

■ LAW FIRMS

Beyond show biz to M&A group

Loeb & Loeb of L.A. latest to expand practice.

By Amanda Bronstad
STAFF REPORTER

LOS ANGELES—Loeb & Loeb has become the latest L.A. law firm to expand beyond its traditional practice of representing entertainment businesses and talent, such as Woody Allen and the Beastie Boys.

The firm has formed a new mergers and acquisitions practice group to handle a rising tide of deals in the media and Internet industries.

In the first six months of 2006, nearly 15% of Loeb & Loeb's revenues came from mergers and acquisitions, more than double the percentage in 2005. The firm has 30 lawyers who make up the mergers and acquisitions group, many in its New York office. The firm's leaders expect the new practice area to reach 50 lawyers in the next few years.

"We've designated this as one of the areas where we think we have tremendous opportunity for growth, and we're going to look to grow it," said Andrew Ross, chairman of the mergers and acquisitions practice area.

The move is similar to that of Los Angeles-based Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, which recently began

moving away from talent clients toward entertainment institutions with corporate work [NL], Aug. 21].

Search for 'niche' markets

Legal experts say firms that previously focused on representing talent in the entertainment field are shifting toward media and Internet clients, which have increased their deal flow as they consolidate or grow.

"They're looking for niche markets," said Ward Bower, a principal at legal consulting firm Altman Weil Inc. "What they're finding here is a convergence of two industries, in effect the computer and Internet industry and the traditional entertainment industry. Anytime there is that connection of industries, there is a potential to create a lot of value."

Founded in 1909, Loeb & Loeb opened a New York office in 1986, followed by small offices in Nashville, Tenn., and Chicago. Now with more than 240 lawyers, the firm grossed \$146.5 million in revenues last year, up about 20% from 2004, according to a survey by *The American Lawyer*, an affiliate of *The National Law Journal*. John Frankenheimer, partner in the

Los Angeles office and co-chairman of the firm, said that the growth has come in several practice areas, including intellectual property and entertainment transactions for motion pictures, television, music, live events and talent.

"We still have talent," Frankenheimer said, "but now we represent a whole panoply of sophisticated financial institutions, including large private equity firms and hedge funds."

Among the firm's clients are Accoona Corp., a Jersey City, N.J.-based search engine, and a21 Inc., an online holder of digital stock images based in Jacksonville, Fla. ■

This article is reprinted with permission from the September 25, 2006 edition of THE NATIONAL LAW JOURNAL. © 2006 ALM Properties, Inc. All rights reserved. Further duplication without permission is prohibited. For information, contact ALM Reprint Department at 800-888-8300 x6111 or visit almreprints.com. #005-09-06-0016

