



Martha S. Samuelson

EDITORS' NOTE Martha Samuelson is an expert in antitrust, finance, and valuation – combining more than 25 years of applying economic and financial analysis to complex legal disputes with five years of experience as a practicing trial attorney. She has managed economic analyses related to antitrust issues in numerous government, competitor, and consumer matters on behalf of a wide range of clients such as MasterCard, Intel, and Microsoft as well as for major securities and finance matters. Samuelson has moderated a panel at the Federal Trade Commission and Department of Justice joint public workshop on most-favored nation clauses, and has presented to the ABA, NYSBA, and NYCBA on a range of competition topics. Samuelson currently sits on the board of directors for Boston Medical Center. She received her J.D. from Harvard Law School, her M.S. in management from MIT Sloan School of Management, and her B.A. in English from Yale University.

COMPANY BRIEF Analysis Group (analysisgroup.com) is one of the largest economic consulting firms based in North America. Its more than 600 professionals provide economic, financial, and business strategy consulting to leading law firms, corporations, and government agencies. The firm's 11 offices are located in Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Los Angeles, Menlo Park, New York, San Francisco, Washington, D.C., Montreal, and Beijing.

What was the vision for the Analysis Group in the early days?

The firm was founded in 1981. Analysis Group was around 70 people when I joined in 1992. Now we're almost 700. I was attracted to the values of the two founders. The founders were focused on growing the firm; they were eager to grow partners and future leaders. They saw distributing the equity in the firm to the other partners and having shared ownership at the senior level as central to the growth.

Where did the growth come from and how do you maintain the culture as you grow?

We grew quickly because we have an unusual management system for a professional services firm. We run the firm genuinely as one firm. We

Removing Barriers to Growth

An Interview with Martha S. Samuelson,
President and Chief Executive Officer, Analysis Group

have one P&L for the whole organization as opposed to P&Ls for practice areas or offices. This encourages collaboration and allows our clients to be directed to the best possible resources within the firm. We don't have sales credits for partners; instead, we reward their role in the growth of the firm, the development of the staff, and our reputation with our clients. We have managed to develop and sustain a shared belief that people will do best if they focus on the firm's long term growth instead of their personal short-term gain.

We think we have removed a barrier that limits growth, namely, individuals focusing too much on what is good for them in the moment. This means that when an inquiry comes in from a potential client, the person who received the call may decide that someone else may be better suited to pursue the opportunity than he or she is.

In terms of maintaining our culture, I think about that all the time. We're going to keep the firm private because, for a firm like ours, becoming public forces you to focus too much on the short term.

It's important to find the opportunities to reiterate what our values are; they are in doing rigorous, high-quality work, and at the same time developing people so that personal achievements are recognized and rewarded in the context of a team and the firm as a whole. How to do that as the firm gets bigger is a moving target; the challenge is figuring out what needs to change as we grow, and how we accomplish that while also recognizing what needs to stay the same.

Is it challenging in this space to show what makes an individual company unique?

The product we offer is expertise. Our model, where we focus on the team, is better for the experts we attract to the firm, and is better for our clients. Having the right people leading the project and a deeply motivated team at all levels is our value proposition. I hope the clients experience it.

Do you primarily work with large global law firms?

Yes, our litigation work is for very important clients. Our greatest focus and where we provide the most value is at the highest of the high end: the litigation departments that work with major international companies on bet-the-company type matters. This is where much of our growth has come from.

Litigation work is about three-quarters of the firm's work, but the other quarter is non-litigation work, particularly in the healthcare consulting area where we have experienced similar growth.

How did your healthcare consulting practice get started?

The practice came about because there was an enormously entrepreneurial partner who, 20 years ago, thought the same skills that people were using in our litigation analyses could be applied in healthcare engagements. He was right, and it's really taken off, not only in healthcare-related litigation, but in health economics and in outcomes research, as well as a whole range of other research areas.

Do you have a feeling early on in a case as to what the end result will be?

We're sometimes brought in early, before fact discovery in litigation or perhaps before a consulting topic is very evolved, and the focus of the work needed often turns out to be different from what we or the client expected.

This is where our business model is really valuable, because when the problem turns out to be something different than what was expected, we can quickly bring in different expertise to address it, from our roster of academic experts as well as from inside the firm.

Having a great expert is really important. Experts have to be great writers and communicators, but the whole case team is important. We have young analysts who walk in out of college who will be doing important analytical work on projects, and they will sometimes tell the team that the analytical work is producing different results than expected and that maybe there is a different and better way to see the problem. Expertise and empowerment up and down the line is really important.

Should more be done to educate people about the quality of our legal system?

Our system relies on two equally resourced sides developing the best arguments, evaluating and critiquing the other side, and presenting both positions to a neutral judge or jury. It's a great system. I think there are many misconceptions about the legal system. There is a perception that the resources are all on the defense side and not on the government or plaintiff side. That is not correct; both sides have access to financing and to expertise.

Business problems are very complicated, although that may not always be obvious to the public at large. Technology keeps changing, new products keep coming to market, and the business challenges they present require rigorous evaluation of facts and development of analytical frameworks for thinking about how companies should operate in a changing world. The legal system is incredibly important for the business life of our country, to ensure there can be a thoughtful, fact-based resolution of these problems. I think our advocacy system provides that opportunity. ●