

Gray Reed Latest Law Firm To Open Consulting Biz

By **Jessica Corso**

Law360 (August 16, 2021, 4:03 PM EDT) -- Texas-based Gray Reed & McGraw LLP last week announced the creation of Gray Reed Advisory Services, joining the ranks of law firms that have opened consulting businesses to expand the services available to clients.

Gray Reed Advisory offers advice on business strategy, operations, marketing and information technology, according to the firm. The new business is led by Mark Gargiulo, who has been the firm's chief operating officer for 11 years. Gargiulo is joined at Gray Reed Advisory by Chief Marketing Officer Michael Blachly and IT director Jason Rodriguez.

Managing partner Cary Gray told Law360 that the firm has been helping its legal clients with business problems for a long time, but it wasn't always set up to answer clients' questions.

For example, Gray said that when Gargiulo joined the law firm from consulting firm Accenture PLC in 2010, among the first things he did was revamp its vendor procurement process to save the firm \$2 million in two years.

Gray said he thinks Gargiulo can provide the same services to some of the law firm's clients that haven't yet thought about how to address the needs of their growing businesses.

"He brought a level of sophistication to our operations, into the people involved in our operations, that's uncommon for organizations of our size," Gray said. "And it just allowed us to observe the needs of midsize businesses for this kind of support."

While the advisory firm says it will represent clients of all sizes, Gargiulo said the firm's focus will be on consulting with small and midsize companies making \$10 million to \$100 million in revenue per year. Those companies often don't have access to larger consulting firms, he said.

"This market is completely not only ignored, it's intentionally ignored," he said. The consulting business has already taken in clients from the oil and gas, construction and legal industry sectors, he said.

Gray Reed joins a growing trend of law firms opening consulting firms, expanding into territory long belonging to companies like Accenture and the Big Four accounting firms. Among them in the past four years are Paul Hastings LLP, Ropes & Gray LLP and Dentons.

Gray said he and Gargiulo were inspired to open a consulting business around five years ago after

visiting the offices of Jackson, Mississippi-based Butler Snow LLP. Butler Snow opened its consultancy, Butler Snow Advisory, in 2011 to offer clients advice in exit planning, executive outsourcing and capital structure.

"That caused us to think about what it might look like or where we might add value," Gray said. "We were ready to take this next step."

Gray Reed employs 160 attorneys in three Texas offices and 30 practice areas, according to the firm's website.

--Additional reporting by Aebra Coe. Editing by Nicole Bleier.

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