



Joel R. Buckberg

Shareholder

The Connective (Virtual Office) | 615.726.5639 | jbuckberg@bakerdonelson.com
Nashville | 615.726.5600

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Mr. Buckberg counsels clients on business transactions and operations, particularly in hospitality, franchises and distribution, including strategic planning, development, disclosure, equity and debt financing, mergers and acquisitions, system policy and practice development, regulatory compliance and commercial contracts. Prior to joining Baker Donelson, Mr. Buckberg was executive vice president and deputy general counsel of Cendant Corporation.

In his career, he has worked on the acquisition of worldwide hotel chains and their financing, de novo brand start-ups, multi-unit acquisitions, initial public offerings, hotel management agreements for existing and new build hotels, divestitures, master license grants, area development agreements, supply chain sourcing, distribution agreements, sales and marketing arrangements, and technology agreements.

Mr. Buckberg is the former chair of the Firm's Commercial Transactions and Business Counselling Group and former vice-chair of the Firm's Corporate Group.



Representative Matters

Results may vary depending on your particular facts and legal circumstances.

- Served as lead counsel for client STR, Inc. in the \$450 million sale to CoStar Group (NASDAQ: CSGP). STR, formerly Smith Travel Research, is a leading company providing performance benchmarking and comparative analysis to hotels. The sale represented the largest hotel industry transaction for 2019 and will provide valuable new services to investors and service providers in the hospitality industry. The transaction included several global subsidiaries involving various countries including England, Germany, China, Columbia, Singapore, Scotland, Australia and Spain.
- Represented the lenders as franchise counsel in one of the largest franchise system acquisitions involving a major worldwide hotel chain and a securitization of franchise system receivables to finance the acquisition.
- Represented the lenders as franchise counsel in a multi-billion dollar acquisition of a franchised and company owned hotel chain by a major private equity sponsor, and in its refinancing through securitization.
- Represented the private equity buyer as franchise counsel of a major pizza franchise multi-unit developer.
- Represented the founders and owners selling a bakery franchise system.
- Represented public company buyer as franchise counsel of privately owned hotel chain.
- Represented private equity bidder as franchise counsel for auto aftermarket franchise system.



Professional Honors & Activities

No aspect of this advertisement has been approved by the Supreme Court of New Jersey.

- President and founder – National Franchise Council, 1998 – 2000; Chairman, 2000 – 2003
- Chairman – International Franchise Association Legal Legislative Committee and Corporate Counsel Committee, 1997 – 1998

- Administrator – International Franchise Association Franchise Compliance Training Program, 2007 – 2011
- Trainer – FRAN-GUARD franchise compliance training program, 2010 – present
- Member – American Hotel & Lodging Association General Counsel Committee
- AV® Preeminent™ Peer Review Rated by Martindale-Hubbell. *This award is conferred by Martindale-Hubbell. A description of the selection methodology is [available here](#).*
- Listed in *Best Lawyers in America*® for Franchise Law since 2008; Leisure and Hospitality Law since 2018. *This award is conferred by Best Lawyers. A description of the selection methodology is [available here](#).*
- Named the Best Lawyers® 2024, 2021, 2017, and 2014 Franchise Law "Lawyer of the Year" in Nashville. *This award is conferred by Best Lawyers. A description of the selection methodology is [available here](#).*
- Recognized as a "Client Service All Star" by BTI Consulting Group, 2017. *This award is conferred by BTI Consulting Group. A description of the selection methodology is [available here](#).*
- Named to *Who's Who Legal: The International Who's Who of Business Lawyers* since 2009. *This award is conferred by Lexology. A description of the selection methodology is [available here](#).*
- Named to *Who's Who Legal's First Edition of Thought Leaders: USA 2023*. *This award is conferred by Lexology. A description of the selection methodology is [available here](#).*
- Named to *The International Who's Who of Franchise Lawyers*, 2008, 2011, 2012, 2020. *This award is conferred by Lexology. A description of the selection methodology is [available here](#).*
- Named to *The International Who's Who of Hospitality Lawyers*, 2020. *This award is conferred by Lexology. A description of the selection methodology is [available here](#).*
- Named to "Legal Eagles" by *Franchise Times*, 2007 – 2025. This award is conferred by Franchise Times. A description of the selection methodology is [available here](#).
- Inductee – "Legal Eagles Hall of Fame" by *Franchise Times*, 2016. This award is conferred by Franchise Times. A description of the selection methodology is [available here](#).
- Named to "20 People to Watch in Franchising" by *Franchise Times*, November 2001. *This award is conferred by Franchise Times.*
- Named to "New Jersey's Top Rated Lawyers" by *ALM*, 2012. *This award is conferred by the New Jersey Law Journal. A description of the selection methodology is [available here](#).*
- Member – Board of Trustees, Immune Deficiency Foundation
- Member – United States Coast Guard Auxiliary



Publications

- "Biden Administration Plans on Resort Fee Crackdown" (December 2022)
- "SBA Releases Application and Guidelines for \$28.6 Billion Restaurant Revitalization Fund" (April 2021)
- Co-author – "Delivery and Updating" chapter, *American Bar Association Forum on Franchising FTC Franchise Rule*, Third Edition (March 2019)
- "The Automatic Stay," chapter, *The Bankruptcy Handbook for Franchisors and Franchisees*, American Bar Association (2018)
- "Exemptions and Exclusions Under Hawaii Law," chapter, *Exemptions and Exclusions Under Federal and State Franchise Registration and Disclosure Laws*, American Bar Association (2017)
- "Crowdfunding: A capital-raising method that is well-suited for franchising," *Franchising Today* (July 2016)
- "IFA Convention," *Franchising Today*, blog (March 2016)
- "For Franchisors, There's More Than Just Browning-Ferris," *Law360* (September 2015)
- "Were The GM, Chrysler Dealer Terminations Constitutional?," *Law360* (May 2014)
- Co-author – "SEC Takes First Significant Steps Toward Crowdfunding," *Franchising Business & Law Alert* (October 2013)

- Co-author – "Delivery and Updating," chapter, *American Bar Association Forum on Franchising FTC Franchise Rule* (2012)
- Featured – "The Rights Guard: What Floats Franchise Attorney Joel Buckberg's Boat After Hours," *Franchise Times* (June/July 2011)



Speaking Engagements

- "Selling Your Franchise Brand or Business – Creating a Blueprint for Success" (October 2025)
- "HospitalityTN Legal Symposium" (July 2023)
- "Positioning for a Strategic Transaction: Getting Your House in Order," National Franchise Association Legal Symposium, Washington, D.C. (May 2023)
- "Back on Track: Franchising Forges Ahead" (June 2022)
- "Welcome Back – Business Returns to A Different World" (November 2021)
- "Tenth Annual Tennessee Hospitality & Tourism Association Law Symposium" (August 2021)
- "Claim Evaluation for the Franchisee Attorney," ABA 41st Annual Forum on Franchising (October 2018)
- "Contracts and Leases: Reading the Fine Print," Seventh Annual Tennessee Hospitality and Tourism Law Symposium (August 2018)
- Moderator – "Beyond Validation: Using Franchisee Satisfaction Data to Build a Stronger Brand," Annual International Franchise Association conference, Phoenix, Arizona (February 2018)
- "Developer Track – Enterprise and Unit Franchising," Sixth Annual Hospitality & Tourism Law Symposium (July 2017)
- "Advanced Issues in Franchisor Acquisitions of Franchisees – Is Vertical Integration in Your Future?," ABA Forum on Franchising, Miami Beach, Florida (November 2016)
- Moderator – "Using Retirement Accounts to Fund Franchise Growth," Franchise Business Network South Spring 2016 Quarterly Meeting (April 2016)
- Moderator – "Financial Performance Representations: What Franchisors Need to Know About the Latest Regulatory Evolution and How It Affects Your Item 19," International Franchise Association Annual Convention, San Antonio, Texas (February 2016)
- "Building Your Brand," Entrepreneur Minute (September 2014)
- Co-speaker – "Product Distribution Agreements," Strafford Webinar (December 2013)
- "Understanding Financial Statements," ABA Forum on Franchising annual meeting, Orlando, Florida (October 2013)
- Co-speaker – "ABA Forum on Franchising annual meeting, Orlando, Florida," Tennessee Hospitality Association's Annual Hospitality Law Symposium (July 2013)
- Co-speaker – "Product Distribution Agreements," Strafford Webinar (September 2012)
- "The Franchise System Post-Private Equity Investment," IFA 2011 Legal Symposium, Washington, D.C. (May 2011)
- "Fran-Guard: Sales Management and Compliance," 2011 International Franchise Association's 51st Annual Convention, Las Vegas (February 2011)



Webinars

- What the NLRB's New Joint Employer Regulations Mean for Your Business: A Panel Discussion (December 2023)



Education

- Vanderbilt University School of Law, J.D., 1980; M.B.A., 1980
- Union College, B.A., 1976, cum laude



Admissions

- Colorado, 2021
- Tennessee, 2006
- New Jersey, 1994
- Georgia, 1981
- Texas, 1980