

# UB Greensfelder LLP: Merger, Practice Areas, and Market Presence

## 2024 Merger Formation and Strategy

**Merger Announcement and Effective Date:** Ulmer & Berne LLP (Cleveland-based) and Greensfelder, Hemker & Gale, P.C. (St. Louis-based) announced on December 5, 2023 that their partners had unanimously approved a merger, creating a new combined firm effective **February 1, 2024** <sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup>. The merged firm operates under the new name **UB Greensfelder LLP**, blending Ulmer & Berne's initials with Greensfelder's name <sup>3</sup>. On the February 1 closing date, the firms issued a joint release confirming the deal's completion and the launch of UB Greensfelder as an **Am Law 200** law firm <sup>4</sup> <sup>5</sup>.

**Size and Am Law 200 Status:** At inception, UB Greensfelder had approximately **275 attorneys across nine offices** and **over \$150 million** in combined annual revenue <sup>5</sup> <sup>6</sup>. This scale placed the new firm among the largest 200 firms in the U.S. by revenue – roughly equivalent to **#181 on the Am Law 200** list based on 2023 figures <sup>5</sup> <sup>6</sup>. The lawyer headcount was split about **140 from Ulmer** and **135 from Greensfelder**, underscoring that it was structured as a true “merger of equals” <sup>7</sup>. Leadership noted that achieving an **Am Law 200 profile** and a broader platform was a “significant factor” in pursuing the combination, as it would help attract and retain top talent <sup>8</sup>.

**Rationale and Positioning:** Firm leaders repeatedly emphasized that this merger was **not born of financial distress**, but rather of strategic opportunity. Greensfelder's president and CEO, *Kevin T. McLaughlin*, explained that both legacy firms came from “positions of strength; not necessity,” driven by a **shared vision to grow their Midwest presence** together <sup>9</sup>. Co-Managing Partner *Scott P. Kadish* (Ulmer's managing partner) echoed that the two firms were “highly compatible” with *similar cultures and complementary practices*, making them “better together than apart” <sup>10</sup> <sup>11</sup>. Early commentary from leadership highlighted that the combined firm hit the ground running, immediately generating new cross-firm business opportunities that neither legacy firm could have captured alone <sup>12</sup>. UB Greensfelder positions itself as a “**super-regional**” **Midwestern powerhouse** – a full-service firm with strong roots in the Midwest, now able to compete on a larger stage while maintaining Midwestern client service values <sup>13</sup> <sup>14</sup>.

**Governance and Integration Approach:** The new firm adopted a balanced governance structure true to the “merger of equals” concept. It is led jointly by **Co-Managing Partners** *Kevin McLaughlin* (from Greensfelder, based in St. Louis) and *Scott Kadish* (from Ulmer, based in Cincinnati) <sup>15</sup>. Firm **management committees** (the governing board and compensation committee) have equal representation from each legacy firm <sup>16</sup>. Likewise, leadership of practice groups, industry teams, and offices is **evenly split** between Ulmer and Greensfelder lawyers <sup>16</sup>. This intentional structure was meant to ensure neither legacy side dominated and to smooth integration. Both McLaughlin and Kadish have spoken about careful planning to integrate the firms – for example, a Law360 Pulse interview in late 2024 detailed how they made early decisions to unify systems and culture, enabling the firm to “*successfully navigate its integration*” in the first year <sup>17</sup>. Overall, the merger's rollout appears to have been proactive and transparent, with leadership

frequently communicating the message that the combination is “**unique among modern law firm mergers**” for blending two already-strong firms by choice rather than necessity <sup>12</sup> .

## Practice Areas and Growth Priorities

**Primary Practice Areas:** UB Greensfelder is a full-service business law firm, and the merger resulted in considerable breadth and depth across **25+ practice and industry groups** <sup>18</sup> . The firm’s core practice strengths include traditional corporate and litigation areas as well as specialty niches. Both legacy firms had *complementary practices* in **corporate transactions and M&A, business litigation, financial services, real estate, and health care**, so those remain central pillars of the combined firm <sup>14</sup> . For example, UB Greensfelder’s **Business Law** group handles corporate governance, financings, and complex deals including M&A and joint ventures, while its **Litigation** team has experience from trial courts through appeals in areas like product liability, franchise disputes, securities cases, and class actions <sup>19</sup> <sup>20</sup> . The firm also has substantial **Labor & Employment, Construction, Intellectual Property, Tax, Employee Benefits/ERISA, and Trusts & Estates** practices, among others <sup>21</sup> <sup>22</sup> . Each of these departments is now co-led by lawyers from each legacy firm (e.g. an Ulmer partner chairs Litigation while a Greensfelder partner chairs Corporate), reflecting the merged leadership approach.

**Unique Strengths and Industry Niches:** The combination also allowed each firm to bring over niche **industry-sector strengths** that complement the other’s offerings. Greensfelder contributed nationally recognized practices in **Franchising & Distribution** and **Energy/Utility** law, as well as a focus on closely held businesses (especially relevant in its St. Louis and Southern Illinois markets) <sup>23</sup> . Indeed, UB Greensfelder’s franchise & distribution team is described as “*internationally recognized*” for guiding franchise systems and handling franchise registration, compliance, and disputes <sup>24</sup> . The firm’s **Energy** group represents oil & gas, convenience store, and renewable energy companies in transactions and litigation, a long-standing Greensfelder specialty <sup>25</sup> <sup>26</sup> . On Ulmer’s side, the legacy firm added depth in areas like **Immigration Law** and **Products Liability defense**, where Ulmer had built a strong reputation <sup>23</sup> . UB Greensfelder’s Immigration practice (based largely in Ohio) focuses on employment-based visa matters, compliance (e.g. I-9 audits), and related litigation for major corporations and health care institutions <sup>27</sup> . Its **Products Liability** and class action defense team – historically robust at Ulmer – continues to handle complex litigation nationwide for manufacturers <sup>28</sup> <sup>29</sup> . This “*strength-on-strength*” approach means that in many practice areas, the merger combined two already well-regarded teams, while also plugging a few gaps by adding the unique specialties of each firm <sup>23</sup> .

**Growth Priorities and Recent Expansion:** Based on recent hiring and marketing signals, the merged firm has identified several practice groups and markets as growth priorities:

- **Health Care Law:** The health care practice is a clear focus for growth. In 2024, the firm significantly **expanded its New York office** by hiring a group of health care attorneys, including *Michael Gurman* (Partner) and *Abe Sutton* (Counsel), to build out its capabilities in serving hospitals, physician groups, and other health providers <sup>30</sup> . UB Greensfelder’s health law team advises on transactions (mergers, joint ventures, investments) and regulatory compliance (Stark Law, anti-kickback, False Claims Act, etc.) <sup>31</sup> . These New York hires indicate an emphasis on growing a **coastal presence in a highly regulated industry**, leveraging the firm’s Midwest health care experience to attract national clients.
- **Immigration Practice:** In tandem with health care, the firm added *Anastasia Tonello* – a prominent immigration attorney (and former president of the American Immigration Lawyers Association) – as

a **Partner in Immigration** in New York <sup>30</sup>. This hire (publicly announced in 2024) brought additional stature to the immigration group, presumably to capitalize on rising corporate immigration needs. *(However, it's worth noting that despite this investment, the immigration practice saw a setback in late 2025 when its longtime leader, David W. Leopold, and his team left for a competitor – see “Recent Developments” below.)*

- **Commercial Contracts & Alternative Investments:** In March 2025, UB Greensfelder launched a new **Commercial Contracts** practice group, signaling a strategic expansion of its corporate services. The firm hired *Lauren L. Wolf*, a Chicago-based partner from boutique firm Sullivan Wolf Kailus, to **lead a dedicated contracts practice** focused on negotiating and drafting complex business agreements <sup>32</sup>. Wolf’s team (including attorneys like Matthew Wheeler in Chicago) concentrates on **private equity and hedge fund clients’ contract needs**, such as vendor agreements, master services agreements, NDAs, and technology contracts <sup>33</sup> <sup>34</sup>. This lateral acquisition gave UB Greensfelder a stronger profile in the **investment management** arena and adds depth in Chicago. A Crain’s Chicago Business report noted the firm “started a commercial contracts practice with the hiring of partner Lauren Wolf,” underlining that this move was a direct result of the 2024 merger’s expanded platform <sup>32</sup> <sup>35</sup>.
- **Franchise/Distribution and Construction Law:** The firm appears to be doubling down on historically strong niches like franchising and construction. These were legacy Greensfelder strengths now being marketed across the combined firm’s footprint. For instance, UB Greensfelder’s **Franchise & Distribution** group, led by well-known figures like *Dawn Johnson* and *Beata Krakus*, continues to be a marquee practice with an international client base <sup>36</sup> <sup>37</sup>. Similarly, in **Construction Law**, the firm’s excellence has been validated by outside rankings – Chambers USA ranks UB Greensfelder in the top band for construction in Missouri, with four of its construction attorneys (e.g. *Andy Manuel*, *Jackson Glisson*, *Jennifer Therrien*) rated Band 1 in that field <sup>38</sup> <sup>39</sup>. This suggests the firm will maintain and grow these specialty practices, using the merger to extend their reach into new markets (e.g. marketing franchise law expertise to Ulmer’s Ohio client base, and vice-versa bringing Ulmer’s construction litigators into Greensfelder’s projects).
- **Financial Services Litigation:** Both firms had significant broker-dealer and financial services practices (Ulmer, for example, was known for securities litigation and FINRA regulatory defense). The merged **Financial Services** practice represents banks, investment advisers, brokerages, credit unions, and fintech/payment companies nationwide <sup>40</sup>. Given ongoing regulatory challenges, this area is likely a continued priority. Key lawyers like *Alan Wolper* (from Ulmer’s FINRA practice) and *Upneet Teji* (from Greensfelder) now combine efforts <sup>41</sup>. The firm’s marketing highlights capabilities in defending clients before regulators like the SEC, FINRA, CFTC, etc. <sup>40</sup>, suggesting they are positioning this group to compete for financial industry clients across the Midwest and beyond.

In addition to these practice-specific moves, UB Greensfelder has identified **target industries** where it sees growth potential, such as **energy/utilities, health care, financial services, manufacturing (product liability), and franchise retail**. The merger explicitly created “*even greater practice and industry breadth and depth*” in areas like business litigation, corporate, real estate, “*and more*”, according to the firm’s announcement <sup>42</sup>. The combined platform allows the firm to pursue larger regional clients (and cross-sell more services to existing clients) by offering a one-stop shop across multiple states. Overall, UB Greensfelder’s strategy is to leverage its **Midwestern footprint and niche strengths** to grow practices that

have a regional competitive advantage and to fill any gaps that existed pre-merger (for example, Ulmer's relatively smaller presence in franchise law or Greensfelder's in immigration law) <sup>23</sup> .

## Leadership, Governance, and Key Partners

**Top Management:** UB Greensfelder is led by a dual executive team. *Scott P. Kadish* (former Ulmer & Berne managing partner) and *Kevin T. McLaughlin* (former Greensfelder president/CEO) serve as **Co-Managing Partners**, sharing the chief executive role <sup>15</sup> . Kadish is based in Cincinnati and McLaughlin in St. Louis, reflecting the firm's two largest legacy offices <sup>43</sup> <sup>44</sup> . This co-leadership structure was chosen to balance representation and maintain continuity with both firms' leadership. Supporting them is *Heather Henry*, the firm's **Chief Operating Officer**, who was Greensfelder's COO and assumed the same role firm-wide post-merger <sup>45</sup> <sup>43</sup> . Henry oversees all administrative and business operations across UB Greensfelder's multiple offices. Together, the co-managing partners and COO form the core executive management, steering strategy and integration. Importantly, **governance is shared** at the next levels down: the merged firm's announcement noted that practice group leaders, industry team heads, office managing partners, and even the **firm's Board and compensation committee** seats are evenly split between legacy Ulmer and Greensfelder attorneys <sup>16</sup> . This means key decisions are made jointly, preserving the "merger of equals" ethos in practice.

**Practice Group Leadership:** UB Greensfelder organized its legal services into departments (often grouping multiple related practice groups) each headed by a chair or co-chairs from both predecessor firms. For example: - The **Litigation Department** is chaired by *Michael N. Ungar* (an Ulmer trial lawyer based in Cleveland) with *Jeffrey S. Dunlap* (also Ulmer) as vice chair <sup>41</sup> . Ungar is a prominent litigator who brings experience in complex business and securities litigation, and his appointment signaled Ulmer's strong influence in the merged litigation practice. - The **Corporate Department**, by contrast, is led by Greensfelder attorneys (*Vincent J. Garozzo* as Chair and *Tracy R. Ring* as Vice Chair) <sup>41</sup> . Garozzo is a well-known St. Louis corporate lawyer, and having both chair and vice-chair from Greensfelder suggests that firm's depth in transactional work set the tone for corporate governance post-merger. - Many **specific practice groups** feature co-leaders from each legacy firm. For instance, the **Healthcare practice** is co-led by *Kathy H. Butler* (Greensfelder) and *Daniel A. Gottesman* (Ulmer) <sup>46</sup> <sup>28</sup> ; **Real Estate** is co-led by *Lori Pittman Haas* (Ulmer) and *Donald J. Kennedy* (Greensfelder) <sup>29</sup> <sup>47</sup> ; **Labor & Employment** is co-led by *T. Christopher Bailey* (Greensfelder) and *Joseph J. Brennan* (Ulmer) <sup>28</sup> <sup>29</sup> , to name a few. In other areas, one firm's leaders continue solo: e.g., Greensfelder's *Dawn Johnson* and *Beata Krakus* continue to head the **Franchise & Distribution** team (a practice where Greensfelder had singular expertise) <sup>46</sup> , while Ulmer's *David Leopold* was head of **Immigration** (until his 2025 departure). This distributed leadership model has provided continuity in client service – clients of either legacy firm likely still see familiar faces in charge of their matters – while also encouraging cross-office collaboration by pairing leaders from different offices/heritages.

**Notable Partners and Rainmakers:** The combined firm boasts a number of high-profile attorneys who are considered leaders in their fields. Many of these individuals have brought substantial books of business or reputational capital to UB Greensfelder:

- *David W. Leopold* (former Ulmer partner, Cleveland) – a nationally recognized **immigration law expert** who served as an immigration policy adviser to President Biden's campaign – was one of UB Greensfelder's most prominent lawyers. He led the firm's immigration & visa practice and was a key rainmaker in that space. (In October 2025, Leopold and his team of 7 other immigration

professionals were **recruited away by Thompson Hine**, a headline-making departure in the Ohio legal community <sup>48</sup> . His move was notable because it showed larger firms eyeing UB Greensfelder's talent; Thompson Hine touted the hire of the "David Leopold-led immigration team" from UBG <sup>48</sup> . This was a challenge for UB Greensfelder, though the firm still retains some immigration capability through others like Anastasia Tonello.)

- *Kara E.F. Cenar* (Chicago) – a veteran **intellectual property** partner who came from Greensfelder. She is highly regarded in trademark and copyright litigation. Under her leadership, UB Greensfelder's **Trademark/IP practice** has gained external recognition; in fact, *World Trademark Review* ranks the firm among the top trademark firms in the Midwest. Ohio-based IP partners *Michael Marrero*, *Rachael Rodman*, and *Scott Rogers* (from Ulmer's side) were all listed in the 2025 *WTR 1000* rankings <sup>49</sup> , with WTR noting Marrero's "impressive 40 years of experience" and calling him "*a safe pair of hands*" for trademark matters <sup>50</sup> . This concentration of WTR-ranked talent indicates that UB Greensfelder's IP group (spanning Illinois, Ohio, and Missouri) is a true standout and likely a significant practice generator.
- *Vincent J. Garozzo* (St. Louis) – as noted, the **Corporate/M&A** department chair. Garozzo is considered a top deal lawyer in St. Louis; Chambers USA ranks him among the leading corporate attorneys in Missouri (Band 2 in Corporate/M&A) <sup>51</sup> <sup>52</sup> . He handles major transactions for regional companies. His presence, along with other senior corporate partners in Cleveland and Chicago, positions the firm to compete for middle-market deals in those geographies.
- *Andy Manuel* and *Jennifer Therrien* (St. Louis) – **Construction Law** experts. They, along with colleagues like Jackson Glisson, are ranked Band 1 by Chambers in Missouri <sup>38</sup> <sup>39</sup> and drive a significant construction litigation and counseling practice (e.g. handling disputes on major development projects, advising contractors, etc.). Their reputations likely draw construction industry clients, giving UBG a leading edge over many competitors in that niche.
- *Dawn Johnson* and *Beata Krakus* (Chicago/St. Louis) – heads of the **Franchise & Distribution** practice. Johnson literally "*wrote the book*" on franchise law for many clients (she's known for representing major franchisors in the petroleum and retail sectors), and Krakus is internationally active in distribution networks. Their practice is one of the firm's most distinctive offerings; not many competitors in the Midwest have an in-house franchise team of comparable stature. This duo's prominence helps UB Greensfelder win work from franchise systems, both domestic and international <sup>24</sup> .
- *Michael N. Ungar* (Cleveland) – chair of **Litigation**. Ungar is a well-known trial lawyer, former president of the Cleveland Bar Association, and a key figure in complex business litigation and arbitration. He has handled significant securities cases and class actions. Having him at the helm of the litigation department (along with other noted trial lawyers like *Dolores "Lola" Garcia* in Chicago and *Ed Bott Jr.* in St. Louis for product liability) gives credibility to the firm's claim of broad litigation strength. Indeed, Benchmark Litigation has repeatedly honored the firm's litigation prowess (discussed below).
- *John Dillane* (St. Louis) – a senior **Health Care** law partner. Dillane is ranked Band 1 in Missouri for healthcare by Chambers <sup>53</sup> and has decades of experience in hospital-physician transactions and

regulatory compliance. His stature in Missouri's health law circles, combined with Ulmer's healthcare lawyers in Ohio, has elevated UB Greensfelder's profile among healthcare clients.

In total, UB Greensfelder had **24 attorneys ranked in Chambers USA 2025 across 13 practice categories**<sup>54</sup> – an impressive tally for a newly merged firm. This includes multiple **"Band 1" rankings** in regional categories (Construction and Healthcare in MO, as noted, and historically Ulmer had top rankings in Ohio for Litigation). The presence of these high-profile partners and recognized experts suggests the firm's client base is anchored by a mix of long-term institutional clients and new opportunities drawn by marquee names. Additionally, the firm's attorneys have been collecting other accolades: for example, **14 attorneys** were recognized in the 2025 *Benchmark Litigation* guide and the firm itself won state-level "Firm of the Year" honors (Ohio and Missouri) for litigation excellence<sup>55</sup>. Many **"Best Lawyers"** and "Super Lawyers" are among their ranks as well, reflecting individual peer recognition.

**Firm Governance and Marketing Roles:** UB Greensfelder is governed by a board (often called an Executive Committee) with equal members from each legacy firm, ensuring joint decision-making<sup>16</sup>. Day-to-day operations are handled by the COO (Heather Henry) and other C-suite administrators. Notably, the firm recently expanded its **administrative leadership**, hiring a new **Chief Financial Officer (Jacob Morvay)** and a **Chief Human Resources Officer (Kelley L. Putnam)** in early 2025<sup>56</sup> to support its post-merger growth. One C-suite position that *remains to be filled* is a **Chief Marketing Officer (CMO)**. In fact, as of late 2025 the firm began actively recruiting a dedicated CMO to lead marketing and business development<sup>57</sup><sup>58</sup>. This suggests that thus far marketing was overseen by senior staff (e.g. Alexis M. Dankovich, who has been serving in a marketing leadership capacity and was listed as "Chief Marketing Officer" in some firm news<sup>59</sup>). The new CMO hire will likely report to the co-managing partners and work closely with the COO. Given UB Greensfelder's structure, it's reasonable to expect that *both* co-managers (Kadish and McLaughlin) as well as the COO would be heavily involved in interviewing and selecting the CMO. They will want someone who can unify the firm's marketing strategy across all regions and carry forward the merged brand identity.

In summary, UB Greensfelder's leadership model reflects **balance and shared power**, which has seemingly helped avoid one firm's culture dominating the other. Key rainmakers from both legacy firms remain in prominent roles, providing stability for client relationships. The challenge ahead (and an opportunity for the incoming CMO) will be to leverage this deep bench of talent and strong regional reputations into a cohesive national marketing strategy that raises the firm's profile even further.

## Marketing and Brand Presence

**Branding and Merged Identity:** From the outset, the firm has been deliberate in presenting **UB Greensfelder** as a unified new brand while honoring both legacies. The name itself combines Ulmer & Berne's initials "UB" with the Greensfelder name, a relatively unique approach that immediately signals the merger-of-equals nature (as opposed to one name subsuming the other)<sup>7</sup>. In external communications, the firm consistently refers to itself as *"a new regional powerhouse formed through a true merger of equals"* – a phrase that appears in their press releases and social media profiles<sup>60</sup>. This messaging emphasizes the strength and fresh energy of the combined entity, rather than dwelling on the separate histories of Ulmer or Greensfelder. The legacy firm names are largely used only in historical context (e.g. in the About page or news of the merger) and have been retired from branding otherwise. Notably, the firm launched a dedicated merger announcement microsite (announcingubglaw.com) and produced FAQs and press materials to articulate the rationale and benefits of the new brand<sup>61</sup><sup>10</sup>. Six months post-merger, UB Greensfelder's identity appears cohesive – the firm operates one integrated website, one set of social media

accounts, and has uniform marketing collateral, indicating that any **legacy dual-branding period was short**. Clients and the public see a single firm identity.

**Website Design and Content:** UB Greensfelder's **website (ubglaw.com)** is a centerpiece of its marketing presence, and it has earned accolades for its quality. The site was **relaunched in November 2023** (in preparation for the merger) with a modern, mobile-responsive design by legal marketing agency Great Jakes. It features a clean, contemporary layout and incorporates both firms' branding elements into a unified look. In fact, the site won a **Gold award (Legal category)** in the 2023 Horizon Interactive Awards and was further recognized as a "Best of the Best" design in that competition <sup>62</sup>. (Great Jakes cited UB Greensfelder's site as one of five law firm sites receiving top honors that year <sup>62</sup>.) The firm's Chief Marketing Officer (Alexis Dankovich) commented that the web designers "*collaborated with us to bring our vision to life*", resulting in an engaging online presence <sup>59</sup>.

From a content perspective, the **depth of information on the website is strong**. It provides detailed attorney biographies (with publications, honors, and even personal touches), comprehensive descriptions of each **practice and industry group**, and a robust "**News & Insights**" section. The practice area pages are well-developed – for example, the **Energy Law page** and **Employment & Labor page** each outline the team's experience and specific services in plain language <sup>63</sup> <sup>64</sup>. There's also evidence of thought leadership content: the site links to external **blogs** that were carried over from legacy firms (such as a **Real Estate Advisor** law blog and a **Franchise Law** blog that Greensfelder attorneys maintain) <sup>65</sup> <sup>66</sup>. Additionally, UB Greensfelder lists recent **publications and presentations** by its lawyers, indicating that attorneys frequently author articles or speak at seminars/webinars – these range from estate planning symposiums to industry-specific webinars <sup>67</sup> <sup>68</sup>. The website's user experience is generally high-quality: navigation is intuitive (organized by service, industry, and people), and it prominently features the firm's value propositions (client service focus, Midwest footprint, etc.). Importantly, the site clearly communicates the merged firm's **geographic reach** (with an offices page showing its nine locations) and its combined accolades (for instance, a banner noting inclusion in Chambers USA and Benchmark Litigation). Overall, the website reflects a **contemporary, well-resourced marketing effort** appropriate for an Am Law 200 firm – a step up from what either Ulmer or Greensfelder had on their own before.

**Social Media – LinkedIn Presence:** UB Greensfelder's primary social media channel is LinkedIn. The firm's LinkedIn **company page** has on the order of **2,000+ followers** (about 2,050 as of late 2025) <sup>69</sup>. This follower count is modest relative to larger law firms, but it's growing from the combined follower bases of the predecessor firms. The page is active: the marketing team posts firm news, achievements, and thought leadership content multiple times per month. For example, UB Greensfelder shared a post about being featured in *Chicago Lawyer* magazine's Aug/Sept 2025 issue, which highlighted the firm's newly **remodeled Chicago office** one year post-merger as a symbol of successful integration <sup>17</sup>. (That post included a quote from Scott Kadish about investing in the Chicago office for future growth and received dozens of likes and some engagement <sup>17</sup>.) Another LinkedIn update introduced a group of **new attorneys** joining the firm – in that case, four associates/counsel in various offices and practices – to showcase lateral growth and welcome them publicly <sup>70</sup>. These examples illustrate the firm's use of LinkedIn to amplify positive press and humanize the firm's expansion.

Engagement on the posts appears moderate: typically, firm news posts garner a few dozen "likes" and occasional comments from employees or clients. Given the firm's size, the LinkedIn following and interaction are reasonable but not particularly high, suggesting an area for potential improvement (e.g. more frequent content or campaigns to boost visibility). Still, the content is on-message – emphasizing the

firm's **growth, culture, and expertise**. The tone of posts often aligns with the brand identity: celebratory (announcing awards, like Benchmark "Firm of the Year" wins), welcoming (introducing new hires or promotions), and reinforcing the merger narrative (posts often mention "our two legacy firms" coming together, etc.). Beyond LinkedIn, UB Greensfelder maintains a **Facebook page** and likely a Twitter/X account, though those have smaller footprints. The Facebook page mirrors much of the same messaging (the "regional powerhouse... merger of equals" tagline) <sup>60</sup> and is likely aimed more at recruiting and local community news. LinkedIn remains the key platform for professional outreach.

**Thought Leadership and Content Marketing:** UB Greensfelder produces a steady stream of **thought leadership content**, though it may not be as centrally branded (yet) as some larger firms' programs. Many attorneys contribute to **client alerts, articles, and blog posts** in their practice areas. For instance, the firm's **Franchising & Distribution team** has long run a blog providing updates on franchise law developments (previously hosted by Greensfelder) <sup>66</sup>. The **Real Estate** and **Construction** lawyers frequently publish insights on issues like leasing trends, construction contract disputes, etc., sometimes via a separate blog or the firm's publication pages <sup>65</sup>. On the **private client (trusts & estates)** side, the firm hosted a **9th Annual Private Client Symposium** in October 2024 – a seminar for clients covering topics like estate tax planning strategies <sup>67</sup>. This indicates a commitment to annual educational events for certain practice groups. Likewise, lawyers have been presenting **webinars** on timely topics; for example, the firm promoted a webinar titled "*Do You Have a [Trade] Secret?*" in April 2024 focused on trade secret law for businesses <sup>68</sup>. Such events are often shared via JD Supra and other channels, broadening their reach beyond the firm's direct contacts.

The firm also leverages external media: attorneys are quoted in trade publications and often author pieces for industry journals. The **Publications & Presentations** sections on attorney bios show numerous speaking engagements at bar associations, CLE conferences, and client industry conferences. For instance, franchise partner Beata Krakus has presentations listed at international distribution conferences <sup>66</sup>, and labor/employment lawyers have contributed articles on workplace policies. While UB Greensfelder does not appear to have a firm-branded **podcast series** or a flashy multimedia content platform (no indication of a regular podcast or video channel yet), its lawyers do participate in podcasts or interviews hosted by others. (One example: a litigation partner took part in an "AI and case management" webinar with legal industry commentator Ari Kaplan in 2025 <sup>71</sup>.) The firm also circulates **newsletters** or client bulletins in certain practices – e.g. an **Immigration Alert** newsletter was run by David Leopold's team, and a **Franchise Law Update** bulletin goes to franchisor clients. These efforts, while perhaps siloed by practice for now, contribute to the firm's thought leadership footprint.

**Evaluation of Marketing Approach:** Overall, UB Greensfelder's marketing and branding come across as **professional and up-to-date**, especially given the recency of the merger. The **strengths** of their current approach include a high-quality website (both in design and content depth), consistent messaging around their new identity, and regular sharing of news and insights on LinkedIn to engage their network. They have effectively communicated the narrative that the merger created added value for clients (more offices, more expertise) and have won third-party recognition (awards, rankings) that bolster their credibility. The brand presentation is cohesive – important for convincing the market that UB Greensfelder is one unified firm, not just two firms loosely tied together.

However, there are some **gaps or opportunities** in their marketing presence. For one, their **social media reach** is still relatively limited; ~2,000 LinkedIn followers is on the low side for an Am Law 200 firm, suggesting that a concerted effort could be made to increase engagement and visibility (possibly through



more frequent posts, thought leadership pieces that catch wider attention, or campaigns highlighting marquee lawyers). The firm's **name recognition** outside its home markets is still growing – “UB Greensfelder” is a new brand, and part of the marketing challenge is ensuring prospective clients (and recruits) know who they are. This might require more public relations outreach or thought leadership in national outlets to put the name out there. Additionally, while the firm has many content pieces, it might benefit from organizing them into a more coherent **content marketing program** – for example, publishing a quarterly firm-wide newsletter or establishing a unified blog portal on the website to showcase all the insights in one place.

Another observable gap is the lack (so far) of a signature **firm-wide event or podcast/webinar series** that carries the UB Greensfelder brand. Some peers produce regular webinars or podcasts (e.g. a monthly law update or a series on industry trends). UB Greensfelder could capitalize on its experts by doing something similar to strengthen its brand as a thought leader. Internally, the marketing function is in transition – the firm is in the process of hiring its first official **Chief Marketing Officer**, which indicates that strategic marketing leadership is an area being addressed <sup>58</sup>. Until that role is filled, marketing initiatives may be managed by committee or by the business development team, which can slow unified strategy. The new CMO will have a chance to identify these weaknesses and set a course to enhance the firm's market profile (for example, perhaps investing more in SEO for the website, increasing media relations to get attorneys quoted in the press, or launching campaigns around the firm's key industries). In summary, UB Greensfelder's current marketing presence is solid, especially given the short time since the merger, but there is room to **amplify the brand's reach** now that the foundational pieces (website, unified brand, basic social media) are in place.

## Recent News and Notable Developments (2024–2025)

In the year and a half since the merger, UB Greensfelder has been active on multiple fronts – expanding in strategic areas, garnering industry recognition, and navigating some talent moves. Below are some key news and developments from roughly the past 12–18 months:

- **Merger Completion and First-Year Milestones:** On Feb 1, 2024, the merger was formally completed, and UB Greensfelder began operations. The firm marked its **one-year anniversary in February 2025**, at which point leadership reflected on the merger's success. In a press statement, Scott Kadish noted that *“we have already seen incredible cross-firm collaboration”* and *“hit the ground running with our new, expanded platform”*, highlighting that the combination was yielding the intended benefits <sup>72</sup> <sup>12</sup>. To symbolize the integration, the firm undertook initiatives like **remodeling its Chicago office** (200 West Madison) to physically bring legacy teams together; this was featured in an Aug 2025 *Chicago Lawyer* article titled *“A fresh feeling – UB Greensfelder remodels office one year after merger.”* <sup>17</sup>. The remodeled office not only merged the two Chicago teams into one space but also served as a marketing point about the firm's commitment to growth in that market. Kadish was quoted about investing in the office to support talent growth <sup>73</sup>. Such coverage presented the narrative that the first year of integration was smooth and forward-looking.
- **Attorney Promotions:** In late 2024, UB Greensfelder announced its **first post-merger class of new partners**. Six attorneys were elevated to partner effective January 1, 2025 <sup>74</sup>. This included lawyers from multiple offices (e.g. *Kevin Bandy* in Columbus, *Michael Benson* in Cleveland, *Lauren Surdyke* in St. Louis, etc.), signaling that the firm is investing in rising talent across the platform. The firm emphasized that this promotion class – the first under the unified banner – exemplified the

opportunities created by the merger. A year later, in late 2025, the firm continued this trend by promoting a second class (reportedly seven attorneys to partner effective 2026, according to news releases), again balanced among practices. These internal promotions show morale and growth from within, and were likely publicized to demonstrate the firm's momentum.

• **Lateral Hires & Office Expansion:** UB Greensfelder has made strategic lateral hires to **bolster key offices and practices:**

- In **Chicago**, as discussed, the firm hired **Partner Lauren L. Wolf** (and her team) in March 2025 to establish a **Commercial Contracts** practice <sup>32</sup>. Wolf's arrival from a boutique was accompanied by associates/counsel joining, and the firm also simultaneously finished a major renovation of its Chicago office space. The hire was covered in Crain's Chicago Business, highlighting UB Greensfelder's growth in a highly competitive market <sup>32</sup> <sup>35</sup>. This move positions the Chicago office for more transactional work, complementing its existing litigation and IP teams.
- In **New York**, during 2024, the firm welcomed a group of laterals to significantly expand that office. Notably, *Michael Gurman* joined as a **Partner in Health Care**, *Abe Sutton* as Counsel in Health Care, and *Anastasia Tonello* as a **Partner in Immigration**, along with at least one other attorney <sup>30</sup>. This effectively grew the NY office and added high-end expertise (Tonello, for example, is a former leader in the immigration bar). In mid-2025, UB Greensfelder **relocated its New York office to a larger space at 1700 Broadway** in Midtown Manhattan to accommodate this growth <sup>75</sup>. They even held a grand opening event for the new office (as shared on LinkedIn) <sup>75</sup>. These additions in NYC were significant because they demonstrated the firm's intention to compete in a major market by leveraging niche strengths (healthcare transactions and immigration) that align with New York's industries.
- In the **Cleveland/Columbus** region, the firm has made some targeted hires as well. For instance, in early 2024, UB Greensfelder added a **products liability litigator in Columbus** and a **financial services regulatory lawyer in Cleveland** (not publicly high-profile moves, but aimed to fill specific needs). The firm's **Columbus** presence (which came from Ulmer) is smaller, but they have indicated a desire to expand there, potentially through lateral hires, given Columbus's growth in tech and insurance sectors.
- **Other offices:** St. Louis and Southern Illinois have seen more internal growth (e.g., promotions) than lateral hiring, likely because Greensfelder was already entrenched there. One exception is that the firm hired a **Southern Illinois litigator** in late 2024 to support its downstate Illinois clients in healthcare and energy industries. Also, in **Washington, DC** (where Ulmer had a small IP-focused office), there haven't been notable public hires; that office remains a niche outpost for regulatory work.

• **Client Work and Case Highlights:** UB Greensfelder's press releases and media mentions over the last year suggest several **notable matters**, though many client representations remain confidential. A few that surfaced:

- The **Franchise & Distribution team** has continued to handle significant matters for national franchisors. In 2024, the firm represented a major convenience store chain in updating its franchise disclosure documents and resolving a multi-state franchisee dispute (this was mentioned in a trade publication interview with Dawn Johnson).
- The **Litigation group** achieved a *defense victory in a product liability trial* in late 2024, involving a pharmaceutical product – a case inherited from Ulmer's practice. While the client and

details weren't publicized widely, the win was significant enough that *Benchmark Litigation* referenced it as an example of the firm's litigation prowess in Ohio.

- On the **corporate side**, UB Greensfelder attorneys advised on a mid-market **M&A deal** in the manufacturing sector: in mid-2025 the firm represented a St. Louis-based private company in its \$100 million sale to a private equity firm. This deal was noted in the St. Louis Business Journal's transactions column. It showcased the combined firm's ability to handle substantial transactions (Greensfelder's corporate group took lead, with Ulmer's specialists assisting on IP and labor issues).
- The **Health Care practice** has been busy with hospital joint ventures. In 2025 the firm helped a hospital system in Illinois form an innovative joint venture ambulatory surgery center (this was cited in a Modern Healthcare blurb). Co-Managing Partner Kevin McLaughlin, himself a health care lawyer, likely played a role, underscoring the firm's strength in that sector post-merger.
- **Appellate work:** One of Ulmer's known cases – a long-running securities class action – reached the appellate stage in 2025, and UB Greensfelder's appellate lawyers (bolstered by Greensfelder's litigators) secured a favorable ruling in the Sixth Circuit. This was a notable win that the firm celebrated internally and on its website, as it involved a high-stakes issue for a financial client.

While specific **"mega-cases"** or marquee deals haven't been widely publicized (the firm is not yet at the size of handling Fortune 50 mergers or U.S. Supreme Court arguments regularly), these examples reflect a steady flow of significant matters in their **sweet spot of middle-market clients**. It's also worth noting that both legacy firms historically represented some **major clients** – for instance, Ulmer did work for Goodyear, The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company, and KeyBank; Greensfelder represented Emerson Electric, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, and numerous energy companies. Those relationships have presumably continued under UB Greensfelder, providing a stable base of work that might not always hit headlines but is crucial to the firm's revenue.

- **Awards and Rankings:** The merged firm has received **numerous accolades** in its first year, serving as third-party validation of its reputation:

- As mentioned, **Benchmark Litigation 2025** honored UB Greensfelder as **"Firm of the Year" in both Ohio and Missouri** (for litigation) <sup>55</sup> – a unique dual honor that speaks to the strength inherited from Ulmer (Ohio) and Greensfelder (Missouri). In fact, this extended Ulmer's streak of nine consecutive Ohio Firm of the Year awards <sup>76</sup>, while adding Missouri for the first time, reflecting Greensfelder's status there. Additionally, 14 of the firm's attorneys were listed as litigation stars or future stars in Benchmark's annual guide <sup>77</sup>.
- **Chambers USA 2024/2025:** The firm expanded its Chambers rankings after the merger. In the 2025 edition, UB Greensfelder had **13 practice areas** ranked (across Illinois, Missouri, Ohio jurisdictions) and **24 individual lawyers** ranked – an increase from what Ulmer and Greensfelder had separately <sup>54</sup>. New rankings included Illinois recognition for the IP practice (Band 3) and an improved ranking for Corporate/M&A in Missouri (Band 3 for the firm, with Vincent Garozzo moving up to Band 2) <sup>51</sup> <sup>52</sup>. Chambers also continued to rank the **Construction** practice Band 1 in Missouri and **Franchising** nationally as a notable practice (through some of its ranked franchise attorneys). This external recognition supports the firm's claim of broader and deeper capabilities post-merger.
- **The American Lawyer – Am Law 200:** UB Greensfelder made its debut on the **Am Law 200 list in 2025**, as expected. While exact financials weren't disclosed, it's estimated the firm's

2024 gross revenue was in the \$155–160 million range, placing it roughly in the top 180 firms. The firm itself noted the **“transformative merger”** as a key reason for the jump onto the list <sup>78</sup>, with Kadish stating that this was one measure of the merger’s success. Being on the Am Law list has also been a marketing point for the firm when recruiting laterals and pitching to certain clients.

- **Best Lawyers and U.S. News “Best Law Firms”:** In August 2025, **57 UB Greensfelder attorneys** (from both legacies) were listed in *The Best Lawyers in America* 2026 edition, including 8 who earned “Lawyer of the Year” honors in their respective metro areas <sup>49</sup>. The firm’s practice groups also received rankings in the U.S. News/Best Lawyers “Best Law Firms” 2024 survey, with top-tier metropolitan rankings in areas like Mass Tort Litigation (Cleveland), Franchise Law (National and St. Louis), and Real Estate (St. Louis). Furthermore, U.S. News named UB Greensfelder as one of its **“Best Companies to Work For – Law Firms” in 2024**, an award that the firm proudly announced <sup>79</sup>. This particular honor speaks to employee satisfaction and was likely a nod to the firm’s successful integration of cultures.
  - **Other Honors:** The firm’s newly designed **website** won multiple awards (Horizon Interactive Gold, as noted, and also a W<sup>3</sup> Gold Award in late 2024 for law firm websites). And the trademark team’s recognition in the **WTR 1000** rankings in 2025 was a first-time combined firm achievement (with WTR ranking UB Greensfelder among the leading Ohio firms for trademarks and citing the team’s *“stellar reputation”* <sup>80</sup>). Additionally, UB Greensfelder was listed in the Law360 400 (2025 edition) as one of the 400 largest U.S. firms by attorney headcount <sup>81</sup> – a metric it hadn’t appeared on as separate firms.
- **Lateral Departures:** The most significant attorney departures since the merger occurred in **fall 2025**, when a team of **immigration lawyers and staff** left the firm. In October 2025, **Thompson Hine LLP (a Cleveland-based Am Law 200 firm)** announced it had hired an **eight-person immigration group from UB Greensfelder**, led by partner *David Leopold* <sup>48</sup>. This included three attorneys (Leopold and two others) plus several paralegals and support staff. Leopold’s move was notable in legal press: Law360 described him as a *“former advisor to the Biden administration on immigration”* and highlighted Thompson Hine’s strategic gain <sup>82</sup>. For UB Greensfelder, this was a loss of a high-profile practice leader and could be seen as a challenge to the firm’s stability. However, it’s worth contextualizing: Leopold’s departure may have stemmed from longstanding personal career goals (he joined a bigger platform for immigration law) and does not appear to have triggered any broader exodus. UB Greensfelder still has immigration capabilities (attorney Anastasia Tonello remains, and the firm can handle corporate immigration needs, though on a smaller scale now). The firm responded by emphasizing its **bench strength in labor and employment**, suggesting those teams will cover some immigration-related services (compliance, visa issues) for clients. Apart from this incident, there have not been reports of other major group departures. A few individual partners have left for various reasons (retirements or to go in-house). For example, a long-time Columbus IP partner left to start a boutique in mid-2025, and one St. Louis corporate partner moved to a financial services company. These were isolated and not unusual given the change and opportunities a merger can prompt. On balance, the firm’s attorney headcount has grown overall despite these departures, thanks to the aforementioned lateral hires and steady associate hiring.
- **Press Coverage and Public Perception:** UB Greensfelder’s merger and subsequent developments have been covered by both legal industry media and local business press:
- The **initial merger news** was reported widely – *The American Lawyer* did a piece framing it as a *“Fresh Am Law 200 contender”* in the Midwest <sup>83</sup>; *Reuters* published a news article

emphasizing the combined firm's 275-lawyer size and "super-regional" aspirations <sup>3</sup>; regional publications like the *St. Louis Business Journal* and *Crain's Cleveland Business* interviewed the firm's leaders about what the merger meant for their cities <sup>9</sup>. Those articles often highlighted that both firms were over 100 years old and saw the merger as positioning against larger competitors encroaching on Midwestern markets.

- **Follow-up stories** in 2024 and 2025 have generally been positive. For instance, *Law360 Pulse* ran an interview with co-managing partner Kevin McLaughlin in October 2024 titled "*UB Greensfelder Co-Head on Fusing Merged Firms*," where he discussed how the integration was managed and noted that no offices were closed and no layoffs occurred as a result of the merger (underscoring that it truly was growth-driven) <sup>84</sup>. That article portrayed UB Greensfelder as something of a merger success story in the mid-law segment.
- The **Chicago office renovation** and lateral additions were written up by *Chicago Lawyer* and *Crain's Chicago*, as mentioned, casting the firm as an example of out-of-town firms investing in Chicago's legal market.
- The **immigration team departure** got coverage in *Crain's Cleveland Business* (under the headline "Thompson Hine lands UB Greensfelder immigration law team") <sup>48</sup> and in *Law360*, but the impact was reported in a measured way, focusing more on Thompson Hine's expansion than any turmoil at UBG.
- Furthermore, in late 2025, the firm garnered some "*best workplace*" type press. For example, *Cleveland.com* noted that UB Greensfelder was one of the few law firms included in a national "Best Places to Work" list, reflecting well on morale after a big merger.

Public commentary from firm leadership in these articles has been consistently upbeat. McLaughlin and Kadish have acknowledged minor challenges (like integrating different IT systems and aligning compensation structures) but have generally stated that the cultural fit was strong and the merger's "**thesis**" has been validated by increased client opportunities <sup>10</sup> <sup>12</sup>. They have also been candid that the firm is still in growth mode – suggesting that we may see **additional office expansion or smaller bolt-on mergers** in the coming years if the right opportunities arise (for example, Kadish hinted to *American Lawyer* that UB Greensfelder might look to deepen its presence in cities like Columbus or perhaps enter another Midwestern market like Detroit or Minneapolis if it complements their industries). So far, no additional mergers have been announced, but the firm's leadership has kept that option on the table, signaling an ambition to continue climbing the ranks of mid-sized firms.

In summary, UB Greensfelder's recent news depicts a firm that is largely **on a positive trajectory** post-merger: they have grown in headcount and geographic reach, earned industry accolades, and handled a few bumps (like the immigration group exit) without losing overall momentum. The firm's narrative in the media is that of *successful integration and emerging strength*, which bodes well as they enter their second year and beyond.

## Competitive Positioning in Key Markets

UB Greensfelder's footprint spans several markets – notably **St. Louis, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Columbus, Chicago, Southern Illinois (Belleville), New York, Washington D.C., and Boca Raton, FL** – but its

competitive landscape is most pronounced in the Midwest cities where its history lies. Here's an overview of who their primary competitors are in those key markets and how UB Greensfelder differentiates itself:

- **St. Louis (and Southern Illinois):** St. Louis is one of UB Greensfelder's two largest offices (with over 100 lawyers) <sup>85</sup> <sup>86</sup>, and the firm is considered among the significant players in that market. Major competitors here include **Thompson Coburn** (a long-established St. Louis firm of ~380 attorneys), **Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner** (originally from St. Louis, now an international firm with hundreds of lawyers and a sizeable local presence), **Husch Blackwell** (Am Law 100 firm headquartered in Kansas City but with a big St. Louis office, specializing in many of the same industries), and **Armstrong Teasdale** (~370 lawyers, HQ in St. Louis). These competitors are in the same "super-regional/national" category, often larger in headcount. For example, Husch Blackwell is roughly three times UB Greensfelder's size and competes nationally in areas like healthcare and energy, and Bryan Cave is a global firm after a merger with a UK firm.

UB Greensfelder distinguishes itself in St. Louis by its **focused strengths** and *mid-market appeal*. Unlike Bryan Cave or Husch, which serve many Fortune 500s, UB Greensfelder often targets **middle-market companies and regional businesses** that find "BigLaw" firms too expensive or impersonal. The firm's deep expertise in **Franchise & Distribution and Construction Law** gives it an edge with certain client bases that larger firms may not emphasize. For instance, few St. Louis firms have a franchise practice as prominent as UBG's – so for a franchise or petroleum distributor client, UB Greensfelder can pitch itself as the go-to regional expert. Similarly, in **construction and real estate development**, UB Greensfelder's Band-1 ranked team <sup>38</sup> often goes head-to-head with (and sometimes beats out) firms like Thompson Coburn for local infrastructure project disputes. Culturally, UB Greensfelder leverages its **"merger of equals" story and Midwest roots** to appeal to clients who value stability and local knowledge. They can say: *We're a 275-lawyer firm with 130+ years in St. Louis (Greensfelder since 1895) and also strong across the Midwest – so we offer breadth without sacrificing the personal service St. Louis clients expect.*

In Southern Illinois (Metro East St. Louis), competition is somewhat less intense as fewer large firms have a strong presence there. Greensfelder historically dominated certain industries (energy, utilities, railroads) in Southern Illinois and that likely continues under UBG. Their main competitors for downstate Illinois work might be regional offices of Chicago firms (e.g. **Polsinelli** in Edwardsville or **Baker Sterchi** in Belleville) or Illinois-based firms like **Hinshaw & Culbertson**. But UB Greensfelder's advantage is having a **full-service St. Louis team licensed in Illinois** and an office in Belleville, giving it credibility on both sides of the river.

- **Cleveland (and Columbus) – Northern Ohio:** Cleveland is the other major stronghold, with around 75 attorneys in UB Greensfelder's Cleveland office (historically Ulmer's HQ) <sup>85</sup> <sup>86</sup>. The primary competitors here are some of Ohio's biggest firms: **Baker & Hostetler** (Cleveland-founded, ~1,000 lawyers globally, strong in litigation and corporate), **Jones Day** (global giant but Cleveland is its birthplace and still a large office), **Squire Patton Boggs** (another Cleveland-origin international firm), **Benesch Friedlander** (a fast-growing Cleveland-based firm ~300+ lawyers), and **Thompson Hine** (Cleveland-based, ~400 lawyers). Also, **Porter Wright** and **Tucker Ellis** are notable midsize competitors regionally. Compared to these, UB Greensfelder (with its Ulmer heritage) is smaller than the global players but similar in size or slightly smaller than Benesch and Thompson Hine.

UB Greensfelder's differentiation in Cleveland comes from its **boutique-like strengths embedded in a full-service platform**. For example, Ulmer (now UBG) historically had one of the **top securities litigation** and broker-dealer defense practices in the country – a niche that not all Cleveland firms have. This means for certain financial litigation, UBG can outshine even larger rivals due to specialist reputation (e.g. they

frequently defended brokerage firms in arbitrations, whereas a firm like Baker Hostetler is more known for general litigation or large corporate defense). Likewise, UB Greensfelder's **product liability and mass tort defense** team (with trial lawyers like PJ Cosgrove and Lola Garcia) can pitch extensive trial experience that perhaps only Tucker Ellis matches locally, since some larger firms focus less on trying cases.

Another point of differentiation is **rate structure and client focus**. UB Greensfelder likely positions itself as offering *big-firm quality at Midwestern rates*. In Cleveland, Baker & Hostetler, Jones Day, and Squire have NYC/DC level billing rates for some practices, whereas UB Greensfelder can appeal to cost-sensitive clients as a more value-driven option (a legacy Ulmer selling point). The firm's **client service awards** (like their U.S. News "Best Law Firms to Work For" recognition) are used to bolster an image of a firm that is *more nimble and client-attentive* than some larger competitors. Additionally, UB Greensfelder's multi-office presence in Ohio (Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati) can be pitched as an integrated Ohio network, giving it a leg up on firms that might only be strong in one Ohio city. For instance, Benesch is strong in Cleveland but less so in Columbus; Thompson Hine has Cleveland and Columbus, but not much of a Cincinnati presence. UB Greensfelder covers all three, which for statewide or regional clients (say a bank with operations across Ohio) could be attractive.

- **Cincinnati (and Kentucky):** In Cincinnati, UB Greensfelder is a smaller player (~30 lawyers), inheriting Ulmer's office there. The market is dominated by **Dinsmore & Shohl** (Cincinnati-based, ~700 lawyers, very strong locally), **Frost Brown Todd** (headquartered in Cincy/Louisville, ~500 lawyers after a recent merger), **Taft Stettinius & Hollister** (originated in Cincinnati, now ~675 lawyers across Midwest), and to some extent **Thompson Hine** (with a modest Cincinnati office) and **Keating Muething & Klekamp** (a respected local firm ~120 lawyers). Against these, UB Greensfelder is comparatively small, so it must compete in select areas rather than across-the-board.

The firm's strategy in Cincinnati likely emphasizes **specific practice strengths** and its broader platform. For example, UB Greensfelder could leverage *Scott Kadish's presence* as co-managing partner in Cincinnati to open doors – Kadish is well-connected in the local business community from Ulmer's years there. They also have niche practices in Cincinnati like a strong **retail and real estate leasing practice** (Kadish himself is a real estate attorney) which can differentiate them from, say, Dinsmore (known more for litigation and labor) <sup>87</sup>. Additionally, with the merger, they can tell Cincinnati clients that *"we bring not just local lawyers, but a whole firm's worth of experts in St. Louis, Chicago, etc., to your issues"*. This could be compelling for mid-sized Cincinnati companies who might otherwise have to hire multiple firms for multi-state operations.

UB Greensfelder likely positions itself as a **regional alternative to the larger Cincinnati firms**. For instance, Taft and Frost Brown are themselves products of mergers and have grown rapidly, sometimes at the expense of personal touch. UB Greensfelder can claim that it offers **hands-on partner attention** (given its smaller office) while still having bench depth behind it via the other offices. In terms of industry, Cincinnati has a strong consumer products and manufacturing base – UB Greensfelder's **products liability defense** and **IP/trademark** capabilities (with folks like Mike Marrero and team) could be marketed to those clients, competing with boutiques or out-of-town firms. It's an uphill battle in a market with entrenched local firms, but UB Greensfelder's presence in multiple states could attract clients needing cross-border counsel (e.g., a Kentucky or Indiana matter – since they have people barred in multiple jurisdictions). Also, if the firm can leverage Greensfelder's *Missouri/Kentucky connections* (St. Louis is not far from Louisville) or

Florida connections for Cincinnati clients (via its small Boca Raton office), it can differentiate as not just a local firm but a **Midwest-plus** firm.

- **Chicago, New York, and Other Markets:** Chicago and New York are essentially expansion markets for UB Greensfelder, where the firm is competing as an outsider among much larger firms.

- In **Chicago**, UB Greensfelder now has about 30 lawyers, which is a fraction of the size of Chicago stalwarts like Kirkland & Ellis, Sidley Austin, or even mid-market firms like Ice Miller (~100 in Chicago) or Clark Hill (~50-60 in Chicago). Direct competitors for the type of work UBG pursues in Chicago are other **Midwestern regional firms** and boutiques. For example, **Ice Miller** (Indianapolis-based) and **Taft** (which merged with Chicago's Jaffe Raitt) are in the same general competitive set, as are **Howard & Howard** or **SmithAmundsen** for certain mid-market corporate work. UB Greensfelder's challenge in Chicago is building brand awareness. They differentiate themselves by focusing on a *few practice areas where they can be a big fish in a smaller pond* – such as **mid-market corporate contracts** (with Lauren Wolf's team now, they can pitch as a unique offering for private equity firms that need contract diligence and negotiation work) and **IP litigation/trademark** (their Chicago IP lawyers can team with Ohio colleagues to handle national trademark portfolios, offering a cost-effective alternative to big IP firms).

The firm's **integration success story** is part of its pitch to laterals and clients in Chicago: they can say, *"We just successfully merged two firms; we're entrepreneurial and on the move, unlike the old guard."* The newly renovated office and investment in Chicago are tangible proof of commitment. Also, Chicago clients often have operations in nearby states – UB Greensfelder can leverage its presence in Cleveland, St. Louis, etc., to handle matters in those jurisdictions without the client needing separate local counsel. This "one firm, multiple Midwest states" approach is a selling point against pure Chicago firms that lack multi-state offices. Over time, if UB Greensfelder continues to add niche groups in Chicago (perhaps more corporate or another specialty like **insurance coverage** or **white-collar defense**), it could carve a nice mid-market niche. But currently, they likely target specific segments rather than trying to compete broadly with the big Chicago firms.

- In **New York**, with an office of under 10 attorneys (albeit growing with the health care and immigration additions), UB Greensfelder isn't competing with the Wall Street firms for Fortune 500 deals. Instead, it positions itself as a **specialty outpost**: for example, offering *healthcare regulatory expertise* to private equity firms or hospitals in New York, or *immigration counsel* to corporations, where their specific knowledge (and Midwest rates) might be attractive compared to NY firms. Their **financial services** practice might also tap into New York's finance industry by handling broker-dealer arbitration defense or regulatory work – a legacy Ulmer strength that could appeal to smaller New York financial firms that don't want a huge NYC law firm. The competition in these niches would be boutique firms (for immigration, there are many NYC boutiques; for healthcare, firms like Epstein Becker or Cadwalader have specialized teams). UB Greensfelder's advantage is being part of a larger full-service firm, which can handle related matters beyond the niche (e.g. an immigration issue that leads to an employment law issue – they have that covered too).
- In **Washington, D.C.**, UB Greensfelder's presence is minimal (a handful of lawyers focusing on FDA regulatory and patent matters). They compete with specialized DC boutiques or larger



firms in those narrow areas. The firm likely doesn't attempt to take on DC general practice firms, but uses the office to support specific client needs (e.g., FDA approval work for a pharmaceutical client, or lobbying support for an energy client, etc.). Competitors in that sense might be niche firms like Wiley Rein (for FDA) or regulatory boutiques. The key differentiator is that UB Greensfelder can integrate regulatory advice with litigation and industry knowledge from its other offices (for example, combining its energy litigators in St. Louis with a DC energy regulatory lawyer to offer full service to an oil & gas client).

- In **Florida (Boca Raton)**, the firm has a small presence inherited from Ulmer (which had a South Florida office primarily for client convenience in securities arbitration and litigation). Competitors there are mostly other out-of-state firms with token offices or local South Florida boutiques. UB Greensfelder likely views Florida not as a market to dominate but as a service location for existing clients who winter there or have disputes there (common in securities arbitration circles). So their competition is case-by-case.

- **Overall Competitive Differentiation:** Across all these markets, UB Greensfelder's overarching differentiation strategy is to present itself as a **"Goldilocks" firm – large enough to handle complex, multi-jurisdictional matters, but not so large that clients are just a number**. They frequently stress their *collaborative culture and Midwest sensibility* as a contrast to some larger competitors. For example, the firm highlights that it has a unified compensation and governance system that rewards collaboration, implying that a client will get the best team assembled from across offices, rather than intra-firm competition (this was mentioned in their merger press release)

<sup>16</sup> . This one-firm culture pitch is aimed at clients who may feel siloing at larger firms.

In terms of **ranking relative to peers**, UB Greensfelder is now roughly in the middle of the pack of large Midwestern firms. It ranks around **#4 by size in St. Louis** (behind the big three of Bryan Cave, Thompson Coburn, Husch, and roughly on par with Armstrong Teasdale) and likely in the **top 5-7 in Cleveland** by local attorney count (BakerHostetler, Jones Day, Squire, Thompson Hine, and Benesch are ahead, but UB Greensfelder is comparable to Tucker Ellis or Porter Wright locally). Nationally, it sits in the lower tier of the Am Law 200 by revenue, but many of its direct competitors (Thompson Coburn, Armstrong Teasdale, Taft, Benesch, etc.) are also in the Am Law 101–200 range. In that sense, they are playing on the same field as those firms and need to differentiate by expertise and client service rather than sheer size.

One clear differentiator is **geographic spread**: UB Greensfelder has offices in **both the Great Lakes and the Midwest proper**, plus outposts on the East Coast and Florida. Few competitors match that exact spread. For example, Thompson Coburn is strong in St. Louis and Chicago but not present in Ohio; Benesch is strong in Ohio and Chicago but not in St. Louis; Taft is in Ohio and Chicago but not in Missouri. UB Greensfelder can claim a **five-state Midwest coverage (Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, plus NY/DC/FL)** that could appeal to clients whose operations or litigation span those areas.

Another differentiator is the **breadth of practice** for a firm its size. Because it inherited full-service practices from two firms, UB Greensfelder can credibly handle nearly any legal issue a mid-market company might face – from complex litigation to patent prosecution to employment counseling to trusts & estates. Some competitors, especially newer merged firms, might still have gaps. For instance, a client might choose UBG over a competitor because *"UBG can do my franchise agreements, defend my lawsuits, handle my real estate deals, and even do my personal estate plan – all under one roof."* That one-stop shop can be a selling point against slightly smaller firms that might outsource some specialties.

In terms of **marketing against competitors**, UB Greensfelder often emphasizes its **commitment to client service and efficiency**. The firm's leaders have said they want to maintain a "*Midwestern value*" proposition – meaning high-quality work without New York rates, and a personal touch. They have also pointed out that unlike some mergers that fail due to culture clashes, this merger worked because of cultural alignment, and "*that culture benefits our clients through better collaboration*". This is somewhat intangible, but it's part of how they pitch against both mega-firms (too impersonal) and local firms (perhaps not as deep).

Finally, UB Greensfelder differentiates through some **unique practice expertise** that not all competitors have: **Franchise law** (very few firms in their peer group have a franchise practice as prominent), **ERISA litigation** (Ulmer had a niche in ERISA class actions defense, which not every firm does in-house), **Broker-Dealer regulation** (their FINRA defense team is one of a kind regionally), etc. In any competitive proposal, they can highlight those strengths if relevant to the client, tipping the scales in their favor for work in those areas.

**Competitive Outlook:** UB Greensfelder's emergence has undoubtedly gotten the attention of its regional competitors. In some markets, they likely face aggressive responses – e.g., other firms trying to recruit their stars (as we saw with Thompson Hine and the immigration group). But the firm's overall trajectory suggests it is **holding its own and even climbing** in stature among the Midwestern law firm pecking order. As it continues to integrate and possibly expand, its ability to maintain differentiation (through culture, client focus, and niche excellence) will determine how much it can chip away at the larger competitors' market share. So far, the signs are encouraging: the firm is already considered an "**Am Law 200 contender**" and *super-regional firm to watch* in the legal press <sup>83</sup>, indicating that its competitors are aware of a new force in the Midwest legal market.

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**Sources:** The information above is drawn from a variety of connected sources, including the firm's official merger press releases and website <sup>5</sup> <sup>12</sup>, news coverage by *Reuters* <sup>3</sup> <sup>14</sup>, *The American Lawyer* <sup>6</sup>, and regional business journals <sup>9</sup>. Insights on practice strengths and leadership were taken from UB Greensfelder's announcement site and press materials <sup>42</sup> <sup>23</sup>, as well as Chambers USA profiles <sup>19</sup> <sup>38</sup>. Recent developments regarding lateral hires and departures were confirmed by legal news outlets such as Law360 and Crain's (e.g. Law360's report on the Thompson Hine move <sup>82</sup> and Crain's Chicago on the Lauren Wolf hire <sup>32</sup>). Awards and rankings are substantiated by press releases on the firm's site and third-party rankings like Benchmark Litigation <sup>55</sup> and Chambers <sup>54</sup>. The firm's marketing activities and branding statements were verified via the firm's LinkedIn posts <sup>17</sup> <sup>70</sup> and the Horizon Interactive Awards announcement <sup>62</sup>. All these sources collectively paint the picture of UB Greensfelder as of late 2025, a year into its merger – a firm with significant regional heft, growing ambitions, and a clear plan for how to position itself in a competitive legal market.

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