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CHAMBERS & PARTNERS USA RANKINGS

'Litigation powerhouse' rolling strong

BY KYLE GRABOWSKI / DENVER BUSINESS JOURNAL

There's a saying at Bartlit Beck Herman Palenchar & Scott LLP: "If you pay for hours, you get hours. If you pay for results, you get results."

So the firm gets paid on results; it doesn't charge clients per hour, but instead works out results-based fee arrangements with them. This idea and a focus on teaching and experience, in addition to success in the courtroom, caused Chambers Law to name Bartlit Beck a Band 1 choice for Litigation-General Commercial Law.

Founding partner Fred Bartlit said he views his law firm "like the Navy Seal Team 6 — small, highly trained, and highly focused."

He said most law firms hire "100 lawyers or 200 lawyers a year," but few are around eight or 10 years later. Bartlit Beck, however, hires one or two "stars" per year on a permanent basis. "There's no up or out," Bartlit said. "We hope after 10 years they're all left [still with the firm]. We think experience, mentoring and teaching create higher quality than inexperience."

Bartlit said having offices in Denver and Chicago give it an edge in recruiting. In Chicago, where he's from, Bartlit praised the sports, culture and restaurants. For Denver, Bartlit said skiing, outdoor activities and the weather help draw talent. "We are able to get in Chicago and Denver the very top young men and women in America," Bartlit said. "You can succeed in a business when you get the best people."

Bartlit Beck's business model focuses on quality and experience in addition to bringing cases to trial. According to Bartlit, 85 percent of its lawyers took a witness "at trial" last year, which means they asked questions of a witness in a courtroom. According to partner Joe Smith, only about 5 percent of commercial litigators do this annually.

"Trying a case, in particular, requires a very specific set of skills," he said. "To take



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Fred Bartlit and Joe Smith are partners at Bartlit Beck Herman Palenchar & Scott LLP. The firm ranked in Band 1 for litigation in general commercial law.

BARTLIT BECK HERMAN PALENCHAR & SCOTT LLP

Band 1: Litigation-General Commercial
Law

a case to verdict as opposed to fashioning a settlement, which is how most of these cases end with most law firms, is a specialized

work, and that's what we bring to the table."

Bartlit first decided to adopt his model while he was one of the heads at Kirkland & Ellis LLP in Chicago. "I thought what a waste; I thought quality would be better if everybody was permanent. Turns out morale is way better, collegiality is way better, everything is way better," Bartlit said. "If people are permanent and they get experience, then they do way better work. If you've never seen something done before, it's hard to do a good job at it."