



HELLMUTH  
&  
JOHNSON

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## OVERVIEW

Since 2000, Joe Beckman has focused on closing commercial contract negotiations. During this time, Joe has bargained with the “800-pound gorilla” in transactions about as often as he has negotiated on behalf of it. He understands where his client has room to ask for more without shutting the door on the ultimate goal for all parties: “Getting to Yes.”

Further, with a half dozen years in the General Counsel seat (including a stint as a Section 16 officer) for two publicly traded technology companies, Joe is acutely aware of the constant demand clients face to allocate precious human and capital resources economically.

Joe is a member of H&J’s Business & Corporate Law practice as well as the firm’s Information Technology & E-Commerce, and Intellectual Property practice groups. His clients include public companies, mature closely held entities, senior executives, shareholders and start up ventures.

## CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Joe has deep experience in corporate governance issues, an interest he originally developed litigating “corporate divorces” in Chicago and Montana. Today, his focus in this area is on the transactional side. When relationships deteriorate to the point business partners cannot get past their differences, however, Joe leverages his trial skills to lead a team to court, and maintains steady pressure on the opponent while keeping options for voluntary resolution open.

Joe maintains a robust library of corporate formation documents which include:

- Articles;
- Bylaws;
- Buy-sell agreements;
- Voting agreements;
- Management services agreements; and
- Board and equity owner resolutions.

Each document is drafted from the perspective of someone who understands the cost less precise contracts carry when presented in court. He works with

## PRACTICE AREA

Business & Corporate  
Business Litigation  
Employment & Labor Law  
Information Technology & E-Commerce  
Insurance Litigation  
Intellectual Property  
Mergers & Acquisitions

## ADMISSIONS

Illinois Supreme Court  
Montana Supreme Court  
Minnesota Supreme Court  
Colorado Supreme Court  
United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois  
United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit  
United States District Court for the District of Montana  
United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit  
United States District Court for the District of Columbia

businesses so the partners “begin with the end in mind,” with an eye toward reducing later investments of time, expense, stress and exposure to unexpected consequences.

## **CORPORATE TRANSACTIONS**

In addition to corporate governance, the type of agreements Joe regularly works with include:

- Merger/Acquisition documents (Letters of Intent, Asset/Stock Purchase/Sale agreements, supporting notes, guaranties, escrow, cross-collateralization, employment, consulting, non-compete and related agreements);
- Senior Executive/Key Employee Compensation (incoming private equity, public equity, incentive, escalators and executive transition/severance agreements);
- Employee/Contractor Agreements (NDAs, offer letters written to protect the company from suits by competitors, non-competes, confidentiality, employee termination); and
- Information Technology & E-Commerce Agreements (see below).

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY & E-COMMERCE**

Joe’s other concentration is in the technology and e-commerce field. He fell in love with computers when welding a resistor on his original IBM PCjr in the Georgetown physics lab in the mid-1980s. Beginning in 2000, Joe has regularly represented companies and individuals with monetizing (or, on the flip side, acquiring rights in) a wide variety of technology endeavors. This includes substantial experience with domestic and cross-border data and dollar flows. He has written and negotiated agreements such as:

- Co-Location/Internet Data Services Agreements
- Credit Card Processing Agreements
- Database Licenses
- Data Privacy and Data Security Agreements
- E-Commerce Agreements
- Hardware Acquisition Agreements and Leases
- IP Rights Assignment Agreements
- Sophisticated domestic and international Service Level Agreements
- Software Development Agreements
- Software licenses
- SAAS Agreements
- Source Code (and other Technology) Escrows
- Telecommunications Agreements
- Website Terms, Policies and Use Agreements

Joe is active in several organizations dedicated to improvement of the delivery of legal services, and was appointed by the Minnesota Supreme Court in 2014 to a three year term on the [Lawyer’s Professional Responsibility Board](#). The Supreme Court reappointed him to a second term in 2017. He is also active in several non-legal service organizations, including a dozen years with Ramsey County’s *Guardian Ad Litem* Program and several years with the Boy Scouts of America.

## **AFFILIATIONS**

## **EDUCATION**

Georgetown University Law Center, J.D., 1988

Loyola University of Chicago, B.S., cum laude, 1985

- A Member of the ABA Section of Litigation Leadership since 1996. Joe has served in many roles, including co-chair of the Section’s Trial Practice Committee (2014-2016). Prior to that he was co-chair of the Content Management Committee (2012-14) which is responsible for the oversight and quality of the web content created by the section’s 39 substantive committees. In 2011-2012, Joe was the Editor-in-Chief for *Litigation News*, the Section’s quarterly flagship publication. Prior to that, Joe served in the Executive Editor and Managing Editor positions for *Litigation News*, and was published six times annually as Associate Editor. The friendships he’s made over 20 years are too precious for him to give up, so beginning in 2016, he again began to contribute articles to the publication so he had a reason to go to the meetings at least once a year.

## COMMUNITY

- He participates in the ABA Business Law Section and the Association of Corporate Counsel.
- Joe is a 1998 graduate of the famed National Institute of Trial Advocacy (“NITA”) national session. He still uses the souvenir coffee mug from time to time, and “feels cool” when he does.
- As an always animated, often colorful, and (in his mind, anyway) appropriately humorous speaker, Joe has presented CLE and client facing programs on topics including technology, contracts and indemnity issues at Minnesota Continuing Legal Education (“MCLE”) and ABA Section of Business Law events.
- Joe was a volunteer Guardian ad Litem in Ramsey County from 2002 to 2014. He maintained an active caseload as the court-appointed advocate for children who are in the temporary legal custody of the county due to abuse or neglect. This work helped Joe and his kids realize how fortunate they are.
- Although totally unfamiliar with the institution given “camping under the el tracks” was not a thing growing up in Chicago, Joe’s Minnesota-raised sons took up Scouting. The proud parent of two Eagle Scouts, Joe remains active in his sons’ Troop Committee as a way to continue to pay it forward.
- Joe is easily the most gifted 1988 Georgetown Law Grad working for Hellmuth & Johnson, although there is at least one [partner of his](#) who might (wrongly) dispute this universal truth.

## HONORS & AWARDS

- Since 1996, Joe has been AV<sup>®</sup> Peer Review Rated. AV<sup>®</sup> is the highest possible Peer Review Rating from Martindale-Hubbell.
- Joe is a qualified neutral under Rule 114 of the Minnesota General Rules of Practice. His kids don’t consider him fair, but 12 years of representing both plaintiffs and defendants in litigation plus 17 negotiating commercial contracts helps him help others “get to yes.”
- He earned the Certified Information Privacy Professional credential from the International Association of Privacy Professionals.