



LEWITT | HACKMAN
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A LAW CORPORATION

16633 Ventura Boulevard, 11th Floor
Encino, California 91436-1865

818.990.2120
lewitthackman.com

MAY 2025

Recent Professional & Community Accomplishments

BUSINESS PRACTICE GROUPS

- Business & Civil Litigation
- Commercial Finance
- Corporate
- Employment
- Environmental
- Franchise & Distribution
- Health Care
- Intellectual Property
- Mergers & Acquisitions
- Real Estate
- Tax Planning

CONSUMER PRACTICE GROUPS

- Family Law
- Personal Injury
- Trust & Estate Planning

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We are pleased to announce that Lewitt Hackman has been recognized by *LA Times Studios* as one of the **Top 125 Law Firms** and **Top 25 Real Estate practice groups** in Los Angeles County.

Congratulations to **Alex J. Hemmelgarn**, who became a State Bar of California Certified Specialist in Estate Planning, Trust & Probate Law. Already a Certified Specialist in Taxation Law, Alex joins a select group of about 55 attorneys in California with dual certifications in these fields.

Tal Grinblat (Certified Franchise & Distribution Law Specialist) was named a *Franchise Times Legal Eagle* for the 11th consecutive year. Featuring attorneys in the U.S. and Canada, this list is "a collection of the best lawyers franchisors and franchisees can turn to in 2025."

Steven L. Feldman and **Keith T. Zimmet** completed months-long negotiations with a property owner and opposing counsel for a multi-million-dollar build-to-suit industrial facility and long-term lease in Los Angeles County.

Zane S. Averbach, **Nicholas Kanter**, **Jessica W. Rosen**, and **Alex J. Hemmelgarn** successfully won an appeal to overturn a summary judgment on behalf of the trust of an elderly trustor. The trustor had been coerced into signing an unconscionable decades-long commercial lease extension with no rent increases, shortly before his death.

Keith T. Zimmet skillfully represented and guided our client through the successful acquisition of an out-of-state, commercial water treatment business. The transaction expands our client's presence in the state's growing market.

Barry Kurtz (Certified Specialist in Franchise & Distribution Law) represents a client selling the assets of two franchised restaurants in different states, to a buyer eager to join the franchisor's system.

Vanessa Soto Nellis (California Family Law Specialist) mediated a divorce for a couple married over 20 years, who wanted to avoid going to family law court. They prioritized their children and found compromises to override their emotions and differences.

Tal Burnovski Yeyni assisted our client with a follow-up EDD audit. Years earlier, the client faced penalties for employee misclassification. After that initial audit, Tal guided them through a transition of workforce. The recent audit concluded with no penalties or assessments, demonstrating the corrective measures' effectiveness.

Paul C. Bauducco and **Tal Grinblat** mediated and settled a lawsuit, ending a dispute over the use of our client's trademark in California, thus avoiding discovery and trial preparation costs.

Sue M. Bendavid and **Joshua S. Stein** obtained a permanent restraining order on behalf of a client after a hotly contested two-day trial with seven witnesses. The court granted the restraining order for the maximum legal duration of three years.

Barry Kurtz and Matthew J. Soroky (both Certified Specialists in Franchise & Distribution Law) are working with two franchisors in resolving issues with disgruntled franchisees. In a separate matter, they are defending a client accused by a former franchisor of misusing confidential information and trade secrets after leaving the franchise to start a similar business. In yet another matter, Barry and Matt are reviewing franchise documents for a client considering the purchase of a senior placement and consulting agency franchise.

Jeffrey A. Kobulnick negotiated a consent agreement with a third party which allowed a music industry client's trademark application to proceed toward registration.

Sue M. Bendavid and Joshua S. Stein successfully resolved a Private Attorneys General Act and individual claim for a low five-figure amount. The client was pleased with the outcome, as potential exposure exceeded six figures.

Thomas M. Morrow and Paul C. Bauducco resolved an accounting negligence matter, ending litigation and saving our client significant discovery and trial preparation costs.

Tal Burnovski Yeyni and Joshua S. Stein resolved two separate matters for low five-figures amounts - about one percent of the original demands, which exceeded six figures.

Jeffrey A. Kobulnick sent a cease and desist letter that convinced a third party to immediately stop using our client's trademark. Jeff's efforts saved our client, a college admissions consulting company, significant time and expenses associated with formal proceedings.

Mark J. Phillips (California Certified Specialist in Estate Planning, Trust & Probate Law) and **Janet Lim** successfully guided the transfer of ownership of 27 properties from a deceased trustee to his elderly widow. The process involved carefully navigating a complex and time-consuming process of signing and notarizing numerous documents.

Paul C. Bauducco favorably resolved a construction defect matter brought against our client, along with a cross-complaint to recover funds owed on a promissory note, avoiding discovery and trial costs.

Nancy Martinez facilitated a newborn's name change when the parents realized their initial choice didn't reflect their child's personality. After thoughtful consideration, the parents pursued a legal name change to better capture their child's unique character. Nancy provided guidance throughout this meaningful family decision.

Barry Kurtz and Caitlyn Dillon drafted franchise disclosure documents and related agreements for a franchisor planning to sell restaurant franchises in Canada, and for a separate multi-unit restaurant operator planning to sell franchises in the United States.

Tal Burnovski Yeyni represented a client facing a pregnancy discrimination claim. The opposing party's initial settlement demand was well over half a million dollars. Through strategic negotiation and effective mediation, the parties resolved the matter for less than seven percent of that initial demand. This resulted in substantial savings for our client, avoiding costly and protracted litigation.

Jeffrey A. Kobulnick worked with local counsel in the United Kingdom on behalf of an apparel company to stop a third party's application to register a similar trademark

Caitlyn Dillon presented at a TEDx event at Southwestern Law School on the evolution of franchising in the U.S.

Sue M. Bendavid spoke on her professional journey with fellow women leaders at the NEW Women's Business Center's EmpowerHER conference. Additionally, Sue and **Tal Burnovski Yeyni** hosted a complimentary webinar, *Common Questions: An Employer's "How-To" for Managing the Workplace*.

Publications & Media Mentions

Franchise Times

CA Legislation Could Inspire States to Enhance Franchise Protections
Tal Grinblat, quoted

Super Lawyers

2025 Southern California Super Lawyers

Zane S. Averbach
Paul C. Bauducco
Sue M. Bendavid
David B. Bobrosky

Tal Grinblat
Stephen T. Holzer
Jeffrey A. Kobulnick

Barry Kurtz
Kira S. Masteller
Vanessa Soto Nellis
Mark J. Phillips
Andrew L. Shapiro
Lynn Soodik
Keith T. Zimmet

Los Angeles Daily Journal

DEI under the spotlight: The DOJ v. the EEOC
Tal Burnovski Yeyni, author

Money Talk, 1290 AM Radio

Matt Soroky on Franchise Law and Franchise Finance
Matthew J. Soroky, guest

Westlaw Today

Beyond the Contract: Non-Signatories to an Arbitration Agreement Can Compel Arbitration
Nicholas Kanter, co-author

2025 Best Law Firms

Fifteenth Edition, Best Law Firms
Lewitt Hackman designated

Los Angeles Daily Journal

Appellate court expands and clarifies the rights of litigants to challenge trusts
Mark J. Phillips, co-author

Los Angeles Times B2B Publishing

2024 Legal Visionaries in Intellectual Property
Barry Kurtz