



Alexander W. Leonard

Partner

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Practice Areas

Food, Beverage & Hospitality | Labor & Employment |
Litigation/Alternative Dispute Resolution | Non-Compete &
Trade Secrets

Alexander (Alexei) Leonard leads the firm's labor and employment practice, representing financial services, technology, entertainment & media, retail, professional service firms and high net worth individual and family office clients, with a focus on the hospitality industry and with emerging/startup companies. His practice spans nearly all employment counseling and litigation matters affecting employers today, including:

- Negotiating employment agreements and executive compensation between key employees and employers in a range of sectors, including hospitality, insurance, real estate and financial services, including situations involving startups and mergers
- Negotiating key employee departures, including providing advice and guidelines regarding restrictive covenants, severance, executive compensation and other employment-related concerns and potential disputes
- Litigating individual and class action federal, state, and out-of-court disputes involving employment discrimination, sexual harassment, and other forms of harassment, wages and hours, restrictive covenants, faithless servancy, breaches of contracts, physical and website accessibility (ADA), as well mass layoff and termination issues
- Defending audits by federal and state agencies, including the U.S. and New York Departments of Labor
- Auditing and preparing procedures for compliance with industry-specific wage and hour requirements regarding wages, tips/gratuities, overtime, exemption classifications, commissions, bonuses, and other compensation arrangements
- Advising on employee-related issues under all federal and state employment laws, including Title VII, FMLA,

- ADA, ADEA, WARN, FLSA, and NLRA, as well as state and local equivalents
- Drafting employment policies and forms including handbooks, employment agreements, separation agreements, non-disclosure and restrictive covenant agreements, and leave & accommodation, discrimination and harassment policies
- Advising clients on compliance regarding accommodating disabled patrons, data privacy, fair housing, and employment-related aspects of mergers, acquisitions and other business transactions
- Providing training on harassment and discrimination, progressive discipline, workplace investigations and union avoidance

Alexei's philosophy is "to go the extra mile" to learn his clients' businesses. This involved approach means constantly thinking of his clients' changing needs and objectives, addressing potential issues before they become problems, being available to consult with clients whenever their needs arise, and staying abreast of cutting-edge legal trends and tools that will benefit clients. His clients appreciate his passion for the law and familiarity with practical solutions that can benefit their operations and staffing. As their advocate, he understands their business and their goals and often takes a pre-emptive approach.

Representative Engagements

- Successful settlement (at cents on the dollar) of dozens of wage and tipping litigations and other claims asserted against restaurants and foodservice establishments
- Successful appeal to the New York Appellate Division, Third Department, of an independent contractor misclassification determination issued by the New York State Department of Labor
- Summary judgment in favor of toy retailer against allegations that employer failed to accommodate former employee's disability and that the employer retaliated against her for making her accommodation request
- The defeat of union organizing drive against fast-casual food establishment involving the United Food & Commercial Workers International Union
- Negotiated employment aspects of multiple corporate asset sales involving significant potential labor and employment liability
- Successfully defended large nationwide WARN litigation in connection with Chapter 7 bankruptcy involving a now-defunct major international law firm

Alexei is regularly asked to speak on various employment law topics before trade associations and professional organizations.

Recognitions

- Included in Super Lawyers' New York Metro Rising Stars (2014-present)

Education & Honors

- Hofstra University School of Law School, J.D.
- University of Hawaii at Hilo, B.A.

Prior Work Experience

- Fox Rothschild LLP
- Jackson Lewis P.C.

Bar Admissions

- State of New York
- District of Columbia
- U.S. District Courts, Southern and Eastern Districts of New York