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VANGUARD AWARD FINALISTS: Latham & Watkins



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Latham & Watkins' global AI Task Force is a finalist in the Vanguard Award category as part of the California Legal Awards.

How has your firm transformed your business in recent years in response to world events or changing demands from clients or talent?

Artificial intelligence (AI) is evolving rapidly and profoundly impacting the way companies operate their businesses. Law firm clients in nearly every sector are developing AI, exploring ways to use it, or integrating AI into business operations to increase efficiency, improve accuracy, automate processes, and mine data.

In anticipation of this revolution, Latham established a cross-border and cross-disciplinary AI Task Force with the objective of going to market with a strategically coordinated approach and global team, while also maintaining a consistent approach to supporting the entire AI ecosystem on matters across the firm's global platform.

Latham's AI Task Force includes more than 150 lawyers from 30 practice areas and 15 offices globally who advise at every layer of the tech stack. The multidisciplinary team leverages capabilities across IP, privacy, cybersecurity, consumer protection, antitrust, data ethics, governance, complex commercial contracts, environment, energy, and infrastructure, to help clients as they develop, implement, or just explore the AI technologies that are transforming business. These subject-matter experts track—and, critically, share—developments in real-time and have developed deep domain-specific knowledge of the technological details that drive emerging legal questions. The team's already-impressive track record advising on both some of the most high-stakes litigation in this space alongside market-setting corporate transactions has set the industry standard for AI counsel.



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How have the changes affected your business?

The fruits of Latham's deliberate strategy to lead the market in AI are evident in the unparalleled suite of mandates to work with the leading companies in the world on their highest-stakes legal challenges in this area.

Latham has advised on more than 2,000 matters involving AI since 2022, including for industry stalwarts, as well as next-generation leaders. We are building the playbooks for leading companies and startups alike to guide their AI strategies to fuel growth in ways that limit exposure and maximize tactical advantage through product design, commercial transactions, and acquisitions.

On the transactional front, Latham has advised on more than \$100 billion in deals for AI-driven companies since 2021, often counseling on the unique IP, licensing, antitrust, and product liability issues related to these transactions. We have negotiated key agreements regarding developing and deploying AI models, structured joint ventures to launch AI companies, advised on major M&A transactions involving AI-driven companies, guided venture capital and other investment funds in their investments in AI-focused companies, and developed a variety of end-user-facing terms of service for AI products.

In litigation, Latham is at the front lines of the most important litigation impacting how AI can be developed and deployed. These lawsuits, the bulk of them class actions, are among the first set of cases challenging this innovative technology under copyright law.

What advice do you have for law firms and companies seeking to embark on similar transformations?

Our 360-degree approach to AI matters draws on Latham's world-class litigation, regulatory, counseling, and transactional capabilities, allowing members and the entire firm to collaborate with in-house lawyers, technology developers, compliance officers, policymakers, and other key stakeholders on legal issues of every dimension, in jurisdictions around the world.

In short, the strategy amounts to a top-down approach to ensuring that the right lawyers are advising the right clients, leveraging the right information and the right expertise, to deliver the most sophisticated legal advice in the market on the most important and cutting-edge issues confronting companies today. The success of this robustly resourced, all-hands-on-deck approach is rooted in Latham's culture, which encourages teamwork and collaboration.