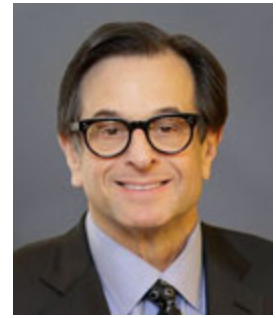




# Hirschfeld Kraemer

*We work for employers*



## Stephen J. Hirschfeld

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### Contact Information

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### Practices

- Anti-Harassment/Abusive Conduct Prevention Training (also available in Spanish)
- Employee Relations & Wage/Hour Counseling
- Employment Litigation (Discrimination/Harassment)
- Higher Education Law
- Internal Investigations Services & Training
- Labor & Employment Arbitration
- Managing Within the Law Leadership Training
- Trade Secrets/Unfair Competition Litigation
- Traditional Labor Services (Organizing/Bargaining)
- Workplace & Data Privacy

*“When clients call us, we respond within an hour. You don’t find us writing long memos or detailed opinion letters. You pick up the phone, and we give you an answer. Period. Our advice is strategic and practical. The phrase it depends is not in our vocabulary. We focus on problem-solving. Our goal is to help our clients create great places to work and minimize HR disputes.”*

Steve is a founding partner and co-managing partner of Hirschfeld Kraemer LLP, based in San Francisco. He is also the founder and Chief Executive Officer of the Employment Law Alliance, the world’s largest provider of employment law solutions.



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“I have specialized in employment law for my entire career,” Steve says. “It’s an area I was interested in even before law school. Dealing with the human dynamic and how it impacts the workplace has always been a point of great fascination for me. I particularly love working with employers who share those values and management practices commonly associated with German-based “Mittelstand” companies: Razor-thin focus, emotional attachment between management and its workforce, innovativeness, obsession with customer service, nimble and flexible management style, and importance placed on social responsibility. What I like most about my work is to help my clients create the best possible places to work and solve their organizational problems when they arise. HR issues are often quirky and sometimes intense, which means when my clients call, they are often feeling great stress. My objective is to provide sage wisdom, sound advice and practical solutions delivered with a smile. I find that a little levity goes a long way.

“I was born an entrepreneur. It’s been my passion since childhood. I love to create things, build things and run things, often in an unconventional fashion. That mindset propelled me to help found HK and to dream up and implement my strategy to create a truly global and seamless provider of employment law services via the Employment Law Alliance.”

Steve’s practice involves labor, employment, and higher education law on behalf of management in both the private and public sectors. He advises clients throughout the country on day-to-day legal issues affecting the workplace, including employee discipline and terminations, union organizing, workforce reductions and reorganizations harassment, discrimination and bullying claims, proprietary information and trade secrets disputes, substance abuse, workplace privacy, disability accommodations, employment contracts, faculty tenure, and other human resources issues. He has also overseen and conducted hundreds of misconduct investigations involving allegations of harassment, discrimination, workplace violence, retaliation, ethics violations, misappropriation of trade secrets, and theft.

“One of my passions is helping companies prevent, investigate and resolve employee misconduct: harassment, bullying, discrimination, retaliation, ethical violations, theft, and other acts of dishonesty.” Steve says. “When I’m retained to serve as a neutral investigator looking into allegations of serious misconduct, it’s normally for a very high-profile matter. I pride myself on being discreet and even-handed and developing rapport with all interested parties. And I never shy away from making tough but necessary decisions.”

Steve regularly defends employers in state and federal courts and administrative agencies on disputes involving discrimination, harassment, wrongful termination, trade secrets/unfair competition, wage and hour law, and union-related matters. He has vast experience providing assistance to unionized employers on matters including collective bargaining, strikes and picketing, contract interpretation disputes, and labor arbitrations. He has tried to verdict over 100 cases before courts, arbitrators, administrative law judges, and government agencies with a win rate of over 90%. He successfully argued a seminal wage and hour issue before the California Supreme Court.

“We are not ‘scorched-earth’ litigators,” Steve says. “Rather, we are thoughtfully aggressive. We don’t drive the litigation: our clients’ desired outcome drives the litigation. That’s not just my personality: it’s the personality of the firm. The vast majority of our employment cases, 95%, never get tried. And for that other five percent, we have a great track record. Clients hire me when they really care whether they win or not. It’s because I actually take it personally. I have longstanding relationships with my clients. I know these people and their operations; I care about their enterprise.”



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Steve has experience working with boards of directors to improve their effectiveness and communications. His clients range from Fortune 500 companies to small, privately-owned businesses. He loves to travel, and he regularly assists multinational clients by conducting worldwide employment law audits to ensure they are in full compliance with all applicable employment and labor laws.

“Now that companies operate virtually everywhere, often with employees working out of their homes, employment law is complicated in ways it never used to be.” Steve says. “Outsourcing also brings up issues that never used to exist. My colleagues and I are experts on these issues. Because of my extensive travel, I offer a unique perspective on how cultural issues impact HR matters. Understanding how to legally terminate or layoff an employee in some far-flung location is one thing; knowing how the local culture and mores impact those decisions is something quite different.”

Steve represents a wide range of clients, from start-ups to Fortune 500 companies. He takes a pro-active approach when advising clients, emphasizing create solutions to employee relations problems. Steve routinely counsels and trains management about ways to prevent costly and protracted litigation. He regularly conducts and oversees multi-state and multi-national legal compliance audits.

Steve is consistently ranked as a leading employment lawyer by numerous publications, including Chambers, Lawdragon, and BTI. According to Chambers: “He is everything you would hope and expect of an experienced attorney in employment-related matters.”

“We take our jobs seriously, but we don’t take ourselves seriously,” he says. “And we love what we do. We all have unique backgrounds, outside interests, and personalities, and I am convinced this diversity is part of our secret sauce.”

In addition to work-related travel, Steve enjoys “adventure travel” — going off the beaten track and encountering interesting people and exploring fascinating places. He is passionate about food and wine (he reports that while his self-made cabernet isn’t yet on the French Laundry’s wine list, it is nevertheless “darn tasty vino”). A major train buff, he has ridden on the Orient Express, the Trans-Siberian, the Trans-Canadian Railways, the Ghan, the Hiram Bingham, and the Andean Explorer. He looks forward to upcoming train trips on the Kyushu Seven Stars and the Shiki-Shima.

## Education

J.D., George Washington University Law School, 1982

B.A., St. Lawrence University, 1979, summa cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa



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## Recognitions

Named to Best Lawyers in America® for Employment Law-Management and for Litigation/Labor & Employment, 2016-2024

Named by Best Lawyers® as Lawyer of the Year, Employment Law – San Francisco, 2020

Recognized by Chambers and Partners USA for the last 15 consecutive years (2010-2024). According to clients interviewed by Chambers, he is “He’s a great speaker and a very no-nonsense communicator. He is a very good business person and a skilled lawyer who understands our business... he is very responsive, very sharp, gives good advice and makes himself available anytime that we need.”

Named to Lawdragon’s 500 Leading U.S. Corporate Employment Lawyers, 2012-2025

Profiled by Lawdragon, “Lawyer Limelight: Stephen Hirschfeld,” September 23, 2018

National Law Journal, Elite Boutique Trailblazer Award, 2018

Named by HR Executive/Lawdragon as one of America’s 100 most powerful employment lawyers for the last nine consecutive years

Recognized by BTI Consulting Group on its “Client Service All-Stars 2017” list. Steve is one of only five California employment lawyers and one of only 28 employment lawyers in the country to be recognized “by clients for client service excellence.”

Since 2008, Steve has been a Fellow the College of Labor and Employment Lawyers. Nomination to the College is by one’s colleagues only, and recognizes those lawyers who have demonstrated sustained and exceptional services to their clients, bar, bench, and public, and the highest level of character, integrity, professional expertise, and leadership. Election as a Fellow of the College is regarded by many as the highest honor in the legal profession for lawyers practicing labor and employment law.

Named by Who’s Who Legal – U.S. and International Management Labor and Employment Law and The Expert Guide as one of the world’s leading lawyers in labor and employment law

Listed as a Northern California Super Lawyer 2007-2024

Named by the San Francisco and Los Angeles Daily Journal as one of the “California Lawyers Companies Turn to First”

Listed by AsiaLaw as one of America’s leading Asia-Pacific focused employment lawyers

Winner of the National Association of College and University Attorneys’ Distinguished Service Award, that organization’s highest award, which was established to recognize individuals who have given extraordinary service to higher education

“AV” rated by Martindale Hubbell



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## **Admissions**

California

Missouri

U.S. Court of Appeals, 9th and D.C. Circuits

U.S. District Court, Northern and Central Districts of California

U.S. District Court, Western District of Missouri

U.S. Supreme Court

## **Associations**

American Bar Association

InterPacific Bar Association

International Bar Association

Bar Association of San Francisco, Labor & Employment Law Section

Fellow, College of Labor & Employment Lawyers

National Association of College and University Attorneys

Society for Human Resource Management

XBHR, A Global Think Tank for Cross-Border HR Experts