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Features:

Taylor English Duma LLP
Attorneys of the Month

Atlanta Bar Association

James L. Yeargan, Jr.
Trial Lawyer of the Month

Lacrecia G. Cade
Shawntel R. Herbert
Eric S. Fisher
Marc A. Taylor, Partner
Joseph C. Sullivan
Amy Burton Loggins



Scott L. Duma, Partner, Marc A. Taylor, Partner, Joseph M. English, Partner

George C. Gaskin, COO (Chief Operating Officer)



It's All in the Slogan... Taylor English: Purpose-Built

By Laura Maurice

Taylor English Duma LLP's meteoric rise among law firms can be summed up in its slogan: the purpose-built law firm. In just eight years, the firm has grown from four former "big firm" attorneys to one of the fastest growing law firms in Atlanta as well as one of the 100 fastest-growing private companies in the city, according to the Atlanta Business Chronicle. What they have built, with intention, is more than another mid-sized firm, but one that may change the landscape of law firms in Atlanta—and beyond. Their goal is to continue to innovate and to rethink the law firm paradigm.

We sat down with partner Marc Taylor and a group of Taylor English lawyers to discuss the firm's innovative business model through the eyes of the lawyers who work there.

The Vision

The recession had not hit when Taylor and Scott Duma, former partners at a large Atlanta law firm, started the firm in 2005. Their idea—ambitious for the time—was to deliver to clients the same offering as AmLaw 200 firms: great talent, technical abilities and scope, but with lower fees and the ability to easily structure fees that were better suited to corporate budgets, particularly in the mid-cap and startup markets.

"The idea was simple— wouldn't it be great if we could reverse engineer a law firm with the principal goal of delivering greater value to our clients?" asks Taylor.

They overhauled the traditional law firm organizational

structure while offering reduced costs and innovative fee arrangements, and the model quickly took off. By 2009, the firm made the Atlanta Business Chronicle's Book of Lists' Top 25 Law Firms in Atlanta—by 2012, the firm had cracked the Top 10.

TECA: The Acronym

TECA stands for Talent, Efficiency, Certainty and Alignment and those are the guiding principles for the firm and its value proposition for clients. When it comes to talent, the firm has assembled an impressive roster over the last eight years and, today, is a full-service firm of more than 120 lawyers with strong practices in hospitality, litigation, labor, employment, real estate, corporate, finance, mergers and acquisitions and intellectual property among others.

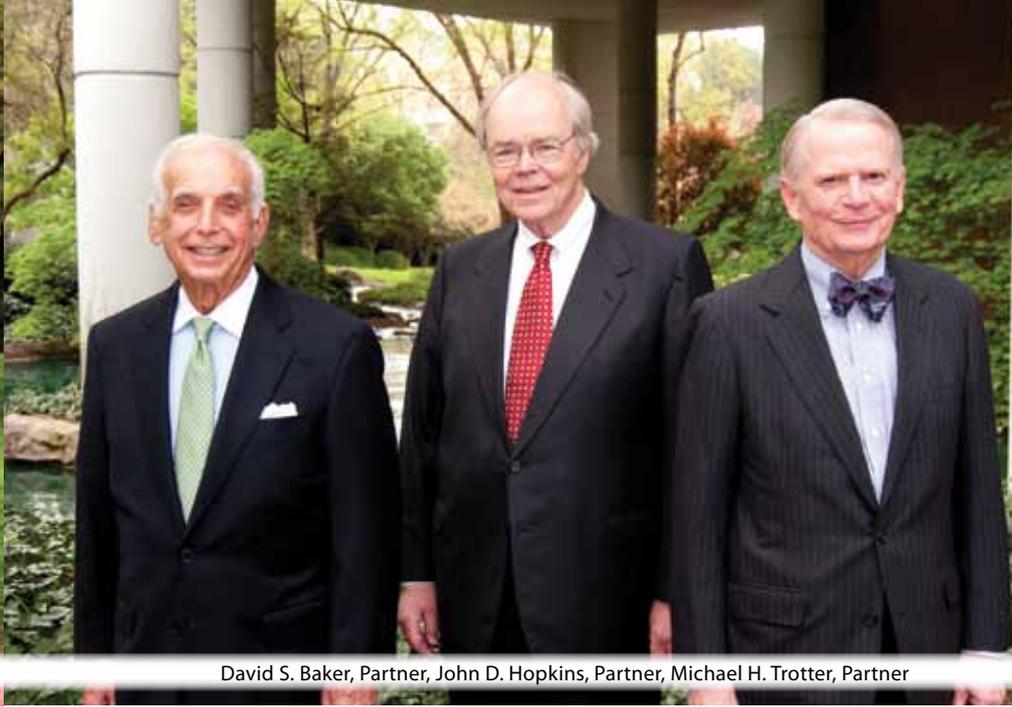
The firm's attorneys have received numerous accolades. Just this year, 11 Taylor English Duma attorneys were included on the Georgia Super Lawyers list, with an additional nine attorneys being recognized on the Georgia Rising Stars list. Another 10 Taylor English attorneys were named among The Best Lawyers in America for 2013.

These attorneys are not on the roster in name only. "Because of our cost and fee structure, we're able to have senior lawyers perform significant work on every file," says firm managing partner Al Hill. "Part of being efficient means not being too vertical."

Efficiency also implies that the firm's overhead is significantly



Al B. Hill, CEO (Chief Executive Officer)



David S. Baker, Partner, John D. Hopkins, Partner, Michael H. Trotter, Partner

less than traditional law firms. The firm achieves this through lower staff-to-attorney ratios and reduced real estate costs (with offices in suburban Cobb County versus in town). Fixed costs are roughly 15 percent of revenue, including real estate, general operating costs and non-attorney staff. The firm leverages these cost savings into an ability to drive value into every client engagement.

Perhaps more important to the equation are certainty and alignment when it comes to client engagements. Taylor English offers a variety of fee structures including caps or flat fees so that clients understand what the fee will be before initiating the engagement. According to partner Joe English, “The ability of a client to perform an accurate return on investment analysis before deciding to engage counsel is a critical component of our client-focused approach to delivering legal services.” Going one step further, the firm tries to align with clients regarding outcomes so that they are incented when the desired result is achieved and conversely, have some “skin in the game” if results don’t go their way. “Our clients want to pay us for results, not just our efforts, and the fee arrangement should reflect that salient fact,” Taylor says.

The value proposition that Taylor English offers has been very well received internally and externally. The firm competes with all of the major law firms in Atlanta for work among mid-cap and startup firms, as well as the more commoditized work for Fortune 100 companies. Nationally recognized expert on law firm economics, Michael Trotter, joined the firm in 2009 and believes that Taylor English reflects the ongoing evolution of the legal services industry in that sophisticated corporate clients are

demanding value from their outside counsel and are becoming much more adept at segmenting their legal needs depending upon the type of matter involved. “The ongoing success of Taylor English is tied to our ability to deliver sophisticated legal services to all segments of the legal market, including the segment that does not require the breadth and depth of services offered by the largest law firms. We succeed in this space because our value proposition conforms nicely with the client’s need for efficient lawyering that takes into account the significance of the matter being handled.”

Attorneys are attracted to the concept of delivering value and being paid accordingly. Taylor believes that the old vertical model of structuring law firms, in which top lawyers are paid vastly higher compensation (often based on past contributions rather than current reality) than their younger colleagues, places tremendous pressure on the few who rise to the top to stay there and justify the high hourly rates they charge. The horizontal model that Taylor English uses tends to equalize compensation among the firm’s attorneys and encourages everyone to originate business (and those who originate business are paid for doing so, as well as for the legal work they do). This has appeal among more senior attorneys who may be looking for ways to better manage their practices and allows attorneys of all levels to flourish. It also attracts like-minded associates who want to have some control over their destiny. For attorney Lacreia Cade, who started out at Kilpatrick Stockton (now Kilpatrick Townsend), Taylor English offers good balance and allows her to be a top-notch lawyer without sacrificing her family or personal life.

Paying It Forward

Taylor English typically doesn't hire entry-level associates but does recruit junior lawyers with three or more years of experience. The firm has a marketing program in place to help these junior lawyers the next generation develop their business-building skills and drive value to their own clients. The firm hired a director of business development & marketing, Michele Golivesky, in 2011 to not only increase brand awareness, but also to implement a business development program. Junior lawyers are typically paired with more seasoned partners to sell as a team. In addition, the firm recently "graduated" its first class from a marketing program with award-winning business coach Robin Hensley where they learned to hone their business development skills. The first group of five lawyers, Lacreia Cade, Eric Fisher, Shawntel Hebert, Amy Loggins and Joseph Sullivan, met with Hensley every other month and on their own with Taylor at least once a month to work on developing and implementing specific business development strategies.

Taylor personally is a big believer in sharing the wealth and actively uses these lawyers to help work his contacts and clients. "The sum is greater than the parts, and it's a win-win for everyone."

The associates like it too. "We like to say there are far less than six degrees of separation from Marc Taylor and that somehow everyone is connected to him," says Amy Loggins, one of the participants in this year's marketing class. Loggins joined the firm last August after time spent with a small trial practice, then the EEOC, followed by serving in-house as employment counsel with Crawford & Company. She says that the marketing program at the firm has been invaluable in helping her "kick the rust off" her private practice skills and relishes the opportunity to practice law in a "high quality, no frills" manner.

Fellow Taylor English lawyer, Joseph Sullivan agrees. "I could not imagine any firm providing the assistance and resources that have been made available to me at Taylor English," says Sullivan. "Many firms encourage their attorneys to seek business development opportunities, but Taylor English actually provides the tools, resources and business model to put their attorneys (regardless of title) in the best position to truly expand their client base."

Sullivan describes a very collegial atmosphere in which younger associates can walk into any attorney's office to discuss an issue or seek advice. "My practice has been richly enhanced by the collaborative relationship with other attorneys at the firm."

Shawntel Hebert, who joined Taylor English from a boutique labor and employment firm, welcomes the opportunity to work with and learn from attorneys in other practice groups. "The fact that I can walk down the hall and ask a litigation attorney for

their perspective has proved to be invaluable."

Eric Fisher spent five years as a litigation associate with a large international firm before joining Taylor English. He believes that he and his peers are part of something special. "It's rare to be able to work with people who are great attorneys with books of business AND great team-builders, but Marc and others at Taylor English are just that. They had the vision to build a law firm where lawyers with tremendous skills would want to come and practice, to service their clients in a way that adds value to their business."

Fisher has been at Taylor English for three years and never looked back. He said he didn't miss a beat in transitioning from a more traditional law firm model to the Taylor English way. "I have earned more money every year than I did in my former role as an associate, and I'm able to work directly with lawyers who are considered among the best in their fields. It doesn't get much better than that."

Recent Recognition For Taylor English Duma:

2013

Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers for Business -
Recognized for Labor & Employment Practice
U.S. News - Best Lawyers "Best Law Firms"
The National Law Journal's Midsize Hotlist
Atlanta Business Chronicle Pacesetter Award
Atlanta Journal-Constitution Top 100 Workplace
Georgia Super Lawyers and Rising Stars (20)
The Best Lawyers in America (10)

2012

2012 Client Advisor Awards
Atlanta Journal-Constitution Top 100 Workplace
Georgia Trend's Legal Elite (17)
The Best Lawyers in America (7)
Georgia Super Lawyers (16)