



Dan Nardello

EDITORS' NOTE After working in private practice at Patterson, Belknap, Webb and Tyler, Dan Nardello worked as an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Criminal Division, Southern District of New York, beginning his tenure under then U.S. Attorney Rudolph Giuliani. He headed the European office of an international investigative firm after leaving the U.S. Attorney's Office. The next phase of his career focused on providing expert litigation support, global asset tracing, fraud investigations, and complex due diligence services for private clients. Nardello is a graduate of Columbia College and received his J.D. from the New York University School of Law.

COMPANY BRIEF Nardello & Co. (nardelloandco.com) is a global investigations firm with experienced professionals handling a broad range of issues including FCPA/UK Bribery Act and other corruption-related investigations, civil and white collar criminal litigation support, independent investigations, asset tracing, strategic intelligence and political risk assessment, computer forensics, and reputational due diligence. The firm's clients include the world's leading law firms and financial institutions, Fortune 500 and FTSE 100 companies, governments and NGOs. With offices in New York, London, Washington D.C., Miami, Atlanta, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Milan, and Dubai, Nardello & Co.'s professional staff includes former U.S. federal prosecutors, former general counsels of multinational corporations, former law enforcement personnel and intelligence operatives, licensed investigators, research analysts, former journalists, financial crime specialists, forensic accountants, and computer forensic experts.

What was your vision when you founded this company in 2003?

I was a partner in another investigative firm and living in London. I was running the international operations of that firm. We had sold it to a publicly traded company and I was at the end of my employment agreement with them. I wanted to establish a firm that was totally independent and didn't have the pressures of a publicly traded company and that would be focused on recruiting and

Putting Clients First

An Interview with
Dan Nardello, Chief Executive Officer, Nardello & Co.

retaining the smartest people in this business and servicing a terrific client portfolio.

I had developed really strong relationships with lawyers, general counsels, private equity firms, and hedge funds, which had become my clients. What I saw was a need and a willingness to pay if I gave people personalized service that was responsive, as well as provided the highest work product and conducted business ethically and legally. This was my founding principle and is what has fueled our growth and remains our mission statement to this day.

Also, I'm a lawyer and a former federal prosecutor in Manhattan, and I wanted to bring a legal discipline to the finding of facts and to make sure we were not just dumping data on people but doing a lawyer's analysis on the information we found to make sure we corroborated it. There is a difference between information and evidence that can be used in court. That was the other unique selling point.

As we've grown, we've added more lawyers to the staff, including another former federal prosecutor and a few state prosecutors. The executive who runs our operations in the Americas is also our general counsel.

I wasn't looking to be the biggest when I started the firm. Quality is not necessarily proportionate to size. We simply wanted to be the best in our space.

There are a number of players in this space whose services can sound similar. How difficult is it to differentiate?

There are many firms offering services that sound the same. The differentiation is in the execution and the way we communicate with clients. Most of our interesting work comes in from people who have been referred to us or who know us.

In comparing ourselves to others, we always ask the potential clients to make sure they're not comparing apples to oranges. What we offer is a thoroughly exhaustive look at a subject as opposed to a commoditized superficial product that many competitors provide.

How do you define your sweet spot for services?

A bit of it is determined by geography. In China, Korea, India, and several other jurisdictions outside the U.S., we're looking at corruption issues and FCPA generated work. There is more of that there than in New York, where what we're doing is big ticket civil litigation. In the U.S., we do a great deal of work with white collar criminal defense law, with many cases that have been resolved favorably

for the defendant, and we do work related to shareholder activism.

In London, we're doing a significant number of asset searches involving foreign sovereigns all over the world, and in London there is also a steady diet of dispute work and many cases involving Russian oligarchs.

In Dubai, much of our work has involved asset searches and anti-corruption investigations, as well as terrorist financing investigations where we're trying to obviate terrorist financing issues.

In Tokyo, we do a mixture of litigation work. Much of the due diligence there is driven by concerns about dealing with folks connected to Japanese organized crime.

We have investigations in the Ukraine and Sub-Saharan Africa as well.

What makes it interesting is that there is a real variety of cases and they are jurisdictionally different. Intellectually, this keeps us going.

Is cyber-risk a focus for you?

We don't do the technical aspects of a cybersecurity breach, but we have handled investigative work that runs parallel to any investigation of a breach. We have done this in extremely significant and well-known breach cases.

We have a thriving practice in digital investigations and computer forensics. We have teams around the world that can conduct forensic investigations of electronic devices.

For cybersecurity and risk of penetration and breaches, we work alongside cybersecurity experts in completing the investigative footwork that comes with that.

Did you know early on that this would work and, as you look back at the past, has it been what you expected?

I knew that if I stayed true to my vision and what I enjoyed doing, which is establishing long-term relationships with our clients and doing good work, the firm would succeed. I could not have predicted it would have grown so nicely.

One of the most rewarding elements is that, as the business has grown, we've maintained the culture I desired, and that is one of putting clients first and doing things ethically and legally.

As I get older, it is also very rewarding to see the talent of the people we have here, including young people who speak several languages and have lived all over the world. It is an impressive group.

We also have a collaborative culture. All of our offices work together, and people rotate among different offices so we're truly an international team. ●