

By Thomas J. Shroyer

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IS THERE A “RIGHT SIZE” FOR LAW FIRMS?

The recent and sudden closing of the Rider Bennett law firm shocked and saddened the local bar and our law firm (although we are pleased to have been joined by four of their attorneys). Following the demise of other large Twin Cities law firms in recent years, this event has again raised questions about the role played by law firm size.

Indeed, several media reports about the closing of Rider Bennett suggested that a mid-sized firm like Rider Bennett, which ended with a census of 90 attorneys, could no longer compete in the current market for legal services. But is that true?

The facts suggest otherwise. First, Rider Bennett was not the first prominent local law firm to fail, having been preceded by, for example, the much larger firms of Popham Haik (over 150 attorneys) and Doherty, Rumble & Butler (over 130 attorneys.) On a national level, recent years have witnessed the demise of several “mega” law firms (Brobeck — over 600 attorneys; Coudert Brothers

— more than 800 attorneys; Jenkins & Gilcrest — over 500 attorneys). If size “matters,” why are firms of such magnitude also failing?

The answer, as we have previously suggested in this space, is that law firms fail when they are not “right-sized” for the needs of their clients. At Moss & Barnett, we have paid very careful attention to this factor — for example, by recently adding our excellent patent and trademark attorneys in response to client-driven needs instead of implementing an “if we build it they will come” strategy. Moreover, as our firm is just now looking to clear the bar with a robust census of 75 attorneys, we remain as stable and successful as ever!

As always, we offer a heartfelt thanks to all of our many clients and friends for granting us the privilege to be of service.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thomas J. Shroyer'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'T' and 'S'.