masuda funai

George H. Kobayashi

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President of Masuda Funai, George Kobayashi serves as general counsel to Japanese companies entering the U.S. market. Fluent in English and Japanese, George worked in Japan and understands the Japanese business mindset and how commercial decisions are made and executed. George is valued for his skill in explaining American law and business in a way Japanese executives can understand and leverage to ensure ROI. George feels a sense of personal success when his clients succeed in the domestic marketplace.

George maintains a unique practice focusing on the representation of Japan-based clients in a wide range of cross-border business transactions, including mergers and acquisitions, joint ventures, strategic alliances and other commercial transactions valued into the hundreds of millions of dollars. As a member of the firm's Intellectual Property & Technology practice, George has represented and advised public and privately held companies in various industries, including information technology, fashion, application development, transportation, machine tool, automobile, robotics, food products and healthcare.

George regularly assists his clients in all aspects of vertical distribution including franchising, dealership and distributorship programs, sales representative and commercial agency relationships, complex commercial licensing and co-branding arrangements, and direct selling and business opportunity relationships. George has appeared numerous times before the United States Patent and Trademark Office and Trademark Trial and Appeal Board, and regularly advises clients on trademark, service mark, branding, copyright and other intellectual property-related issues.

George also has experience assisting companies

Education

Creighton University, B.S.B.A., 1995

Temple University Japan Law Program (Tokyo), 1999

The University of Illinois Chicago School of Law, J.D., 2000

Admissions

Illinois

Ohio

Michigan

Practice Areas

Commercial, Competition & Trade

Corporate, Finance & Acquisitions

Intellectual Property & Technology

Languages

English

Japanese

internationally, including those in and from Japan, Mexico and Brazil, and has developed strong relationships with experienced business and legal advisors around the world to assist his clients' expansion into these markets. He has conducted numerous seminars, both in the U.S. and in Japan in English and in Japanese, on a broad range of commercial, intellectual property and other legal issues affecting businesses conducting cross-border transactions.

Prior to law school, George worked in Tokyo as a Product Development Manager for 3Com Corporation and its predecessor US Robotics, Inc. While in law school, he studied comparative law in Tokyo and was a legal intern at the Tokyo office of TMI Associates.

Experience

- Lead legal counsel to a major Japanese automotive component manufacturer in the negotiation, formation and establishment of complex, multi-tiered dual joint venture entities in Mexico with a large scale global private investment fund.
- Assisted the world's 10th largest Internet company in the participation of a $27 million round of financing for a Chicago-based global market technology company.
- Represented a foreign buyer in a multi-million dollar asset purchase of an industrial products division of an established trading company.
- Lead counsel for the sale of a U.S. subsidiary of a Japanese logistics company.
- Represented global audio component and accessory manufacturer in their expansion of operations into Brazil.
- Assisted a large Japanese trading company in connection with the restructuring of global fashion accessory business with a U.S. partner, involving a series of multi-million dollar acquisitions of the assets located in various territories around the world.
- Represented client in the acquisition of a motorcycle and ATV products company in Utah.
- Represented Japan-based computer and smart-phone application developer in trademark prosecution and other intellectual property matters.
- Represented Japan-based household products manufacturer in the negotiation of long-term manufacture and supply agreements.
- Advised an international electronic entertainment company on U.S. laws and regulations applicable to its bringing a number of its entertainment properties to the North American market, with an emphasis on online gaming and E-Sports competition sectors.

Memberships

- American Bar Association
- Japan Business Association of Southern California
- Japan Business Society of Detroit
- Japanese American Bar Association
- Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Chicago
- U.S.-Japan Council - Board of Directors (Chair of Finance Committee)

Distinctions

- *Leading Lawyers*, 2015-2026
- Legal 500 Chicago Elite – Corporate and M&A