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LAW FIRM BUSINESS

## One-Stop Shop

Rosenfeld, Meyer & Susman LLP has been a Beverly Hills entertainment law boutique since 1957. As the entertainment industry has evolved, so has its practice.

By Jason Pafundi  
Special to the Daily Journal

Since its founding in 1957, Rosenfeld, Meyer & Susman LLP has been at the heart of the entertainment world — both figuratively and literally. With an office on North Canon Drive in Beverly Hills, the firm is entertainment-oriented at its core. And as the entertainment industry has evolved, so has its practice.

The 18-attorney firm, including nine partners, began providing outside counsel to MCA Inc., a predecessor to NBCUniversal Inc. And for decades, the firm has worked predominantly in the film industry. But since the advent of Netflix Inc. and countless other digital media platforms, Rosenfeld has shifted its focus to the smaller screen.

Rosenfeld prides itself on being a one-stop shop for its clients across the entertainment industry, and the firm's practice areas include litigation, corporate transactions and trust and estate planning.

Partner Leif Reinstein, whose previous places of employment include both Latham & Watkins LLP and London-based production company FreemantleMedia Group, joined Rosenfeld in 2013 to help lead the firm's transition into television industry representation.

Reinstein has provided outside counsel to Miramax LLC's television development department on production, distribution and financing matters involving "From Dusk Till Dawn: The Series" and "The Brothers Grimm" project currently in development.

Zanne Devine, Miramax's executive vice president of film and TV, said Reinstein is a savvy and talented attor-

ney whose counsel and collaboration she values greatly.

In addition to his experience in-house and at Latham, Reinstein also represented talent — including actors, directors and showrunners — for around a decade, and he uses his wealth of experience in the business to help mentor Rosenfeld Meyer's younger attorneys.

"I have a monthly lunch with my attorneys and we go over substantive questions that they have in order to give them the tools to go out there and speak in an informed way."

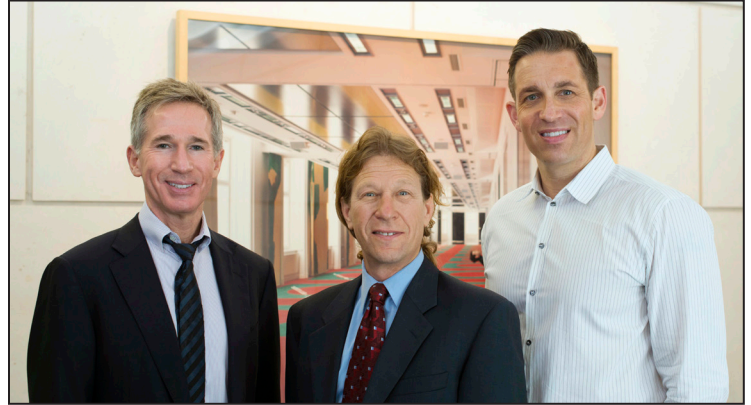
With the shift in focus from the big screen to smaller ones comes a need to adapt to changes in technology used in the entertainment industry itself, and the firm has made it a priority to adapt to the changing times.

Litigation partner Todd W. Bonder, who has been at the firm since 1987 and has litigated matters for Katherine Jackson and Dean Martin's heirs, said that one thing they are doing is getting younger. The firm recently hired several millennials in part because of their experience with new technology.

"Keeping up with the times is a challenge these days," Bonder said. "You have to bring in people that are savvier about the tech issues. There are some of us who aren't as savvy, and we have to get out of the way and let the next group come in."

Bill Rogin's eponymous production company, Rogin Entertainment Inc., has been a client of the firm for more than a decade. He has used Rosenfeld Meyer for matters including endorsement agreements, trademarks, copy-right and licensing deals.

"Their attention to detail, willingness to roll up their sleeves, communi-



Juliane Backmann / Daily Journal

From left, Rosenfeld, Meyer & Susman LLP partners Burt Levitch, Todd W. Bonder and Leif W. Reinstein.

cation skills and strength as litigators gives me a quiet confidence while navigating our industry," Rogin said.

Partner Burt Levitch heads the trust and estates group and said that the firm leverages its relationships with its corporate clients to provide legal counsel to individuals on more personal matters including divorce, child care and family planning.

"We aren't dealing with faceless corporations but with people," Levitch said of the firm's trust and estates and estate planning practice. "These people have needs to not only get their businesses in a good position, but those people have private needs, too. Our clients think of us as not only bringing expertise to their business but also bringing a reassuring hand to their personal situations."

Federal estate laws have changed significantly in the last few years, Levitch said, so there is a need for clients to revisit the planning they did prior to the changes in the law.

Bonder agreed that the personal service is a way that the firm distinguishes itself in the legal landscape.

"We don't staff matters deeply, we staff them personally. Having a small size allows us to get very intimate with our clients and provide them with more focused representation that is adaptable to their needs rather than shoving the client into the business model at a large firm."

The firm continues to see practices evolve, much like the entertainment

industry itself. Bonder now handles more trust and estate litigation as his clients have gotten older, and he said the new types of matters makes coming to work fun.

"It is why I still enjoy coming to work every day," he said. "It is certainly stimulating for my team and me to get involved in new matters."

Bonder said the firm is nimble and flexible in its billing structure, though most of the billing is still done hourly. He said they think it is important to provide cost-effective representation that doesn't bury the clients in bills. However, for some matters, especially in Reinstein's transactional practice, the firm would receive a flat fee for a specific project. Also, Levitch occasionally has probate work with fees determined by the courts.

In its 55-plus years of existence, Rosenfeld has seen the ebb and flow, the success and failure, and the evolution of the entertainment business. Reinstein, Bonder and Levitch said they see no reason why the firm won't continue to evolve and grow alongside it.

"We have a really established brand as an exceptional entertainment firm," Reinstein said. "We are a cutting edge group in terms of the legal areas we want to work in, and over the next 10 years, as the content changes, I personally want the firm to continue to be at the forefront of the evolution and the changes. I want the firm to be on the cutting edge in all areas."