



TOP INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAWYERS 2022



Catherine M. Polizzi

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Polizzi is the type of attorney who is unlikely to appear in a courtroom. She will be the first one to remark that she is not a litigator, but not because she doesn't have a passion for the law. Also, unlike most attorneys, she has dual doctorate degrees in molecular biology and biochemistry.

She describes her job as "translating important technological and scientific advancements into patents, the assets that people fight over later."

Global brands and startups in the life sciences industry rely on Polizzi for her unique approach to risk assessment, IP strategy and challenges.

Dealing with the medical science of the future, "Keeps me excited and interested," she said. "It's a very challenging job. Many technologies and issues are very different, but they all have the potential to produce very important medical developments, therapies and diagnostics."

In her almost 30-year career, she's worked with clients such as Bristol-Myers Squibb, Genentech, Dynavax Technologies, SQZ Biotechnologies, Seagen, Dewpoint Therapeutics and Nestlé.

When Bristol-Myers Squibb acquired Celgene Corporation for \$74 billion in 2019, it relied on Polizzi to

lead the strategy and prosecution for Celgene's multibillion-dollar blockbuster anti-cancer drug Abraxane.

"It's very humbling, because you see all this creativity, energy and potential of these technologies, and you're part of it, and you're trying to help to get these into the form of a legal document that encapsulates them," she said.

Polizzi's work includes IP strategy and due diligence counseling helping to develop patent portfolios for blockbuster drugs as part of a team where she is the most senior member, but "this type of work is always a team effort. I do not work solo."

Companies approach Polizzi because of her reputation or because she has had a relationship with them for years. "I've worked with Genentech for over 15 years," she said as an example.

Genentech consults her for patent and prosecution services on its multibillion-dollar portfolios, including cancer drugs Kadcyla, Perjeta, Gazyva and Tecentriq.

Polizzi was a key member of the team that represented Genentech in its patent infringement assertion against Eli Lilly, fending off a bid for \$10 million in attorneys' fees.

Genentech sued Lilly in 2018 alleging patent infringement covering



methods of making antibodies to a specific antigen over rights to the discovery, but later withdrew the suit. *Genentech, Inc v. Eli Lilly and Company* 3:2018cv01518 (S.D. Cal., filed Jul. 2, 2018).

Polizzi recognizes that "Challenges happen at every level. The technology is quite complex. The examination process has you draft the applications, which have many facets and dimensions. Only then you worry about the law and the criteria you have to fill to have a claim. Many times you deal with international law and how it will work in other countries."

Polizzi describes her practice as a dance, where she has to jump between issues and applications and sometimes work on up to 10 different patents in a day.

Federico Lo Giudice