



NICK SIMONITE | ABJ

Robert Bernhoft considers moving his law firm to Austin from Milwaukee a strategic decision.

Firm known for highly visible clients moves HQ to Austin

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The Bernhoft Law Firm SC chose Austin for its new headquarters over Nashville because found the Capital City a draw for creative people such as the firm's employees and clients.

The firm, which had been based in Milwaukee, prides itself on thinking outside of the usual parameters in high-profile criminal defense, criminal tax law and investment fraud recovery cases. The 11-year-old law firm has an acquittal rate of about 95 percent.

"Our shop has proven the value of a different approach," founder Robert Bernhoft said.

Bernhoft has represented clients ranging from celebrities to family-owned construction companies, and the outcomes of several of his cases have been significant. The firm is well-known for representing Wesley Snipes in what *The New York Times* called "the most prominent tax prosecution since Leona Helmsly." The firm was also responsible for getting Ralph Nader on the national ballot in Wisconsin and getting IRS whistleblower Joseph Banister acquitted on all federal charges of tax fraud and conspiracy.

After Bernhoft turned 50, he made a strategic decision to move the firm's main office.

"Moving the national headquarters to Austin gave us the natural opportunity to rethink what [our] presence should look

like," he said.

The firm moved to its new 3,300-square-foot office west of the Texas Capitol with a core group of four attorneys and one paralegal in November, and it plans to hire six employees locally.

Bernhoft also plans to hire a couple more attorneys and another senior-level partner over the next two to three years so that the firm can begin to accept other business, such as political litigation. But Bernhoft said he won't let the firm become a big shop because he would rather manage a finite number of clients and do it well.

The firm has only handled about 10 cases in Texas, but Bernhoft expects to gain more in Houston, Dallas and Austin because of its new location.

The law firm has a branch office on the Avenue of the Stars in Los Angeles because about a third of its clients are from California, but Bernhoft said he would like to close that office and open a boutique office in Beverly Hills or Santa Monica.

Bernhoft said the majority of his clients come from economically robust areas such as New York and Los Angeles and tend to be entrepreneurs.

He has become increasingly concerned about the climate for tax law enforcement, saying an innocent business mistake can result in a client's criminal indictment.

The over-criminalization of tax errors such as unintentional misallocated expenses "can have a chilling effect on entrepreneurship and a depressing effect on the economy," Bernhoft said.

Recruiting, collaboration spur software company's relocation

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Sage Nonprofit Solutions is preparing to move into new digs that it believes will better reflect its culture and help it recruit top tech minds.

Sage Nonprofit Solutions, which is part of U.K.-based software giant The Sage Group Plc, has more than 120 employees at its Northwest Austin headquarters. The company will be moving in mid-March to a LEED-certified building about four miles

away, called Pecan Park. It will occupy about 21,000 square feet of space in the office park. The company provides fundraising and fund accounting technology for nonprofit and governmental entities and has two other small U.S. offices, one in New York and one in Toronto.

The company thought it was time to move to an office that would lend itself to its "agile culture and innovation," said Krista Endsley, general manager and senior vice

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