

International office of the year

WINNER

Al Tamimi & Company

Essam Al Tamimi, senior partner

Impressive growth and an enviable client list

Dubai-based Al Tamimi & Company spent 2008 reinventing itself. Whilst retaining its status as the top-choice referral partner for the global elite, the firm has also been spreading some international roots of its own.

Al Tamimi stole a march on the rest of the world by becoming the first foreign firm to open a greenfield operation in Saudi Arabia without an association. It will follow this up in 2009 by opening an office in London, becoming the first major Middle East firm to break into the capital.

Its impressive client list comprises sovereign wealth funds such as DP World and Dubai Holding, and prominent aviation clients such as Air Arabia. Al Tamimi also enjoys excellent links with leading financial sector names due to its longstanding reputation as the 'go-to' firm for advice on establishing a business under the Dubai International Financial Centre's regulatory regime.

Al Tamimi's unwavering commitment to growth can be seen in its dramatic leap in headcount, from 96 UAE-based lawyers in 2007 to 147

HIGHLY COMMENDED

APPLEBY, MAURITIUS

Malcolm Moller, office managing partner

Appleby's ability to anticipate the market was made clear when it became the first foreign law firm to open in Mauritius in 2007, well ahead of its rivals, which are now showing increased interest in anticipation of a regulatory revamp on the island. Many investment funds have been established in Mauritius for the purpose of investment into India, and Appleby is ideally placed to pick up the top mandates.

HERBERT SMITH, PARIS

Jacques Buhart, office head of corporate

2008 was an outstanding year for this hyper-profitable office, with strong financial performance coupling with healthy recruitment levels and a raft of impressive instructions. It is Herbert Smith's largest presence outside London, with over 100 lawyers, and has an enviable client base. Highlights include advising EDF on the French aspects of its offer to acquire British Energy, and winning a major tax case for Papillon before the ECJ.

LATHAM & WATKINS, WASHINGTON, DC

Eric Bernthal, office managing partner

With 30 years' experience in Washington, DC, Latham boasts a diverse practice that excels in M&A, private

Al Tamimi became the first foreign firm to open an office in Saudi Arabia without an association.



Al Tamimi & Company's Christopher Lipscomb (centre) with Fernando Peláez-Pier of the International Bar Association

lawyers in 2008 – an impressive 53% increase that cements its position as the largest firm in the region.

In a financial climate that has the biggest legal names shaking their heads, Al Tamimi is living proof that the Middle East is where the action is.

equity and litigation. This is an office that punches way above its weight. Of the firm's 50 practice groups around the world, 13 are chaired by partners based in Washington. 2008 was yet another strong year; the firm hired four senior government officials to enhance its practice areas, while continuing to represent key clients such as Carlyle and Time Warner in major matters.

SKADDEN, ARPS, SLATE, MEAGHER & FLOM, HONG KONG

Alan Schiffman, partner

Global giant Skadden Arps celebrates 20 years in Hong Kong in 2009, and has one of the most formidable teams in the market. The office enjoys a premier position in the local M&A rankings, with a roster of top clients including Nomura Holdings – which the firm advised on its acquisition of certain Lehman Brothers' businesses in the Asia-Pacific and India – and Coca-Cola, which the office is representing on its high-profile \$2.4bn attempt to acquire Huiyuan Juice Group.

STIBBE, BRUSSELS

Olivier Clevenbergh, office managing partner

This Benelux stalwart was visible on a host of major deals in 2008, including the InBev/Anheuser-Busch merger. An acknowledged leader not only locally but globally through its strategic alliance with Herbert Smith and Gleiss Lutz, the firm's Brussels office enjoyed a 41% increase in turnover between 2005 and 2007, with charismatic managing partner Olivier Clevenbergh recently winning a third term in charge.

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