

Attorneys' Valuable Ally: Trial Partners, Inc.

Maps Strategies, Picks Juries, Prepares Witnesses



J. Lee Meihls, far right, is the founder, president and senior consultant of Trial Partners, Inc.

J. Lee Meihls, Ph.D. has some great stories to tell. Like her jury selections for Michael Jackson's and R. Kelly's defense teams. But the one where you can really hear fire in her voice was a rape case where she offered her services to the prosecution after the verdict angered her. In that one, the hung jury (11-1 for acquittal) that caught Meihls' attention led to a retrial – and conviction after Trial Partners got involved. In another high-profile retrial, Meihls helped MGA Entertainment win an unprecedented \$310 million verdict against the Goliath toymaker Mattel.

Meihls is the founder, president and senior consultant of Trial Partners, Inc.,

which assists attorneys in civil and criminal actions, and in federal and state courts. The firm is a fully integrated component of clients' legal teams, providing vital support in developing case themes and strategies; holding mock trials and focus groups; preparing witnesses; recommending and developing graphics with the help of its sister company, Creative Counsel; picking juries – *more than a thousand juries* – and many other key areas. "We really do have a lot of experience in court, in the trenches," Meihls says. "A lot of what we do is very scientific, but a lot of it is an art."

The firm, composed of psychologists and social scientists, is nationally known,

renowned for its integrity, and highly sought-after in the legal world. Staff leaders include Mark Phillips, the vice president of the company, and Lauren Harvey, who runs the San Francisco office. "They're so vital to the success of the firm," Meihls says. "They bring so much to the firm that I wouldn't be able to do what I do without them."

Trial Partners helps counsel for Fortune 100 corporations, mom-and-pop companies and individuals. The consultancy has served clients in 44 states and the District of Columbia. In addition to traditional jury research, "We offer clinics in *voir dire*, opening statements and closing arguments, and more, and we bring in our staff to participate," Meihls says. These sessions produce keen and candid insights and ideas. "Our clients benefit because they get to hear from people who haven't been drinking the Kool-Aid."

Knowledge of trial procedures across the country is one of the firm's strengths. Another is a vast database of information about jurors, judges and verdicts. And yet another is an emphasis on "continuous improvement." "Our standards," Meihls says, "are uncompromising."

JURY SELECTION

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TrialPartnersinc.

www.trial-partners.com

8383 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 810 | Beverly Hills, CA 90211 | 323-653-3330