

16 Firms Score GCs' Praise For Cyber Savviness

By **Michele Gorman**

Law360 (March 18, 2020, 4:25 PM EDT) -- General counsel and other high-ranking corporate decision-makers have identified 16 law firms to call first during a cyberattack or other data privacy crisis, according to a new report out Wednesday, as experts warn that the COVID-19 outbreak presents hackers with new opportunities.

The "CyberSavvy 16" were named in BTI Consulting Group's first-ever Cybersecurity & Data Privacy 2020 report. To assemble the list, BTI conducted more than 250 phone interviews between Oct. 1 and March 2, and then gathered additional answers through this week largely to account for the rapidly evolving COVID-19 pandemic.

The interviews with the highest-ranking cybersecurity and data privacy decision-makers came from more than 15 industries including the banking, consumer goods, pharmaceutical and transportation industries.

"Their thinking is, 'My biggest need in a crisis or acute situation is a strategist and somebody who knows how to pull a team together should I need one,'" said BTI President Michael Rynowecer.

Given an unexpected event, participants told BTI, "We need to know who that firm is that is going to respond no matter when, no matter what, and will know who, what, when and where as to what to do and will assemble a team. That's the CyberSavvy 16," Rynowecer said.

Corporate counsel said the firms on the CyberSavvy 16 list can anticipate what's coming next, according to the report. In addition, these firms "can simplify even the most complex legal matters and are unwavering in their dedication to clients," according to BTI.

The 16 firms are Alston & Bird LLP, BakerHostetler, Baker McKenzie, Covington & Burling LLP, Crowell & Moring LLP, Debevoise & Plimpton LLP, DLA Piper, Hogan Lovells, Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP, Jones Day, Latham & Watkins LLP, McGuireWoods LLP, Mintz Levin Cohn Ferris Glovsky, Morrison & Foerster LLP, Norton Rose Fulbright, and Perkins Coie LLP.

Clients told Rynowecer they want these firms by their side if an unexpected event arises, he said.

BTI CyberSavvy 16

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BTI identified cybersecurity and data privacy as the fastest-growing practice area. The report notes the opportunity for firms is huge as clients face complex and unknown risk and seek help from their outside counsel.

But not all firms appreciate how big the cybersecurity and data privacy market is and will become, especially as the COVID-19 outbreak adds to concerns, Rynowecer said.

According to experts, as the virus continues to spread and the majority of the workforce conducts business from home, new opportunities arise for cyber criminals to insert themselves into the process. For instance, cybersecurity lawyers have warned others to watch out for phishing emails from senders pretending to represent health authorities.

"What clients told us was one of the biggest overlooked risks was unintended employee mistakes, innocent mistakes that get made because that's what happens in life," Rynowecer said. "While certainly everyone should be working from home, it doesn't take away the risk of all those people."

He added that the need for counsel, strategy and backup plans is "just enormous. The need was enormous before [the] coronavirus."

In addition, the report identified more than 100 firms that clients said excel in certain areas ranging from class actions and strategy and counsel, to litigation and global regulations.

--Editing by Amy Rowe.