

Top Boutiques of 2015

GIANT SLAYERS: THE SMALL, HYPER-FOCUSED LAW FIRMS THAT TAKE ON BIG MATTERS AND WIN

CORPORATE

Stubbs, Alderton & Markiles



Alexander Drecun / Special to the Daily Journal

From left, Greg Akselrud, John McIlvery, Kevin Debre, Scott Alderton and Michael Sherman

Every good idea needs a little room to grow.

Stubbs, Alderton & Markiles LLP specialize in protecting and fostering those good ideas until they become the next big app, software product or other emerging technology.

“Our objective is to be cutting edge and provide services for emerging technology and technology clients in Los Angeles,” said co-founder Scott Alderton.

Stubbs Alderton is a business law firm with a niche in emerging growth and technology. They handle public securities, mergers and acquisitions, entertainment, intellectual property and brand protection while representing Southern California businesses from venture-backed emerging growth companies to midsize and large

SANTA MONICA/SHERMAN OAKS

companies involved in technology, entertainment, video games, apparel and medical devices.

“It’s really fun to work with smart people who may not have the level of sophistication that a Fortune 500 company may have,” Alderton said. “What they lack is the knowledge base of having gone down an evolution path of a company.”

As a boutique, Stubbs Alderton offers clients flexibility to create alternative fee arrangements, which can help emerging businesses get off the ground. In fact, the firm represented Skype for nearly two years before paying anything back. Sometimes, the firm has used a venture capital approach, taking equity positions in companies in lieu of payments.

“In addition, consistent with pro-

fessional ethics, we do have our own investment funds, in instances where clients are seeking taxes and capital,” said partner Michael Sherman.

Stubbs Alderton has represented several high-profile clients, including Hello Tech and Beats by Dr. Dre, until its sale to Apple last year. The firm is currently representing Iron Clad, a publicly-traded company specializing in task-specific performance wear, in a dispute over an exclusive distributor contract.

Alderton acknowledges that for every business that works out, a number more fail.

“If you want to be in that emerging technologies space, you have to take those risks,” he said.

Partners Sherman and Alderton also founded a crowd funding platform called FlashFunders that seeks to empower entrepreneurs to access

the public markets more efficiently than S1 corporations. The firm offers its own co-working spaces, including law and market services to startups. Already, a dozen companies are working out of the firm’s space in Santa Monica.

With 28 attorneys, the firm has the expertise to help clients in most circumstances, Alderton said. If not, the firm will help find the right resource to resolve the problem, he said. Alderton said he hopes to continue to build the firm’s reputation as a go-to source for emerging technology and technology clients in Los Angeles.

“I don’t know how big we’ll be, but I can tell you this: We constantly turn down overtures from large firms to be acquired and its same with lateral partners,” he said.

—Ryan Van Velzer