



Craig Knobbe

Partner

Denver

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"I actively listen to clients to truly understand the nature of their transaction and their desired outcome," said Craig Knobbe. "When working through complex problems and transactions, I think creatively about how to navigate through the most important issues. I also work hard to assess the problem or transaction from multiple perspectives and look for practical solutions."

Craig Knobbe, a business lawyer who focuses on commercial transactions, franchise and distribution matters, and mergers and acquisitions, is a partner in Lathrop GPM's Franchise and Distributions group. Clients – ranging from startups to private equity to large well-established companies – rely on Craig's advice to guide them through complex legal issues in their transactions, including:

- Franchise and distribution issues
- Mergers and acquisitions (with a focus on transactions involving the acquisition of franchise systems)
- Maintenance of franchise disclosure documents and registrations
- Preparation of franchise disclosure documents for startup franchisors and provide assistance through the franchise registration process
- Trademark and intellectual property issues
- Commercial Contracts
- Entity formation and corporate structure
- Leasing and real estate-related transactions

Areas of Focus

Services

[Corporate & Business](#)

[Franchise & Distribution](#)

[Real Estate & Development](#)

[Sales, Exchanges & Leases](#)

[Mergers & Acquisitions](#)

[Franchise M&A](#)

Sectors

[Restaurant, Food & Beverage](#)

Craig enjoys helping clients achieve their goals and takes a creative, diligent, and flexible approach to resolving legal challenges. Some of the industries Craig serves include:

- Automotive rentals
- Brewing and distilling
- Home/commercial restoration services
- Hospitality and entertainment
- Personal care and consumer services
- Real estate
- Restaurant and food and beverage

Private equity funds, franchisors, and investors value Craig's counsel on the regulatory issues, due diligence process and other important matters in mergers and acquisitions occurring in the highly regulated franchise environment. His experience with franchise mergers and acquisitions ranges from the purchase and sale of small franchise systems to the acquisition of large, international franchise companies valued at up to \$1 billion.

Companies and investors rely on Craig to help them assess and navigate the complicated legal issues that arise in commercial transactions and make well informed decisions.

Craig sets himself apart by listening closely to his clients, understanding and assessing their needs, and then being creative in crafting practical solutions that fit their long-term strategic goals.

Experience

- Advised multiple private equity funds, investors and franchisors on mergers and acquisitions of franchise systems.
- Assisted a franchisor with a transaction involving a buyout of a large franchisee operating numerous units in multiple states.
- Counseled a restaurant client on the negotiation of a joint venture to develop multiple restaurants across multiple states.
- Advise clients on complex commercial contracts and issues arising in commercial transactions.
- Advised franchisor on the negotiation of loan documents to refinance existing debt.
- Assist startup franchisors with the preparation of franchise disclosure documents and the franchise registration process.

Credentials

Education

- University of Denver Sturm College of Law, J.D., with honors
 - *Order of St. Ives*
 - *Law Review*, Research and Technical Editor
- University of Arizona, B.S.B.A.

Bar Admissions

- Colorado

Recognition

- Selected among *The Best Lawyers in America*®, 2019-2025
 - Franchise Law "Lawyer of the Year," 2023
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Presentations

- Co-presenter, "Crafting a Plan for Your Brewery Exit or Next Acquisition: What You Need to Know About M&A," Colorado Craft Brewers Summit, November 2021
- Panelist, "Decision Making During Adversity: Pathways to Pivot," Colorado Brewers Guild Webinar, March 2020
- Co-presenter, "Legal Aspects of Distribution," Colorado Craft Brewers Summit, November 2018
- Presenter, "Overview of Franchise Law and Accidental Franchises," Arapahoe County Bar Association CLE Presentation, January 2018
- Moderator, "Mergers & Acquisitions in Franchising: Menu Items for Buying and Selling a Franchise System," International Franchise Association, Franchise Business Network, October 2017
- Presenter, "Mergers and Acquisitions in Franchising," International Franchise Association Franchise Expo West, October 2016
- Presenter, "Introduction to Mergers and Acquisitions of Franchise Companies," Colorado Bar Association CLE Presentation, September 2015
- Presenter, "Hidden Franchises: How the Franchise Laws Affect Your Business Practice," Colorado Bar Association Business Law Institute, October 2013

Publications

- Co-author, "[Beer in 2021 and Beyond](#)," *ColoradoBiz Magazine*, December 14, 2020
 - Author, "[How To Avoid Becoming an Accidental Franchise](#)," *Franchise Update Media*, February 5, 2020
 - Author, "The Accidental Franchise," *Colorado Bar Association Newsletter*, September 2017
 - Author, "Hidden Franchises," *The Colorado Lawyer*, January 2016
 - Co-author, "The New Federal Gift Card Regulations," *ABA's Franchise Law Journal*, Winter 2011
 - Co-author, "Federal District Court Case Involving Classification of Franchisees Raises Concerns," *Shopping Center Legal Update*, Fall/Winter 2020
 - Co-author, "New Federal Gift Card Regulations to Become Effective on August 22, 2010," *The Franchise Lawyer*, Spring 2010
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Professional Activities

- American Bar Association, Forum on Franchising; Business Law Section, Member

Community Involvement

- The Bridge Project, University of Denver, Board Member, 2015-2018