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Thompson Hine Absorbs IP Litigation Boutique Turner Boyd Seraphine to Open Silicon Valley Office

By Samson Amore
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What You Need to Know

- Thompson Hine absorbed Northern California IP litigation boutique Turner Boyd Seraphine.
- The combination allows Thompson Hine a foothold in Silicon Valley and access to a lucrative client roster.
- Both firms said compatible billing rates for IP work were key in closing the deal.

Thompson Hine entered the Silicon Valley legal market this week with the addition of 18 lawyers and staff from IP litigation boutique Turner Boyd Seraphine, the firm announced Tuesday.

Some dozen lawyers and six staff joined Thompson Hine following the combination, which was finalized at the start of the year. Thompson Hine will take over Turner Boyd Seraphine's office in San Mateo, with 35 lawyers as part of the intellectual property and technology litigation group following the combination, Thompson Hine firmwide managing partner Tony White said.

Credit: muddymari/Adobe Stock

San Francisco Skyline.

"We've worked with them, [and] we've been local counsels on cases together," White said of Turner Boyd Seraphine. "We're getting the best of both worlds: Expansion in great new markets and of our client base and expansion of talented lawyers, with the same kind of small firm in a national firm's body and culture," he added.

Turner Boyd Seraphine handles a host of IP matters, including copyright, trade secret and patent litigation. Co-founding partner, Karen Boyd said the firm's current clientele includes chipmaker NVIDIA, Canva, Invisalign maker Align Technology, medical device manufacturer Medtronic, DNA testing company Natera, and e-scooter manufacturer Lime, which is now owned by Uber Technologies. The firm also works with AI network tech company Juniper Networks, which was recently acquired by Hewlett Packard Enterprise for $14 billion, pending government approval.

"We have been in touch with all of our active clients and anticipate that all of them will be moving here," Boyd said in an interview on Tuesday. She added that "when we told everybody that our billing rates were going to stay exactly the same, like we were to hold them through 2026 and that we didn't expect them to be changing dramatically thereafter, that was quite persuasive."

Turner Boyd Seraphine said the firm was routinely courted by other, larger firms for a merger, sometimes to the tune of at least one call per month. The firm said all but one partner, who was approaching retirement, will join Thompson Hine.

"The pre-existing relationship was a differentiator here, we had worked with Thompson Hine, so that discussion started out differently than a cold call," co-founding partner Jennifer Seraphine said. "We also found that some of the impediments that might have been in place were not," she added, noting that the firm's ability to maintain billing rates through 2026 was key. "We have very close billing rates, and that's something that, had we joined a different, bigger firm, I don't think that would have been the case and we wouldn't have been willing to do it for that reason," Seraphine said.

White said Thompson Hine's focus on more affordable rates, which are "dramatically less than the Am Law 1-75 firms are charging," allows the firm ample room to expand. "With adding this team, we now have this coast-to-coast IP litigation practice group with the capabilities to handle just about anything our clients want to send us, at an Am Law second hundred price point," he added.

Thompson Hine remains on a growth trajectory in California; White said the firm has "essentially doubled" the firm's Los Angeles office head count in the past 18 months. Some 22 lawyers are now based there.

White said Thompson Hine's growth strategy continues to be focused on "small firms and groups of people that work together around a shared client base," and will look towards similar combinations or acquisitions throughout this year.

Editor's Note: An earlier version of this story misstated the head count of the firm's intellectual property and technology litigation group. The error has been corrected.