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INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF PRIMERUS LAW FIRMS

FALL 2018

**President's Podium:
Serving Our Communities**

**In-House Lawyers
Find Value with Primerus**

**Six Diamonds:
Primerus Firms Sparkle for
Clients Around the World**

Current Legal Topics:

Asia Pacific

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North America





In-House Lawyers Find Value with Primerus

Susie Woodard was taught to believe what many general counsel were: when it comes to law firms, bigger is better.

But since getting to know Primerus and its small to mid-sized law firms, Woodard has changed her mind.

“I have always been in-house. I was raised to believe that you use big law firms,” said Woodard, who is senior vice president and general counsel for Riviana Foods Inc. in Houston, Texas. “This has certainly changed my attitude.”

Woodard learned about Primerus through member firm Gordon Arata Montgomery Barnett in New Orleans, Louisiana. Firm attorney John Y. Pearce invited her to attend the Primerus International Convocation in Miami this past May.

“I was just blown away by the whole experience,” Woodard said. “From the moment I walked in and met people from Primerus, I understood exactly why they’re good lawyers and good people.”

Woodard was referring to the familiar Primerus tagline of “good people who happen to be good lawyers.” Based on her interactions there, she became convinced that small to mid-sized, high quality law firms are an ideal fit for many of her needs.

“I just love Primerus,” she said. “I think it’s an in-house counsel’s dream.”

Her company, Riviana Foods, is the United States’ largest processor, marketer and distributor of branded and private label rice products, as well as the second largest producer and marketer of pasta products in the U.S.

She often needs to hire outside counsel in various jurisdictions, and she’s looking for quality attorneys she can trust.

“What clicked for me as in-house counsel was why I should go to a smaller law firm rather than big law. What Primerus law firms together are is like big law firm,” Woodard said. “I have ready for me 3,000 lawyers in [more than] 40 countries that are going to give me lower cost, efficient service and good relationships.”

She said that because of technology, all law firms, regardless of size, are on the same playing field with the same resources.

“I think that in-house counsel are missing out. I don’t care what size your company is, we all have all kinds of sizes

of legal projects,” Woodard said. “The only time I can see needing a big law firm is if you have a ‘mega’ acquisition or merger and you need a vast number of people to do due diligence. Otherwise, there’s no reason not to use a small or mid-sized law firm.”

She appreciates that Primerus strictly vets firms before inviting them to join and then continues to screen them for quality every year they remain members. She also likes that Primerus then puts them at her fingertips through the website (primerus.com) and personal interactions with members she met at the International Convocation. In cases where Primerus does not have the lawyer she needs, she knows Primerus will use their resources to find another attorney for her.

Connections Around the World

Jose Baron, tax director for Ingersoll-Rand Latin America in Miami, Florida, also attended the Primerus International Convocation in Miami. He was a guest of Felipe Chapula, a partner of Primerus member firm Cacheaux, Cavazos & Newton, which has various locations throughout Mexico.

After working with the firm for more than 10 years, Baron has been very pleased with the quality of their work and commitment to excellent customer service. He was pleased to be connected with other Primerus firms like them at the event.

“I am very excited about the opportunity that this conference has given me to find other ‘Cacheaux’ outside of Mexico,” he said.

Baron said the best part was the understated, non-salesy tone of the event. He found the attorneys very easy to interact with and get to know – and that’s the foundation of the relationships he wants to establish with outside counsel.

He has worked with both the world’s largest law firms, as well as smaller, regional law firms.

“I get more attention when I work with small firms, and the fact that the fees are reasonable helps,” Baron said. “I get more

personal service, and I know that I can talk with a partner at any time with a small firm.”

Using Primerus Resources to Expand

Heather Friedl, senior house counsel for Society Insurance in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, learned of Primerus through law school colleague James Whalen, who is now an attorney with Primerus member firm Lipe Lyons Murphy Nahrstadt & Pontikis in Chicago. She attended her first Primerus event three years ago and has since attended three more events and used several Primerus law firms in various cities.

Friedl appreciates the quality and “cutting-edge” relevance of the educational offerings at Primerus events, she said. She also values the focus on building relationships between attorneys and clients.

“As a client, you often feel like you are a piece of meat in water with a lot of sharks,” Friedl said.

But at Primerus events, she said, “People are talking to you, not imposing themselves on you. There’s not a frenzy of passing business cards around.”

With her company expanding to write policies in a new state every year, she looks to Primerus both to find attorneys as well as to help guide her company’s growth.

“I feel this as a really good opportunity each time we are moving into a new jurisdiction,” she said. “We make decisions about where we want to go based on a variety of factors, including our conversations with attorneys.”

Primerus attorneys have come to Society Insurance’s offices to give presentations about relevant topics as well as to train their insurance adjusters. Based on those interactions with Primerus law firms, they have recently expanded into Tennessee and will expand into Minnesota this year.

“It has been a tremendous thing for us,” Friedl said. **P**

Six Diamonds: Primerus Firms Sparkle for Clients Around the World

When Primerus was created in 1992, its founding members wanted the public to know what makes a good lawyer and how to find one. This became the basis for the Six Pillars, which still stand more than 25 years later as the values that every member of Primerus must adhere to in their daily practice of law:

- **Integrity**
- **Excellent work product**
- **Reasonable fees**
- **Continuing legal education**
- **Civility**
- **Community service**

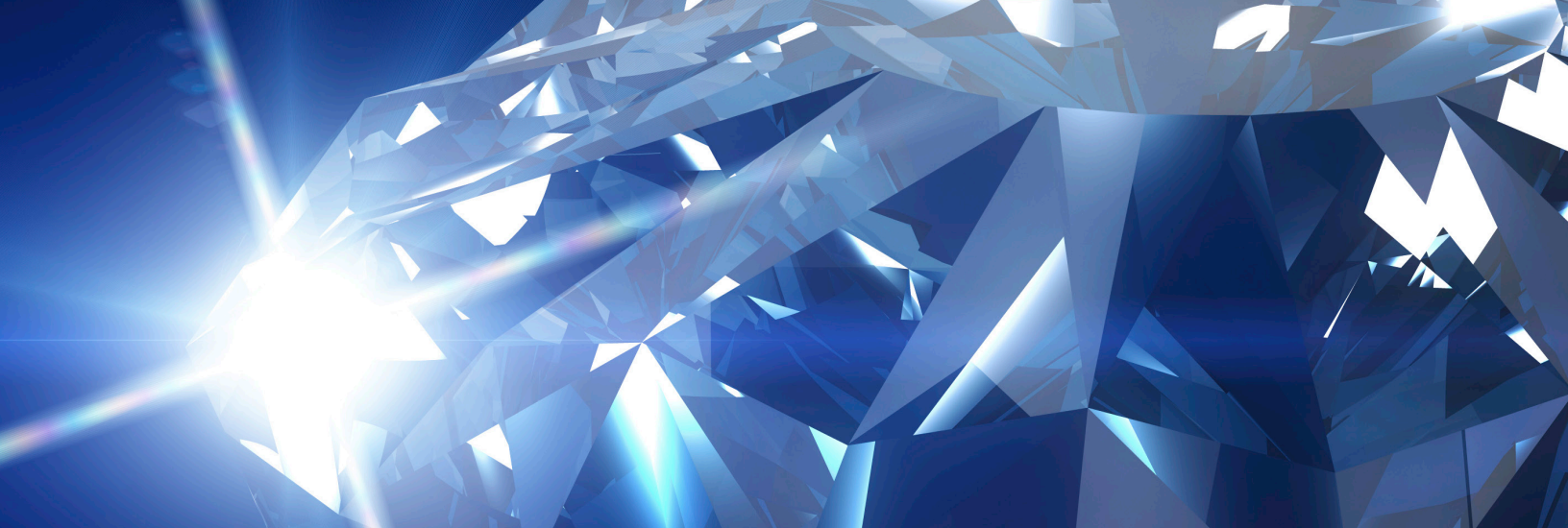
In 2018, Primerus added the Six Diamonds. Designed as a way to describe what Primerus offers to new member firms around the world, the Six Diamonds also carry a strong message to clients about what Primerus firms bring them.

“The Six Diamonds help us show member firms and clients alike all that Primerus offers,” Primerus President and Founder John C. “Jack” Buchanan said. “Together with the Six Pillars, they describe the essence of Primerus.”

The Six Diamonds are:

1. Primerus levels the playing field for small and mid-sized law firms.

In a law firm climate in which many in-house counsel have been conditioned to turn first to big law firms, Primerus helps the world’s finest small and mid-sized firms compete – and helps clients find them. Primerus travels around the world searching for high quality, small to mid-sized law firms who are committed to performing quality work for reasonable fees. Primerus submits the firms to stringent screening before they are admitted to the society, and then continues to review their performance every year they remain members. Primerus then brings these law firms together into a society to work together for clients.



"What clicked for me as in-house counsel was why I should go to a smaller law firm rather than big law. What Primerus law firms together are is like big law firm," Woodard said. "I have ready for me 3,000 lawyers in [more than] 40 countries that are going to give me lower cost, efficient service and good relationships."

— **Susie Woodard, senior vice president and general counsel for Riviana Foods Inc. in Houston, Texas**

2. Primerus facilitates face-to-face time with potential corporate clients.

Primerus organizes many opportunities every year for attorneys and clients to meet in person through events like the annual Primerus Defense Institute Convocation and Primerus International Convocation, as well as efforts like the Primerus Client Resource Institute. These are not your typical law firm network gatherings. Rather, they're filled with highly relevant legal seminars and plenty of time for clients and attorneys to get to know one another personally and professionally through multi-day events. Clients tell us they often emerge from these events with new, lifelong friends, as well as valuable professional connections.

"As a client, you often feel like you are a piece of meat in water with a lot of sharks." But at Primerus events, "People are talking to you, not imposing themselves on you. There's not a frenzy of passing business cards around."

— **Heather Friedl, senior in-house counsel for Society Insurance in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin**

3. Primerus facilitates member-to-member referrals and collaboration.

With 3,000 lawyers in 170 law firms in nearly 50 countries, Primerus can be likened to a large, virtual law firm with countless opportunities for collaboration among members and with clients. Primerus calls itself a society and not a network, as law firms networks are often perceived as just referral organizations. Primerus brings so much more to relationships between lawyers and clients, calling upon members to become active partners in the society – making connections that will benefit clients in many ways.

"To think that there is a Primerus member firm virtually anywhere on this planet is incredible. Primerus has enabled the small or mid-sized firm to practice on a different level because of the contacts and relationships it encourages."

— **Robin Lewis of member firm Mandelbaum Salsburg in Roseland, New Jersey**

4. Primerus provides a powerful website and social media presence.

Primerus features its members on primerus.com, creating a go-to source for clients around the world to find the lawyer they need, where they need it. And if Primerus does not have the lawyer a client needs with the right expertise, and in the right location, members work together to use their connections to find one.

"Primerus is a great organization. I have been really pleased. It's the ultimate resource. Now if I need someone quick, I don't have to waste time going through all those steps."

— **Mark Di Giovanni, vice president of litigation management for Global Indemnity Group in Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania (said of going to primerus.com instead of other resources to find an attorney)**

5. Primerus provides a comprehensive strategic marketing program.

Primerus is a trusted business development partner for its member firms, making it easier to get the word out to clients about all they offer. Clients around the world tell us it's a struggle when they're looking for quality, smaller law firms. Because Primerus gets the word out about their member firms, it makes finding those quality firms so much easier.

"Hiring a law firm to me is very precarious. It's hit or miss. What I like about the Primerus model is that the firms are already vetted. There is a screening process, and if something goes wrong with a firm, I need to contact someone who can hold the firm accountable. That to me is the value."

— **Rodolfo Rivera, chief international counsel for Fidelity National Financial, Inc. in Jacksonville, Florida**

6. Primerus provides a global platform of the world's finest law firms.

After starting in the United States, over the past 25 years Primerus has expanded to include 170 law firms in nearly 50 countries. Even the world's largest law firms cannot offer the global coverage Primerus does. Because Primerus firms are independent law firms, they avoid the potential conflicts of interest that arise with big law firms. Clients can turn to Primerus with confidence, knowing it will open a world of opportunities.

"We joined Primerus because we wanted to be able to offer our clients quality legal services worldwide. As a member firm, we are able to share knowledge and to refer our clients to the best lawyers and offer them specialized service all over the world."

— **Reinier Russell of member firm Russell Advocaten in Amsterdam, Netherlands**