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'We're Recruiting': Amid DOJ Hires, Holtzman Vogel Looks to Grow

By Abigail Adcox
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What You Need to Know

- Earlier this summer, Holtzman Vogel brought in two senior DOJ officials as partners.
- The firm is still looking to bring on additional talent within its attorney generals, investigations, litigation practices.

After hiring several senior officials from the Justice Department, Holtzman Vogel Baran Torchinsky & Josefiak is eyeing more growth. There has been a wave of departures from the DOJ this summer, many of which have joined Big Law firms, but also several midsize law firms.

Holtzman Vogel, which now has roughly 80 attorneys, has hired at least a half-dozen partners since the beginning of the year to support client demand within its litigation, state attorneys general and investigations practices.

"We have both attracted incredibly elite legal talent from Big Law and from government," managing partner Jill Holtzman Vogel said, adding that in some ways she was surprised at the "pace of the growth" but said the firm has the client demand to support it.

"There's been so much growth around the [state attorneys general] practice, the congressional investigations practices," Vogel added. "That's been a lot of fuel for growth here, just because there's so much demand right now."

Holtzman Vogel logo.

The firm has had a growing footprint in D.C. over the past year-and-a-half. The firm, which specializes in political law, regulatory matters and high-stakes litigation, has built a reputation serving clients in Republican circles. Vogel herself led the Republican National Committee's legal efforts during the 2004 presidential election and served 16 years in the Virginia State Senate.

In June, the firm hired former deputy associate attorney general Abhishek Kambli as a partner in the firm's state attorneys general and congressional investigations practices in D.C. Kambli previously served as lead counsel for the Trump administration in the Big Law executive order legal battle.

That same month, the firm hired Brian Nieves as a partner in D.C. Nieves previously served as

chief of staff in the Office of Deputy Attorney General under Todd Blanche, who is now serving as attorney general.

Outside of D.C., the firm hired former Tennessee deputy attorney general Kevin Kreutz as a partner in Nashville earlier this month.

Just this week, the firm announced it brought on Karen Donnelly as a partner in D.C. from a nonprofit-focused firm, Copilevitz, Lam & Raney, in Kansas City.

In April, Akiva Shapiro joined from Gibson Dunn as managing partner of the firm's newly opened New York office, where he also leads the office's Administrative Law and Regulatory Litigation practice.

Several Big Law firms have added attorneys from the DOJ in recent weeks, including Ashurst Perkins Coie, Winston Taylor and Squire Patton Boggs.

For Holtzman Vogel, Vogel said they've had success with recruiting laterals who have relationships with existing attorneys at the firm, and for more junior talent; they've built out their summer program, and had brought back attorneys who had left to do clerkships.

"Acquisitions of both senior talent and more junior lawyers have helped us keep pace with the demand internally that we have to meet the needs of the clients in terms of litigation, and the litigation practice has also grown so quickly. And this past week, we brought on [seven] new people," said Vogel, adding that those hires haven't all been publicly announced yet, but include two partners and five associates.

Vogel indicated the firm is still recruiting attorneys for its litigation, investigations, state attorneys general and compliance practices.

"We're recruiting. We need associates who are litigators. We're looking for people for the investigations practice. We're looking for people for the state attorneys general practice. We're also looking for mid-level and some more senior people who can help us on the compliance side. We have a huge practice [advising] tax-exempt organizations," said Vogel.

Aside from lateral recruiting, Vogel indicated the firm does not have interest in any larger growth plans, such as merger, for the time being.

"I'm very happy with where we are in the market, and I'm happy with the flexibility that we have to make those kinds of growth decisions. We give our partners a lot of freedom, and we want to," said Vogel. "I don't have any larger plans outside of that."

However, the firm is exploring adding additional offices down the road in markets where they have existing clients, Vogel said, but declined to specify any locations.

"I always want to be more measured about the physical office space, because it's a major investment and you want to feel really confident about that marketplace when you land there," said Vogel.

The firm just opened its first South Florida office in Miami last November with the addition of former Southern District of Florida AUSA Lindsey Lazopoulos Friedman as a partner.

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