

# BOSTON BUSINESS JOURNAL

## EXECUTIVE PROFILE | MARK BETTENCOURT

# Goodwin's 'big thinker' takes charge

A Boston-based tech lawyer takes on the role of managing partner of the national firm on Oct. 1

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The last few years have been good to the law firm Goodwin, to put it mildly.

Locally, Goodwin has dominated the handling of initial public offerings in the bustling life sciences industry, and the Boston-bred firm is even winning work on high-profile Silicon Valley stock offerings like Lyft Inc.'s. And that's just the IPOs. Goodwin's transactional and litigation work, taken together, has powered it to new financial heights. In a four-year span, it grew its annual revenue by more than half, to \$1.2 billion.

It's a strong position for a new managing partner to start his reign. But at the same time, the pressure is undeniable: The firm's climbed 12 spots in the ranking of highest-grossing U.S. law firms since 2015, to No. 26, even as plenty of competitors have themselves experienced record growth. How long can Goodwin keep up that pace?

To Mark Bettencourt, the Boston-based technology lawyer who takes over as Goodwin's firmwide managing partner on Oct. 1, the recent success only marks the beginning of a plan that's been a long time coming.

"I was actively involved in developing a lot of the strategy that the firm's currently executing, so I believe passionately in the strategy," he said earlier this month, sitting in a conference room on the top floor of Goodwin's three-year-old Seaport District office. "I wouldn't say we're anywhere near the full implementation of that strategy."

Bettencourt has helped shape Goodwin's attack plan over years of service on the firm's management and executive committees. The firm offers a full suite of legal services, from intellectual property to capital markets to white collar defense, but it isn't intent on winning work from every single industry. Instead, it focuses on five: real estate, private equity, financial services, technology and life sciences.

Practically every law firm in Boston describes those last two industries as target growth areas. But nearly 15 years ago, Goodwin scored a major advantage when it brought aboard two dozen partners from the soon-to-fold Testa Hurwitz & Thibault LLP, a Boston firm nationally renowned for its tech-industry connections and prowess. Bettencourt was one of those partners.

The team's tech expertise has proven a boon to Goodwin as those two industries have become



### ► CLOSER LOOK

#### Mark Bettencourt

**Title:** Incoming managing partner, Goodwin

**Age:** 50

**Residence:** Hingham

**Education:** University of Notre Dame, bachelor's degree in government and philosophy, 1991; New York University, law degree, 1994

more essential cogs in the local, national and global economies. Bettencourt himself has spearheaded Goodwin's transactional work in the tech space, including recently for big-name local companies like HubSpot Inc. and restaurant-software maker Toast Inc.

Now, Goodwin's other favored sectors, finance and real estate, are making tech a bigger part of their business models. Bettencourt sees that intermingling as key to Goodwin's future growth.

The firm already has a practice group dedicated to financial services technology, or fintech.

"We're seeing them come together, and they want their law firms to understand the opportunities that are being unleashed by this overlap, this convergence among these industries," Bettencourt said.

The Raynham native rose quickly at Goodwin after coming aboard from Testa. In 2008, three years after he joined the firm, he was handpicked by then-chair Regina Pisa as one of the young partners to serve on something called the "big think" committee. Its charge was a weighty one: to consider how the firm should change over the next decade-plus.

"Immediately it was clear that he was a natural leader," said Andrew Sucoff, chair of Goodwin's Boston office and one of the other members of the "big think" panel. "He's jovial and fun to be with, but is also driven and focused. He helps people get to the right place, but not in a hammer-you-over-the-head way."

The committee spent months compiling a roughly 60-page report outlining what Goodwin should accomplish by 2020. The "big thinkers" supported splitting the chair and managing partner roles and other changes designed to foster a more collaborative, risk-taking culture.

With 2020 mere months away, Bettencourt said much of the committee's vision has been accomplished. "By some estimations, we've overachieved that mark, but by any fair estimation, we came pretty close," he said.

Now, Bettencourt and incoming chair Rob Insolia, who is based in New York, will help determine the vision for Goodwin over the next decade and beyond. That could include further global expansion. In the past five years, the firm has opened Paris and Frankfurt offices. Boston remains its largest office, however. And Bettencourt's upcoming ascension to managing partner means that for the first time in five years, one of the firm's two top leaders will sit in Boston.

"We are as much Boston as we are anything," Bettencourt said. "What makes us very special is the tenacity and resilience that you get from being from Boston, whether you're by birth or by choice."

He's confident the good times won't end soon. "We think that there's really a significant amount of growth that is ahead of us," Bettencourt said, "and as fanciful as this may sound, probably at levels higher than what we've enjoyed over the last couple of years."