



Spencer Fane Highlights the Value of Taking Risks in Most Innovative Law Firm Feature

On the heels of the firm's recognition as one of *Missouri Lawyers Media (MLM)*'s 2025 Most Innovative Law Firms, Spencer Fane was spotlighted for having "reimagined the law firm model ... by replacing hierarchy with parallel leadership structures: internally-facing Talent Teams and externally-facing Market Teams.

In the firm's profile, Spencer Fane Chair [Patrick J. Whalen](#) outlined its intentional embedding of innovation, autonomy, and experimentation into its culture and new organizational structure. He also emphasized the importance of continuing to empower professionals in an industry that is traditionally risk adverse.

"Whalen explained that innovation does not happen in environments that punish risk," *MLM* reported. "He noted that the disconnect between what clients need and how firms operate represents a significant challenge, as many firms cling to legacy structures that stifle responsiveness and creativity.

"The structures empower attorneys to self-organize around client needs and professional development, *MLM* added. "Whalen shifted the firm away from a command-and-control approach to one that prioritizes autonomy and accountability, an approach that has fueled growth, improved retention and enhanced client service. He embedded innovation into the firm's culture, encouraging experimentation and risk taking while maintaining excellence in client work."

MLM recognized Spencer Fane as recipient of the 2025 Most Innovative Law Firms honor which was celebrated in November at the publication's Legal Innovation Summit in St. Louis.

The distinction for innovation follows the firm's recent honors from other industry thought leaders for the ingenuity it brings in growing a law firm capable of continuously unlocking new value for clients while also standing as one of the highest performing firms nationally in workplace satisfaction. For example, *Bloomberg Law* recognized Spencer Fane as an inaugural Leading Law Firm honoree in 2025, and *Financial Times* shortlisted the firm for the Innovative Lawyers Awards North America 2025, respectively.

Read the firm's full *MLM* honoree profile [here](#). Please note, a subscription may be required.