

WHO'S WHO IN PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

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A look at the top attorneys, accountants in the Tri-Counties

For 2013, our annual Who's Who in Professional Services special report is building on a major upgrade from last year.

This special report focuses on key legal and accounting advisors to companies across the Tri-Counties. Because of its subject matter and geographic reach, Who's Who in Professional Services is a must-read issue for anyone seeking business-to-business legal or accounting services in the region.

In plain English, this special report is an essential tool for anyone trying to start a business, run a business or acquire a company in the region.

During the past decade there have been major changes to the ranks of law firms and CPA firms in the Ventura, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo county region. Each year's issue of Who's Who in Professional Services gives us a chance to reassess the roles of the movers and shakers in these very important firms that are the backstops for our business community.

To put together this special report, we use the Business Times' Top 25 lists as a cornerstone to contact the region's top law firms and CPA practices. We also solicit nominations from our readers and have added a number of new people to the section this year.

Our selection criteria are fairly simple.

To qualify, an attorney or CPA must have his or her principal office or place of business within the Ventura, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo county region. A qualified candidate also must offer his or her services to a range of clients — we did not consider nominees who are employed as a CFO or general counsel at a single organization.



**HENRY
DUBROFF**

Editor

We select Who's Who candidates based on the quality and quantity of their effort advising clients and we also factor in community outreach efforts and pro bono work.

The section would not be possible without the support of our sponsors, Bartlett, Pringle & Wolf and Cappello & Noël.

The section was organized and produced by Managing Editor Marlize van Romburgh and the cover was produced by Advertising Graphic Designer Elizabeth Willhite.

Our special reports calendar continues with Who's Who in Healthcare, Insurance and Biomedicine on Nov. 8 and our annual Tax & Financial Planning Guide on Nov. 22. Our December lineup includes Who's Who in Nonprofits & Foundations, followed by our signature special report, the year-end Book of Lists.

• *Contact Editor Henry Dubroff at hdubroff@pacbiztimes.com.*

A word from our sponsor

Perspective. Integrity. Expertise. Character.



Successful service professionals know what it takes to help clients achieve their goals. They invest their time and energy staying current in an ever-changing world, going beyond just keeping up.

Service professionals who withstand the test of time have unique challenges with building service teams, complying with employment laws and addressing succession planning to ensure the

longevity of the business, all without taking their eye off the ball to provide valuable insight to clientele. Balancing growth and service, working in the business and working on the business, being the best and building the next generation of experts; these are the common threads that weave throughout the professional services sector.

It can take years, even decades, to build a successful reputation. Time is money. Integrity is key. And passion is the fuel to persevere as a service professional.

We applaud those who are being recognized as top service professionals in this special issue. We understand what it took to get there and wish you continued success always.

Scott Hadley, CPA
Managing Partner

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About the Business Times

Pacific Coast Business Times is the weekly business journal serving Ventura, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties.

We have an award-winning news team and an experienced advertising staff. Subscriptions cost \$49.99 per year and include a copy of our annual Book of Lists.

UPCOMING SPECIAL SECTIONS:

- **Who's Who in Healthcare, Insurance & Biomedicine:** Nov. 8
- **2013 Tax & Financial Planning Guide:** Nov. 22
- **Who's Who in Nonprofits & Foundations:** Dec. 6
- **2014 Book of Lists:** Dec. 27

GET INVOLVED:

- To nominate a person or company for a special report, visit www.pacbiztimes.com/special-sections.
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- For information on upcoming Business Times-hosted events, visit www.pacbiztimes.com/events.
- To make an addition or corrections to a Top 25 list, email specialreports@pacbiztimes.com.
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A word from our sponsor

Facing Complex Litigation With the Right Counsel – And Staying Local

You are a small business with a big legal problem. Your current lawyer handles transactional matters but is not a litigator, let alone someone with expertise in complex litigation. What do you do?

A tri-county business with complex legal needs may be tempted to take its litigation matter to a large Los Angeles law firm. This assumes that only a mega firm can go toe-to-toe with another mega firm, which is what you face when your problem mushrooms into full-blown litigation. This could be a big mistake. Some local law firms regularly and successfully take on the largest law firms in the country. Our firm is one: we specialize in complex business litigation. Are there others? Check around.

Law Firm Checklist

Are the firm's attorneys highly rated by Martindale-Hubbell (martindale.com)? Have they received other legal recognition, particularly in their practice area?

Has the law firm successfully negotiated settlements or tried cases that are similar in complexity to your matter? If so, the firm has the qualified legal team to handle the most challenging legal issues.

Interview the firm's attorneys – how would they approach your case; what are the likely expenses and fees; how would they communicate with you?

Local Advantages

If you can stay local, you have many advantages. The first is expertise. A smaller, local firm typically means senior firm partners are more accessible, and you will not deal exclusively with junior associates. Second is efficiency. While outstanding lawyers do not come cheap, attorneys in smaller markets generally have lower overhead than larger metro firms. This means more client funds go toward actual lawyering. Finally, local lawyers are also members of your community. They have additional motivation to represent you, and have a leg up in understanding your business and the local context.

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RECENT VICTORIES

- DEFENSE VERDICT FOR SIENTRA, INC. IN \$27 MILLION TRADE SECRET/EMPLOYEE LIFT-OUT SUIT BY JOHNSON & JOHNSON/MENTOR WORLDWIDE LLC
- \$7.7 MILLION VERDICT FOR UNITED STUDIOS OF SELF DEFENSE IN TRADE SECRETS CASE
- DEFENSE VERDICT FOR FOUR NEUROSURGEONS IN \$10 MILLION COMPLEX ANTITRUST LITIGATION
- \$41.7 MILLION VERDICT FOR CORE WEALTH MANAGEMENT, LLC IN TRADE SECRET/EMPLOYEE LIFT-OUT/FIDUCIARY DUTY CASE

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TOP 100 WOMEN LAWYERS IN CALIFORNIA, *DAILY JOURNAL*
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LAWYERS

Joseph Abkin

Fell, Marking, Abkin,
Montgomery, Granet
& Raney
Santa Barbara



Joseph Abkin is a founding member of Fell, Marking, Abkin, Montgomery, Granet & Raney and has practiced law in Santa Barbara since 1970.

Abkin's practice focuses on business matters, including organization and counseling of corporations, partnerships and limited liability companies, mergers and acquisitions, securities, financings, real estate, taxation, commercial transactions and trade association matters. He serves as outside general counsel to various types of businesses. He is experienced in the negotiation and preparation of contracts involving international transactions.

Abkin received his law degree from UC Davis in 1969. He served as an editor of the UC Davis Law Review.

Abkin was admitted to practice in California in 1970 and in the District of Columbia in 1972. He is a past member of the board of directors of the Santa Barbara Bowl Foundation.

John Ambrecht

Ambrecht & Associates
Montecito



John Ambrecht, senior partner and founder of Ambrecht & Associates, focuses on IRS tax controversies, complex estate planning, multi-state planning, asset protection, family business transition management to help minimize family conflict, international estate tax planning and property taxes.

He has won many multimillion-dollar tax cases, organized family businesses for succession or transition, and organized foreign entities for foreign asset protection. Named one of America's top 100 attorneys by Worth magazine, he is an author of "For Love & Money — Protecting Family & Wealth in Estate & Succession Planning, Blending Law & Psychology." He has authored many articles on succession planning.

He is board president of the Westmont College Foundation and a past board member of the Santa Barbara City College Foundation, Girl Scouts of America, and Bishop Diego Garcia High School's board of trustees.

Ryan Barncastle

Stuart | Moore
San Luis Obispo



Ryan Barncastle has been partner at Stuart | Moore since 2011 and concentrates his practice on the representation of real estate businesses, emerging growth companies and technology startups with respect to significant transactional matters.

His diverse client base includes real estate investment companies, property managers, homeowners associations, technology companies, online retailers, "flash-sale" websites, software companies, private investors, consulting firms, physical therapists and related facilities, fitness centers, national moving companies, restaurants and restaurant service providers, food production companies and special event businesses.

He received both his bachelor's degree in business economics, with an emphasis in accounting, and his master's degree in economics from UC Santa Barbara. He received his law degree from the University of San Diego. Prior to joining Stuart | Moore, he was an associate with a law firm in the Bay Area.

Craig Beam

Jackson DeMarco Tidus
Peckenpaugh
Westlake Village



Craig Beam, a shareholder at Jackson DeMarco Tidus Peckenpaugh, is a member of the real estate, environmental and public law sections of the California bar.

His decades of experience include his background in the public sector and representation of both public and private clients in complex regulatory matters affecting the use of property. His practice focuses on land use planning and Clean Water Act compliance, general plans, community plans, zoning, local coastal plans and natural resource preservation. He has represented pro bono groups advocating the formation of habitat preserves and the creation of artificial reefs, called "Project Yukon."

Beam was a senior partner at the former Luce, Forward, Hamilton & Scripps until he joined Jackson DeMarco's Westlake Village office in 2004. He received his law degree from California Western School of Law and his bachelor's degree from San Diego State University.

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David Bender

Anderson Kill
Ventura

David Bender is a managing partner of Anderson Kill's California office and a member of the firm's executive committee.

The firm has a number of specialty practices including insurance recovery on behalf of corporate policy holders and government relations, including land use, environmental law and complex litigation. The firm recovered more than \$160 million for the state of California from various insurance compa-

nies to clean up one of the country's most environmentally contaminated sites.

Bender specializes in policy enforcement, representing companies who are seeking payment of claims from their insurance companies. He has recovered more than \$100 million for his clients, which include Fortune 100 companies, public entities, hospitality companies, manufacturers and health care providers.

His law degree is from Southwestern University School of Law, where he was editor of the law review. He received his bachelor's degree from the University of Notre Dame. He is a member of the State Bar of California, the American Bar Association's employment section and the National Association of College and University Attorneys.

Matthew Berger

Matthew I. Berger Law
Group
Carpinteria

Matthew Berger is the founder and principal attorney of the Matthew I. Berger Law Group.

The firm serves a culturally and economically diverse clientele, including small businesses and entrepreneurs, as well as larger international and local businesses, nonprofit organizations, and individuals, with its principal office in Santa Barbara County.

The firm's major practice areas include

trademarks and copyrights, business organization formation, operations, governance, consulting, and financing, employment, entertainment including film, music and music publishing, traditional and digital publishing, merchandise and licensing and digital games.

The firm also practices in Internet law and ecommerce, international and domestic business transactions, trusts and trust administration, estate planning, wills and probate, real estate, nonprofits and litigation in federal and state courts.

Berger received his bachelor's degree from UCSB, with honors, in political science and sociology. He received his law degree from the University of Oregon School of Law, with a certificate of specialty in ocean resources and coastal law.