Stephen J. Dragich

PARTNER

Steve focuses on a client's big picture, not just individual deals.



Industries

Beverage & Food
Private Companies
Automotive & Transportation
— Logistics

Practices

Corporate & Securities
— Private Equity

Education

University of Illinois College of Law, JD, University of Illinois Law Review, Member and Business Manager; magna cum laude , 1983

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, BS, with highest honors, 1980

Offices

Chicago

Phone

312.258.5692

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He believes in investing time up front to fully understand his clients' strategic and tactical needs before matching them with legal counsel. This often involves bringing in a team of attorneys skilled in other areas such as labor, employee benefits, tax, intellectual property, real estate and litigation.

His extensive background in representing an array of medium to large companies means Steve can offer clients clear perspectives on virtually any corporate opportunity or challenge. This includes mergers and acquisitions, public and private financing, and other complex contractual arrangements. Steve is especially adept at representing entrepreneurs and emerging businesses in their day-to-day concerns, as well as serving as outside general counsel and providing general corporate advice to business owners and senior executives. Should a client run into "compliance" issues, he also has experience with internal investigations and advising on post-investigation strategies.

Steve operates at the speed of business. He understands the need for responsive client communication and the importance of meeting deadlines (even the "impossible" ones). Unlike other corporate attorneys from major firms, he does not just move on after a deal is done. Once a corporate transaction is complete, he sticks by his clients, offering legal advice to meet their business needs and better their bottom line.

Client Work

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In a complex $1.05 billion transaction with many multinational and multi-U.S. jurisdictional compliance components, Steve led the team that represented Emaar. Under his guidance, the Dubai-based developer and one of the world's largest real estate companies closed its first U.S. acquisition. This deal, which involved purchasing the second largest privately held U.S. homebuilder, received national and international publicity and strongly positioned Steve and the firm as "go-to" lawyers for similar transactions.

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Steve represented Laidlaw, an international transportation company, for many years during its strategic acquisition programs targeting the ambulance, school bus and passenger bus sectors,

including:

- Its $1.2 billion tender offer for American Medical Response, Inc., and $400 million tender offer for Dallas-based EmCare Holdings, two companies engaged in the emergency medical transportation business.

- Its acquisition by cash-out merger of Indianapolis-based Mayflower Group, Inc., the second largest provider (behind Laidlaw) of school bus transportation services in North America, in a transaction valued at $250 million.

- Its acquisition of Greyhound Lines, Inc., the largest provider of inter-city bus transportation services in North America, in a transaction valued at $700 million.

- World's Finest Chocolate established itself as a market leader under Steve's counsel. He represented the company in its strategic acquisition of the Queen Anne candy brand and cordial cherry production assets from Gray and Company. World's Finest Chocolate is now the leading brand of chocolate-covered cordial cherries and one of the top-five boxed chocolate brands sold during the holidays. The purchase included a long-term cherry supply agreement with Gray & Company; the world's leading maker of maraschino cherries, ensuring our client will have a low-cost, reliable source of maraschino cherries.

- Recently, Steve counseled a 50 percent partner in a major trucking and warehousing business to recoup the multimillion-dollar value of his ownership stake in the business. Despite an extremely contentious and hostile management takeover battle with his deceased 50 percent partner's relatives, this culminated in a favorable settlement for our client.

Publications, Presentations & Recognitions

Recognitions

- Illinois Leading Lawyer, Law Bulletin's *Illinois Leading Lawyers Network* (2006-2021)
- *The Legal 500 United States* – M&A/Corporate and Commercial: M&A – Middle-Market (Sub-$500m) (2016-2020)
- *The Legal 500 United States* – Mergers, Acquisitions, and Buyouts (2011)
- *Chambers USA* – Corporate/M&A, Illinois (2010); Corporate, Illinois (2008-2009)
- *Illinois Super Lawyers*, Thomson Reuters (2007)
- Peer Reviewed AV® Preeminent™, *Martindale-Hubbell* (Since 2003)

Boards, Memberships & Certifications

- American Bar Association, Section of Business Law
- Chicago Bar Association
- Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, Illinois
  - Board of Directors (2016-present)
  - President (2020-present)
  - ?President Elect (2019-2020)

Bar Admissions

Illinois

Court Admissions