

THE BIG INTERVIEW

Set apart in
tech

The Firm's global industry group model was introduced to help us maximise our potential in specific industry sectors. In the first of a series of profiles, we speak to the co-leads of the Global Technology Industry Group, Partners Aalok Sharma and Daniel Turgel.

Our Global Technology Industry Group was established in 2017 to help us better respond to the needs of our technology clients.

Since then, the group has helped the Firm grow revenues in the sector exponentially year on year, with an impressive 2021 followed up by an even better 2022.

Partner and co-head of the group Aalok Sharma explains: "If we are to provide a gold-plated service to our clients, it's critical that we fully understand their businesses, industry and the legal trends they face.

"That's one of the key goals of our Global Technology Industry Group. Over the past six years, it's enabled us to build relationships internally and externally, and to set up processes and procedures that ensure we deliver the best of the Firm to our clients.

Fellow co-head and Partner Daniel Turgel adds: "The group provides a great opportunity to bring everyone together, share best practices and make sure we're on the same page.

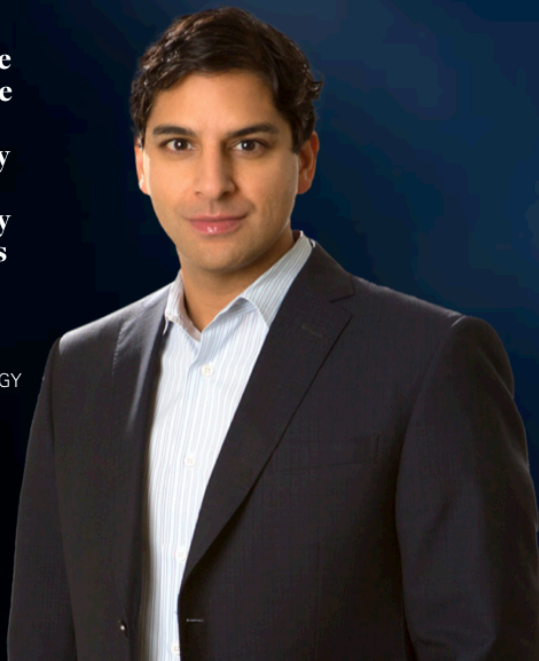
"Being collaborative and making the most of our collective industry knowledge has helped us build our client base and to organically grow the clients we already have, establishing ourselves as true trusted partners."

Aalok and Daniel jointly manage and oversee the group. They head a core team of around 10 lawyers and a wider team including additional partners and associates, drawn from a broad spectrum of practice areas and jurisdictions. The team also features several Business Development professionals to support its client targeting, business generation, internal education and brand-building initiatives. Aalok and Daniel reserve special praise for Head of Business Development Brooke Denhart, who has been instrumental in the group's success.



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INDUSTRY GROUP



A team effort

The team meets bi-monthly and quarterly, with Daniel and Aalok speaking on a weekly basis.

Aalok says: “Together, we identify which clients to pursue, work with our partners to resolve business and legal conflicts, and identify and fill potential gaps in our client offering. We also decide on the group’s strategy.”

The success of the group is evident in its unrivalled client list, which includes the Firm’s biggest client, Meta, Amazon, Avast, Toshiba, Microsoft and Snap. Household names Spotify, Shopify and LinkedIn have also been added in the past 12-18 months.

Daniel adds: “We’re working with some of the world’s biggest names in the industry, but also many fast-growing start-ups who we’ve worked with since their early days, investing in the relationships and going with them on their growth journeys, much in the same way we have with Meta.”

Cutting-edge partnership

The Firm began working with Meta 12 years ago and have become trusted advisors as the Facebook giant has grown beyond recognition.

Aalok says: “We work with Meta on all their international civil litigation, representing them in 165 countries on the most cutting-edge issues. We’re currently handling hundreds of cases for them, including more than 80 cases in the highest courts in the world.

“Over the years, we’ve grown the relationship to include a broad range of legal advice, including law enforcement, product compliance, commercial transactions, privacy, regulatory and more.”

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The creation of the Global Technology Industry Group has proved invaluable in growing the relationship with Meta to the extent that the Firm aggressively and thoughtfully recruits talent specifically with the client’s needs in mind.

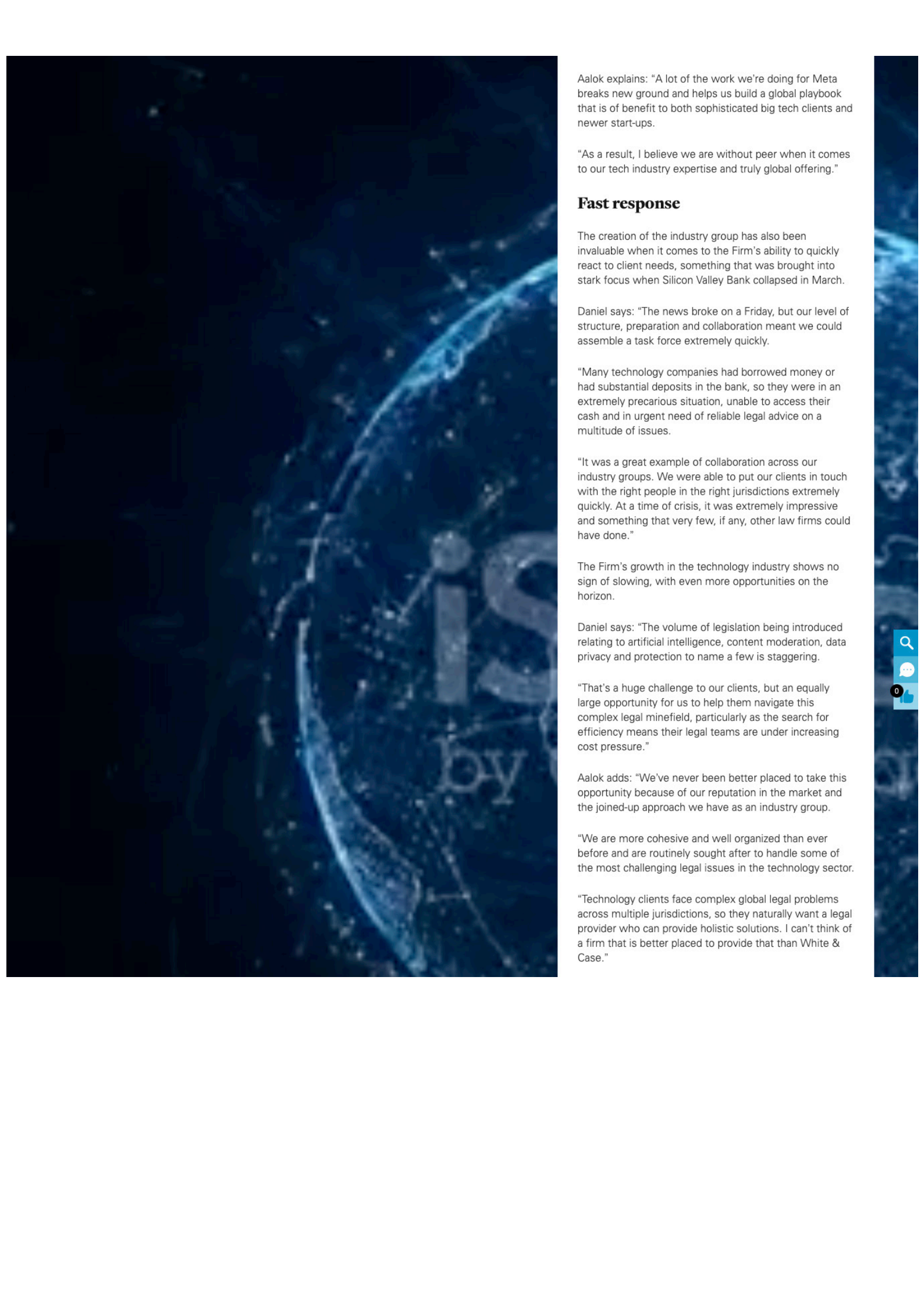
Aalok says: “It’s helped us build personal relationships, increase touch points and build loyalty between our team and Meta’s in-house lawyers, which is vital.

“Working with Meta has also reinforced the need for us to work cohesively and strategically, constantly striving to ensure we continue to maintain a top-level client experience.

“Meta expects us to not only keep up with them, but also to lead the charge by being innovative in our legal services, for instance rolling out dedicated legal operations teams and new ways of working.”

In addition, our experience with Meta has proved a key differentiator when it comes to attracting other tech clients.





Aalok explains: "A lot of the work we're doing for Meta breaks new ground and helps us build a global playbook that is of benefit to both sophisticated big tech clients and newer start-ups."

"As a result, I believe we are without peer when it comes to our tech industry expertise and truly global offering."

Fast response

The creation of the industry group has also been invaluable when it comes to the Firm's ability to quickly react to client needs, something that was brought into stark focus when Silicon Valley Bank collapsed in March.

Daniel says: "The news broke on a Friday, but our level of structure, preparation and collaboration meant we could assemble a task force extremely quickly."

"Many technology companies had borrowed money or had substantial deposits in the bank, so they were in an extremely precarious situation, unable to access their cash and in urgent need of reliable legal advice on a multitude of issues."

"It was a great example of collaboration across our industry groups. We were able to put our clients in touch with the right people in the right jurisdictions extremely quickly. At a time of crisis, it was extremely impressive and something that very few, if any, other law firms could have done."

The Firm's growth in the technology industry shows no sign of slowing, with even more opportunities on the horizon.

Daniel says: "The volume of legislation being introduced relating to artificial intelligence, content moderation, data privacy and protection to name a few is staggering."

"That's a huge challenge to our clients, but an equally large opportunity for us to help them navigate this complex legal minefield, particularly as the search for efficiency means their legal teams are under increasing cost pressure."

Aalok adds: "We've never been better placed to take this opportunity because of our reputation in the market and the joined-up approach we have as an industry group."

"We are more cohesive and well organized than ever before and are routinely sought after to handle some of the most challenging legal issues in the technology sector."

"Technology clients face complex global legal problems across multiple jurisdictions, so they naturally want a legal provider who can provide holistic solutions. I can't think of a firm that is better placed to provide that than White & Case."



“I think that’s a differentiator – we spend a lot of time getting under the skin of the industry and our clients so we can offer them a distinct client experience that sets us apart.”

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Adding strength

The Firm’s technology offering was strengthened even more in March with the recruitment of Yar Chaikovsky, one of Silicon Valley’s most respected intellectual property lawyers, along with Partner Phil Ou, and their team of two counsel and six associates.

Daniel comments: “This is an example of how much we are invested in Silicon Valley as a global technology hub, both for emerging companies and big tech.

“It’s an immediate boost to our overall offering and particularly to our reputation and coverage in Silicon Valley.”

The Global Technology Industry Group is also continuing to invest in awareness of technology-related issues and trends, with the recent launch of the Technology Academy, a series of professional development sessions the Firm’s lawyers worldwide. These sessions are intended to equip lawyers to speak knowledgeably and authoritatively about emerging technologies.

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A distinct experience

Such training is another way in which we’re preparing ourselves to provide the best possible client experience to our existing and future technology clients by offering value that differentiates us from our rivals.

Aalok says: “Our industry group is a shining example of the Firm’s mission to deliver a distinct client experience, because we are proving we are willing to invest in our clients’ long-term success.

“We believe we listen to and understand our clients better than our competitors and, as a group, we serve our clients with a personal, proactive touch.

“They also have an expectation that we’ll come up with innovative ways of handling their legal issues in ever more creative, efficient ways.

Daniel adds: “My clients often comment that we are one of the only firms that show a strong interest in understanding their business from their perspective. For example, I love to ask clients for a ‘teach in’ at our cost. That may seem a small thing, but they love that we take the time to understand them.

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