

LITIGATION BLOG

Just five months after its launch, former Cohen Milstein partner Michael Hausfeld's new firm has set a legal precedent. And it's all thanks to one man – Anthony Maton. By **Katy Dowell**

Hausfeld partner secures automatic settlements in rubber class action

MICHAEL Hausfeld has come a long way in the five months since he was allegedly expelled from his former firm Cohen Milstein Hausfeld & Toll (now Cohen Milstein Sellers & Toll) – and he has partner Anthony Maton to thank for it.

The firm has steered its clients towards settling numerous claims – without going near a court or entering into arbitration

Last November Hausfeld left the firm to set up on his own in Washington DC, calling the firm Hausfeld. In February he was joined by the London branch of Cohen Milstein, where Maton was a partner.

Now, just months into the new firm's life, Maton has managed to set a legal

precedent. The firm has steered its class action clients towards settling numerous claims with one part of a US-based cartel – without going near a court or entering into arbitration. Quite a feat, by anyone's standards.

The case revolves around five manufacturers of marine hose (the

rubber hose that transfers oil between tankers and storage facilities). Two years ago competition authorities in the US, UK and EU found that the companies had conspired to fix the price of the product over a

21-year period. The cartel included Dunlop Oil & Marine, Bridgestone Corporation and Parker ITR.

After setting aside cash to settle any claims relating to its involvement, Parker ITR opted to forego litigation,

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**Anthony Maton,
Hausfeld**

choosing instead to automatically settle claims brought against it, regardless of where the claimants were based.

According to Maton, the fact that the cartel was

wound up in 2007 after being found guilty of the price-fixing meant that its member companies were ideally positioned to offer automatic settlements.

But Parker ITR was the only cartel member to opt for automatic settlement.

“Companies aren't used to settling cases in the UK and EU,” said Maton. “They'll settle in the US, because that's where they expect claims to be brought.”

But setting legal precedent is nothing new for Maton. While still a partner at Cohen Milstein, he reached a settlement in the US price-fixing class action brought against British Airways and Virgin Atlantic, the first transatlantic case of its kind.

For those participating in cartels, Hausfeld and Maton are becoming a force to be reckoned with.

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