

With Antitrust at ‘Historic’ Moment, Shook Hardy Adds DOJ Litigator

By Andrew Maloney

What You Need to Know

- Shook, Hardy & Bacon has added Ryan Sandrock, a DOJ litigator, to help lead its antitrust practice.
- Sandrock said he wanted to return to the private sector to help clients navigate antitrust.
- Other firms are also expanding antitrust capabilities.

As demand in antitrust expertise grows, Shook, Hardy & Bacon is bringing on a Justice Department litigator to help lead its practice.

The firm announced this week that Ryan Sandrock, a trial lawyer in the department’s antitrust division, will co-chair its antitrust practice from San Francisco and Washington, D.C.

Sandrock has been a digital markets trial attorney with the DOJ for the last two years, working on the government’s landmark claims against Google, as well as claims against a \$13 billion merger between health care companies, and consolidation in the sugar industry, among other issues. Before that, he was an antitrust partner at Sidley Austin in San Francisco.

He said in an interview that he wanted to be back in the mix of helping companies navigate an increasingly complex antitrust landscape, particularly the types of companies that Shook Hardy represents: those in the health and technology sectors. He said he’s known a number of Shook Hardy

partners for years, including Lynn Murray, the other co-chair of the practice, and that the firm’s focus on litigation and trials was particularly appealing.

What he finds compelling about antitrust work, he said, is that it can touch on a little bit of everything.

“You can have issues with sugar, boxes, chickens, tech—anything can raise antitrust issues,” he said last week. “And Shook has relationships with all kinds of companies, from tech companies to companies that sell consumer goods.”

Shook isn’t the only firm to beef up in antitrust lately, both in the U.S. and around the globe. Cooley recently brought on government antitrust watchdog Kathy O’Neill, most recently the senior director of investigations and litigation at the DOJ, calling the enforcement environment “red-hot.” Major German law firm Noerr also signed on for a larger office to accommodate a growing antitrust team, as demand for competition and regulatory expertise rises.

While the current administration has increased enforcement, there’s a bipartisan belief at the moment that large corporations need to be reined in and competition needs to be increased, Sandrock said. Antitrust is a significant piece of that because it gets to fundamental issues about who should have power and who should be rewarded in the economy, he said.

There are also several proposals currently pending in Congress to update



Courtesy photo

Ryan Sandrock, a partner and co-chair of the antitrust practice at Shook, Hardy & Bacon.

the Sherman Act and other laws that prohibit anti-competitive business practices.

“Antitrust is at a historic moment,” Sandrock said. “Antitrust is a topic of everyday conversation, more than it’s ever been probably since the early part of the 20th century.”

Shook Hardy in a statement touted previous government hires in its antitrust practice from the DOJ and Federal Trade Commission, including Elliott Davis, who was hired last year after serving as principal deputy to the assistant attorney general for the civil rights division.

“We’ve known Ryan and his outstanding trial capabilities for many years,” said Murray, the other co-chair of the practice, in a statement. “We’re delighted to bring him onboard to expand our antitrust group and lead us to the next level of antitrust litigation and counseling services for clients.”