



Gaylen L. Knack

Partner

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Gaylen Knack assists franchisors in structuring domestic and international franchise and distribution programs, and advises clients on related business and regulatory issues. He also advises clients on international trade regulation, trademark, Internet, and corporate law matters.

Gaylen's combined 30 plus years of experience in private practice and as a franchise executive provide him with a unique understanding of the complex business and legal issues that companies face in establishing and operating franchise and other distribution systems. As vice president and general counsel at a U.S.-based, multi-concept retail franchise, Gaylen developed sales training and compliance, preferred vendor, internet, franchise renewal, operational standards, and due diligence programs that are integral to the success of expanding franchise programs.

He has authored numerous articles on such varied franchise and distribution-related topics as the use of franchisee referral networks, development through multi-unit and area development strategies, encroachment and franchise site location, cross-border/supply chain transactions, due diligence audits, and franchise advertising funds.

Areas of Focus

Services

[Corporate & Business](#)

[Franchise & Distribution](#)

[Distribution](#)

[Franchise Litigation &](#)

[Dispute Resolution](#)

[Franchise M&A](#)

[Franchise Registration &](#)

[Compliance](#)

[Start-Up Systems](#)

[International Development](#)

[Emerging & Mature Systems](#)

Sectors

[Wholesale & Retail](#)

[Distribution](#)

Credentials

Education

- University of Minnesota Law School, J.D., 1985
- University of Minnesota, undergraduate degree

Bar Admissions

- Minnesota

Recognition

- *Chambers Global*, Franchising, 2007-2025
 - *Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers for Business*, Nationwide Franchise, 2008-2024
 - Selected among *The Best Lawyers in America*®, 2010-2025
 - *Franchise Times*, "Legal Eagle," 2007-2025
 - *Franchise Times*, "Legal Eagles Hall of Fame," 2017
 - *Minnesota Monthly*, "Minnesota's Top Lawyers," 2022, 2024
 - *Lexology Index*, Thought Leader – USA Franchising, 2025
 - *Lexology Franchise Guide* (formerly *Who's Who Legal*), 2003-2023
 - *Thomson Reuters*, "Minnesota Super Lawyer®," 2008, 2011-2021
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Presentations

- Roundtable Facilitator, "Is Now the Right Time To Go International: Analyzing Post-Covid and Geopolitical Issues Abroad," 2023 IFA Legal Symposium, May 8, 2023
- Moderator, "How to Limit Disruption from Supply Chain Uncertainty While Expanding Internationally," International Franchise Association Annual Convention, February 28, 2022
- Co-Speaker, "Structuring and Negotiating Essential Vendor Agreements and Dealing with Financial Terms, Discounts, and Rebates," American Bar Association 44th Annual Forum on Franchising, October 2021
- Moderator, "Ghost Kitchens, Virtual Restaurants, and the Intersection with Franchising," IFA 2021 Legal Symposium, May 6, 2021
- Co-Speaker, "Negotiating Your First International Franchise: Achieving Success by Avoiding the Big Mistakes," International Franchise Exposition, New York, NY, June 16, 2017
- Co-Speaker, "10 Commandments of Franchise Sales," International Franchise Exposition, New York, NY, June 16, 2017 and June 20, 2015; Franchise Expo South, January 15, 2011; and various other IFA-sponsored franchise events
- Co-Speaker, "Selecting the Best Franchise Structure for Domestic and International Expansion," International Franchise Exposition, New York, NY, June 19, 2015
- "Strategies for Franchising into the U.S. Market," International Franchise Exposition, New York, NY, June 18, 2015

- Co-Facilitator, “Mexico: Gateway to Central & South America,” IFA 55th Annual Convention, Las Vegas, Nevada, February 17, 2015
- 2014 Client Conference and Research Symposium: Make Analytics Actionable, August 11, 2014
- Co-Presenter, “Beyond Single Unit Franchising: Expanding Franchise Systems Through Multiple Unit and Third Party Arrangements,” IFA’s West Coast Franchise Expo, Los Angeles, November 2011 and various other IFA-sponsored franchise seminars and expos, June 13, 2014
- 47th Annual IFA Legal Symposium, May 4, 2014
- “Non-traditional International Expansion Strategies: The Current Business Environment is Opening Up New Options,” IFA’s 53rd Annual Convention, Las Vegas, Nevada, February 18, 2013
- Co-Presenter, “Taking Your Franchise System to the Next Level: Examining Common Traits of Successful Franchisors,” International Franchise Expo, New York, June 15, 2012; and Franchise Expo South, January 14, 2011
- Co-Presenter, “Adapting Civil and Common Law Contracts to the U.S. Market,” 28th Annual Joint IBA/IFA Conference, Washington, DC, May 23, 2012
- Co-Presenter, “So You’re Thinking About Franchising Your Restaurant: Here’s How It Works and What It Entails,” National Restaurant Association Show, Chicago, May 7, 2012
- Panel Moderator, “Fran-Guard Seminar,” IFA’S 51st Annual Convention, Las Vegas, Nevada, February 14, 2011
- Co-Presenter, “You’ve Built a Great Business, Now Grow Through Franchising,” National Restaurant Association Show, Chicago, May 22, 2010
- Co-Presenter, “Selecting, Negotiating, and Operating a Master Franchise,” International Franchise Expo, Washington, DC, March 21, 2009
- “Revitalizing Your Franchise System Through the Proactive Use of a Resale Process,” 49th IFA Annual Convention, San Diego, California, February 16, 2009
- Panel Moderator, “International Franchise Basics,” Multilaw Annual Conference, Rome, Italy, October 2008
- Panel Moderator, “Critical Issues Affecting Payments from Your International Franchisees,” IFA’s 48th Annual Convention, Las Vegas, February 2008
- “Maximizing Flexibility in the Use of System Marketing Funds,” IFA’s 48th Annual Convention, Las Vegas, February 2008
- Co-Presenter, “Maximizing Expansion Opportunities While Minimizing Territorial Conflict,” IFA’s Franchise Expo South, Miami Beach Convention Center, January 2008
- Co-Presenter, “Business and Legal Issues Raised by Franchise Transfers,” IFA Legal Symposium, Washington, DC, January 2008
- Panelist, “Global Proliferation of Franchise Laws,” ABA International Meeting, Washington, DC, May 2007

- “Solving The Challenges With Underperforming Masters and Area Developers,” International Franchise Association Annual Convention, Las Vegas, Nevada, January 2007
 - “The New FTC Rule,” IFA Legal Roundtable Series, Washington, DC, January 2007
 - Co-Presenter, “Disclosure Risks in Complying with Non-U.S. Franchise Regulations,” IFA Legal Symposium, Washington, DC, January 2006
 - Panelist, “Entry Into the U.S. Market: Agency, Distribution or Franchising,” International Bar Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois, January 2006
 - Panelist, “International Trademarks—Safely Exporting Your Brand Overseas,” IFA’s 45th Annual International Franchise Convention, Hollywood, Florida, March 2005
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Publications

- “[Top 5 Legal Issues on the Radar](#),” Franchising World, April 2019
 - “[Is Your Franchise Ready for GDPR?](#)” Franchising World, August 28, 2018
 - Co-Author, “[The Role of Letters of Intent in International Franchise Transactions](#),” Franchising World, June 2017
 - “[Making Lemonade: 2016 Legal Strategy Seeks to Overcome 2015 Legislative Lemons](#),” International Franchise Association, March 21, 2016
 - Chapter author of “Multi-Tier and Combination Franchising” for the American Bar Association Franchise Law Casebook, June 13, 2014
 - Co-Author, “[Acquiring a Franchise System: Due Diligence Tactics to Assess Value](#),” Franchising World, October 2013
 - Co-Author, “[Selling the Franchise System: Laying the Legal Groundwork to Optimize Value](#),” Franchising World, April 2013
 - “Strategies For International Development In Uncertain Times,” Franchising World, November 2008
 - “Business Hurdles—Legal And Cultural—Hinder Trade In China,” Minneapolis Star Tribune Edit, November 2005
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Professional Activities

- Multilaw, Chair, Americas Region
- International Franchise Association, Legal/Legislative Committee and Supplier Board
- International Bar Association
- American Bar Association, Forum Committee on Franchising

Community Involvement

- Global Minnesota, member/topic speaker
- Urban Ventures, Board of Directors, Chair of the Governing Committee