duty video game series.

The FTC tried to block that deal but was unsuccessful. Weil also had to convince the U.K.'s Competition and Markets Authority, which blocked the deal until it was restructured to meet some of the government's conditions.

Weil "played the global quarterback on the deal, which saw them coordinating between some 16 regulatory agencies and with local counsel in countries where the firm didn't have boots on the ground," Moiseyev said.

Fellow partner and antitrust practice co-head Brianne Kucerik said the expansion of the firm's antitrust practice globally is only making them better at what they do, which is "even more important today due to the heightened antitrust scrutiny in the United States and Europe."

"We have always been a practice that delivered results for clients in the merger review process in the United States, and we saw the opportunity to grow the practice," she said. "What distinguishes our group is the depth of our group and experience of our group working on complex matters in front of antitrust agencies."

--Editing by Andrew Cohen.