

Trademark Licensing and Strategy

Strategic management and exploitation of intellectual property (IP) are key to expanding the global reach, recognition and revenue streams of a brand. In today's technology-driven environment, digital channels such as e-commerce, mobile apps and social media platforms have opened more opportunities for businesses to break into untapped markets and further leverage the value of their trademarks and related assets. Katten's team brings a wealth of experience in developing and executing licensing strategies for companies ranging from luxury fashion brands and cosmetics companies to financial institutions and software developers, and with this versatile insight, counsels clients on traditional and digital means of brand protection and optimization.

Innovative partners in IP management and enhancement

Managing IP portfolios is a cornerstone of Katten's value-driven IP programs. We develop market-focused strategies for the creation, management and enhancement of trademarks and broader IP assets. Our team works in partnership with our clients to design innovative approaches aimed at building and preserving the recognition and goodwill of brands in domestic and international markets.

Forging strategic alliances is key to growing brand awareness, and our attorneys have extensive experience in maximizing the value of IP portfolios through licensing, collaboration, distribution, joint venture, endorsement, marketing and manufacturing agreements. As the digital age has altered the way that products and services are promoted, distributed and consumed, our attorneys combine deep industry and market knowledge to help clients face novel issues that have emerged in the exploitation of IP rights.

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Additionally, our team comprehensively supports companies' mergers and acquisitions (M&A) by managing the transactional process and conducting thorough reviews of IP assets such as patents, trademarks and copyrights to identify potential opportunities or risks that could impact deal value. Our M&A work includes verifying IP ownership, analyzing agreements and advising on transaction strategies to ensure seamless integration and protection of acquired assets. Katten's proficiency in this area is demonstrated through our representation of clients, including manufacturers, retailers and brand development/licensing companies, in their significant asset sales and purchases, as well as the license back of IP rights for the continued operation of brands.

Navigating opportunities and risks in a digital world

Global digitization has forever changed how companies boost and maintain the value of their brands. Katten's team plays an integral role in helping clients navigate the perks and potential pitfalls of the digital landscape, working to craft bespoke licensing strategies that align with modern business models and consumer platforms. Our deep bench of attorneys, including nationally recognized authorities on trademark strategy and [litigation](#), identifies viable exploitation opportunities while developing creative solutions to safeguard rights, whether it involves traditional promotional channels or public personalities such as entertainers, musicians, models and influencers.

Integrated counsel on transactions

Our interdisciplinary team delivers comprehensive services when negotiating and structuring a wide array of domestic and cross-border transactions to commercialize IP rights. Our seasoned attorneys apply a combination of business acumen and legal skills that enable us to offer client-focused counsel with the ultimate goal of closing deals that minimize risks and maximize IP value. We also collaborate with Katten authorities on tax, finance, real estate, insolvency and international customs, drawing on their knowledge to anticipate and resolve critical issues that arise in various arrangements, including:

- Brand extension licensing
- Celebrity endorsement agreements
- Co-branding, collaboration and web-based agreements
- Design agreements
- International distribution agreements
- Patent/technology licenses
- Retail agreements
- Software licenses
- Trademark license agreements
- License administration/records
- Internet-domain names/social media

Our clients range from small startups to major international companies across industries, including [apparel and fashion](#), beauty, media and entertainment, video games, sports, software and technology, pharmaceuticals, health care, hospitality, food and beverage, financial services and consumer goods. We know that understanding what drives business in individual industries is critical to developing effective solutions that support our clients' diverse commercial needs.

Recognitions

Recognized or listed in the following:

- *Best Law Firms*
 - Trademark Law
 - Law Firm of the Year, 2024
 - National, 2016–2025
 - Chicago, 2020–2025
 - Los Angeles, 2024–2025
 - New York, 2016–2025
- *Chambers USA*
 - Intellectual Property
 - Illinois, 2006–2022
 - Intellectual Property: Trademark, Copyright & Trade Secrets
 - Illinois, 2021–2024
 - Intellectual Property: Litigation
 - District of Columbia, 2021–2024

- *Managing Intellectual Property IP Stars*
 - Copyright & Related Rights
 - United States, 2017, 2020, 2024
 - Ranked Firm
 - United States (National), 2023
 - Top Tier Firm
 - New York, 2023–2024
 - Illinois, 2023–2024
 - Trademark Prosecution
 - United States, 2017, 2020–2024
- *Managing Intellectual Property Annual Awards*
 - Trademark Contentious
 - Midwest Region, 2017
- *The Fashion Law*
 - Top US Law Firms for Retail Companies, 2025
- *World Trademark Review 1000*
 - The World's Leading Trademark Professionals
 - National, 2013–2018
 - Chicago, 2017–2018
 - New York, 2013–2018
 - Washington, DC, 2013–2018