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## Highly Focused

*Boutique LA law firm O&A, P.C. specializes in corporate and commercial transactions.*

By **Melanie Brisbon**  
Daily Journal Staff Writer

**L**OS ANGELES — Daniel O. Offner and his law firm **O&A, P.C.** advised in a deal to bring next month's big movie release, "Blade Runner 2049," to virtual reality platforms, and yet there was a time when he was unsure of how to proceed with his legal career.

Offner had been general counsel of Oculus VR Inc. during the company's \$2 billion sale to Facebook Inc. After that deal closed he received offers to continue with the company and to join other law firms, but in 2014 chose a different direction.

"My perception, rightly or wrongly, was that there was a gap in the marketplace with respect to legal services," Offner said. "On one hand, you have some really wonderful firms that are now kind of institutions coming out of Silicon Valley like Gunderson, Cooley, Fenwick, Wilson that have built great practices in developing startup and emerging companies, but they're expensive and they only have so much capacity."

"Then on the other side you have entrepreneurs and startups who go to companies like LegalZoom or they have their uncle incorporate something," he added.

Offner's goal was to create a law firm that would fill that gap. He hung out his own shingle and created O&A, short for Offner & Associates, a boutique law firm that focuses exclusively on corporate and commercial transactions. Offner started out with one other attorney, Jim Kidston, formerly with Latham & Watkins LLP.

Today, O&A assists clients throughout the world — such as startups, venture funds and conglomerates — in mergers and

acquisitions, corporate startup formation, financing rounds and other types of deals. The firm's practice touches the gaming and interactive, software and entertainment sectors, along with other industries.

But O&A faced obstacles when it first started.

Offner, whose career included stints at Loeb & Loeb LLP and Nixon Peabody LLP, and had helped Oculus execute a multibillion-dollar deal, still had concerns about whether his new firm would attract clients.

"I felt like the guy who had been part of a big rock 'n' roll band and now I'm playing in the café down the street hoping that someone would leave a tip," Offner said. "When we started two and a half years ago, we had some legacy work from Facebook Oculus that kind of kept the lights on, and no startups and no venture funds."

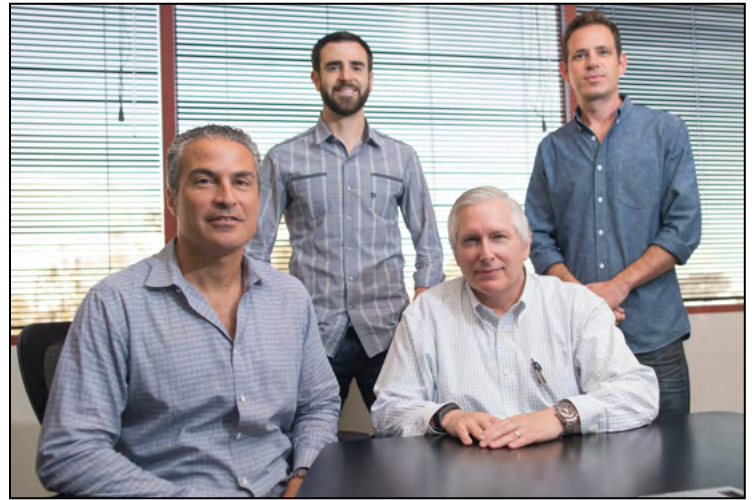
He used many strategies to bring in clients, Offner said.

"Number one, we developed a startup program which is sort of a better system for the startup, better wiring, better plumbing all done from top to bottom," Offner said. "Number two, I was a relatively active angel investor and I developed a better perspective, a better understanding of what it meant to be an angel investor in venture capital."

"That process led to our working with BAM Ventures and our working with Arena Ventures," he added.

Also, Offner spoke with contacts in his network. The strategies paid off. The firm started to get more work, and needed more attorneys to handle it. Attorneys Michael Borenstein, Kevin Pasternak and Sara Wolf joined the firm along with counsel David Phillips and Afshin Hakim.

The work the firm did for the



Juliane Backmann / Special to the Daily Journal

From left, Afshin Hakim, Jim Kidston, Daniel Offner and Michael Borenstein of O&A, P.C. at their office in Brentwood, Los Angeles.

Alcon Entertainment film production company in bringing "Blade Runner 2049" to Oculus virtual reality platforms last year is part of a cavalcade of highly publicized deals.

O&A also advised Ubisoft SA, a French video game publisher, in its acquisition of Growtopia, an online gaming community with about 20 million users worldwide. Terms of that deal were not disclosed. O&A advised Spaces Inc., a virtual reality company led by former executives at DreamWorks Animation, in its \$6.5 million seed financing.

"We were introduced to Spaces very early on in their company," Kidston said. "It was cool for us to see them on their growth trajectory from just starting with a cool idea, building some momentum, getting some traction, getting some interest around it and then doing the deal that got them the first significant bit of money."

Los Angeles-based startups are also among their clients.

"I spend a lot of time managing our startup program — running through the gamut of initial legal issues and explaining them to the clients," Borenstein said.

Paige Craig, founder and general

partner of the firm's client Arena Ventures, said Offner "sees both sides" of a deal. "He's a really good mediator," Craig said. "We've never not been able to get something

resolved. I think Dan is extremely insightful and diligent."

Jeff Lapin, president of Tech Coast Angels, which provides funding to early-stage companies

in Southern California, has known Offner for nearly 20 years.

He described Offner as "very personable, very practical, reasonably priced and always gets the job done." Lapin, who was the CEO of Atari and Starwood Hotels, called Offner "a dealmaker, though he takes a softer practical approach in negotiating. That's not to say he can't be tough when he needs to be tough."

Growing the firm and continuing to provide great service to clients are among his future goals for O&A, Offner said.

"I think this is the age of the specialist law firm," he said. "It's very hard to be a full-service shop and have great lawyers in every area."

"We want to build a great firm with great people and great clients. Our vision is quality not quantity," he said.

