

**Reichman Jorgensen LLP:**

# Building the Law Firm of the Future

In October 2018, former McKool Smith rainmakers, Courtland Reichman and Sarah Jorgensen, launched what they are confident represents “the law firm of the future.” [The 13-attorney elite national trial firm, Reichman Jorgensen](#), focuses on high-stakes commercial and intellectual property litigation, working from offices in California, Atlanta and New York. But size aside, a creative approach to law firm management has positioned Reichman Jorgensen to compete with top Am Law 100® firms.

Reichman previously managed the California offices of McKool Smith and King & Spalding, where he headed the firms’ 150-lawyer intellectual property group. His litigation experience includes trials nationwide and more than 30 appellate arguments before the Supreme Court and federal circuit courts. Reichman’s partner, Sarah Jorgensen, also has an impressive background working as a former clerk to the late Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist. Both partners have worked side by side for nearly two decades, trying cases worth hundreds of millions of dollars for a range of clients across the country including Arconic, Alcoa, Sempra Energy, 3M, FLEETCOR, Immersion Corporation and The Coca-Cola Company, among many others.

Somewhat surprisingly, Reichman and Jorgensen did not set about building their “law firm of the future” with a huge focus on artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies. While the founding partners acknowledge that access to the latest technology is important, their vision for the modern law firm goes much deeper than that. For Reichman Jorgensen, it’s really about carefully examining traditional law firm business principles, keeping what works and changing what doesn’t.

“We designed this firm to be disruptive—to include the best attributes of highly sophisticated law firms and to dismiss the worst, setting a new standard for clients facing the most complex litigation challenges,” Reichman said.

Let’s examine how they’ve done it.

## IT’S ALL ABOUT TALENT

While many firms claim to offer their clients the very best in legal talent, they generally do so because it’s a subjective claim that is nearly impossible to disprove—at least factually. The issue for Reichman Jorgensen was that in order to attract the extraordinarily high caliber of clients it wanted, it really did need to recruit the best of the best in legal talent. The firm went about doing so, in part, by boldly committing to paying its associates at levels surpassing the so-called “Cravath” compensation scale, the top-of-market scale named for the influential New York firm and widely followed by top-tier law firms.

That commitment to top-of-market compensation seems to be paying off for the firm so far, with its ranks including attorneys from such coveted clerkships as the U.S. Supreme Court, the Federal Circuit, the D.C. Circuit, the 2nd, 6th, 7th and 11th Circuits, and district courts throughout the country, as well as lawyers graduating from the nation’s most prestigious law schools.

“We believe that talent wins cases. Period,” Reichman says. “The first thing you have to do is be competitive. The second is tied to creating an environment that allows unique talent to thrive. Part of that is embracing diversity and a thoughtful approach, because a lot of your best talent is going to be extremely independent.”

True to Reichman’s words, Reichman Jorgensen is a truly diverse firm with the majority of its attorneys from diverse backgrounds and most of its partnership comprised of women.

“If you are only looking for a ‘master of the universe,’ you are going to be very limited in your ability to attract, retain and encourage the best talent,” Reichman explained. “You need people who think differently but have the right academic

credentials. That creates an electrifying environment where everybody is challenging each other, coming up with great ideas and not trying to just be focused all day on billing hours. We want to solve clients' problems."

## NO MORE BILLABLE HOURS

Reichman's and Jorgensen's experience in traditional Big Law taught them that the billable hour model simply doesn't work—at least in a high-stakes litigation practice. [In place of billable hours, Reichman Jorgensen employs only flat and success-based fees](#), providing clients the elusive price certainty and alignment of interests they crave from law firms.

"There were two things critical to creating this platform," Reichman notes. "One is not being at odds with your clients over billable hours. Most lawyers hate billable hours because it kills their spirit. But you need to have the very smartest people from the best law schools and clerkships working with you. If you combine these two, it is almost like magic because now you are not being rewarded for being slow."

The co-founders had noticed that at most large law firms, an associate who works slowly is more profitable than the smartest, fastest and most-efficient associate. The smarter one feels the lack of energy and excitement about their work because there is no advantage to being super-efficient and getting the work done. The only advantage is being slow.

"If you do things quickly, you just get more work because you still have to hit those 200 hours a month, no matter what you do," Reichman said. "We want to energize lawyers and unleash them."

## BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE

Per Reichman Jorgensen, the law firm of the future also eschews two other standard features of law firm life—the partnership track and lockstep compensation—in favor of systems that encourage attorneys to advance as quickly as their skills allow. And [a flexible work environment](#) also plays into the equation.

"We've found there is an increased desire to be able to work when and how you need to," Reichman says. "If you have to be in the office by 8 A.M., you might have a two-hour commute, but if you can get to the office by 10:30 A.M., maybe it's a 20-minute commute. So the flexible work schedule is a game changer. We are all expected to be plugged in each morning, but what's the difference if you do it from home? If you're going to be busy writing a brief all day, maybe it's better to just stay home, be productive and get your work done."

Reichman Jorgensen realized that this type of flexibility can help attract talent it otherwise would not have had access to. Particularly with millennials, who tend to value job flexibility.

"It's not that they're not willing to work extraordinarily hard, but they want to work smart in a time and place that allows them to achieve work-life balance," Reichman says. "Forcing people to punch the clock in certain locations just is not conducive to recruiting the very best talent."

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