



→ Ian Carleton Schaefer

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Ian Carleton Schaefer is a partner in the Labor and Employment Practice Group in the firm's New York office.

Areas of Practice

When companies face their most existential, global workplace management and crises management matters impacting reputation, Ian is the first-call.

Whether investigating public or private allegations of individual or organizational misconduct, serving as strategic advisor on major workforce restructurings, shepherding clients through reputation management issues, conducting sensitive workplace audits around classification and pay equity, or facilitating complex C-suite transitions through executive compensation and employee relations strategies, Ian's practical, no-nonsense, business-enabling, and results-driven approach transforms challenging legal issues into impactful, business solutions.

Fortune 100 companies, professional sports leagues and member clubs, media giants, performing arts organizations, financial and professional services institutions and emerging companies alike all turn to Ian for his "Go-To Thought Leadership" (*National Law Review*) and innovative solutions to enrich their workplaces. Blending nearly two decades of practice in labor and employment law with his salient in-house counsel perspective, and coupled with his appreciation of the human experience, Ian takes pride in helping employers anticipate and respond to the impact of world events, social justice movements (#MeToo; BLM; Pay Equity), and an ever-evolving legal and digital landscape (AI and Pay Transparency). Viewing thorny legal situations through the prism of business opportunity, Ian partners with employers to realize their strategic visions and become best in class people-organizations. He is also regularly called upon by numerous media outlets – including *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *CNBC*, *Politico*, *Bloomberg Law*, *CBS*, *PBS*, *SHRM* and *Law360* – as a go-to source for his unique insight with respect to cutting edge issues impacting the modern workplace.

Ian is highly sought after to design and deliver memorable, high-profile and innovative workplace trainings covering anti-harassment/non-discrimination, bystander intervention, and diversity, equity and inclusion for executive leadership, senior management and large-scale employee workforces.

Previously, Ian was a partner and a member of several international law firms, where among other accomplishments, he served as leader of his practice group, and co-authored the successful briefs in the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision *14 Penn Plaza v. Pyett*, a decision which modified 35 years of labor law.

A classically trained musician and an advocate for arts education, particularly in underserved communities, Ian is a Member of the Board of Directors of Jazz at Lincoln Center (Wynton Marsalis, Managing and Artistic Director) and a Trustee (and alumnus) of the Grammy Award winning New York Youth Symphony.

Honors

- Go-To Thought Leader in Employment Law, *The National Law Review*, 2020
- Best Lawyers in America, Employment Law – Management, *The Best Lawyers in America*, 2019, 2022, 2023
- Recognized by *The Legal 500 United States* in the areas of Workplace and Employment Counseling (2016-2019); Labor and Employment Disputes (including Collective Actions): Defense (2018-2019); and Sports (2022)
- New York Metro Rising Stars - Employment & Labor, *Super Lawyers*, 2011, 2013-2019

Experience

INVESTIGATIONS

- Successfully served as principal investigator for a professional sports club facing thorny allegations of harassment, age discrimination and retaliation, as well as alleged violations of the National Labor Relations Act.
- For a professional sports league, investigated the investigators making cross claims of bullying, racial discrimination and gender based harassment concurrent with an ongoing, high-profile investigation of a third-party.
- During the height of #MeToo, successfully lead the investigation and resolution of a potentially explosive claim against a C-suite executive of a global, publicly traded technology company alleging sexual harassment and sexual assault without any resultant litigation or public relations exposure.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT, HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT & WORKPLACE RESTRUCTURINGS

- For a professional sports league, designed and implemented complex executive transition strategies in the United States, Europe, Latin America and Asia, leading in the drafting and negotiation of transition agreements for scores of C-suite executives over a multi-year period, all while maintaining operational continuity.
- Served as COVID-19 reopening “czar” to dozens of organizations – across industry – across geography - facing issues attendant to mandatory vaccination policies, reasonable accommodations on disability and religious grounds, and drafted and advised on reopening guidelines and return to work/future of work plans.
- Lead scores of corporate restructuring initiatives, from furloughs to large scale reductions in force in response to shifts in economic and funding cycles, assisting organizations manage total headcount and total labor costs while maintaining operational continuity.
- Serves as outside-inside employment counsel to dozens of emerging company clients advising on policies, practices, procedures and various employee relations matters.
- In conjunction with a multi-disciplinary team including public relations professionals, advised several performing arts organizations facing potential reputational harm stemming from internal complaints surrounding race, ethnicity, gender levied against the organization and senior members of management.

- Lead a global technology company undergoing a multi-year, global workforce restructuring and organizational redesign, implicating issues of reductions in force and the WARN Act, wage and hour classification and reclassification, pay equity, executive compensation and employee benefit plan design, all with significant public relations, economic and employee relations implications.

COUNSELING, TRAINING AND COMPLIANCE

- Designed and delivered dozens of cutting-edge anti-harassment/non-discrimination and professionalism trainings to a professional sports leagues and several member clubs throughout the United States, a program which has subsequently been adapted and deployed to employers across industries and used to train hundreds of thousands of employees globally.
- Served as the architect and designer of modern employee handbooks reflecting an ever-shifting legal landscape, cultural trends and the migration from brick-and-mortar offices to fully virtual, distributed working environments, all in keeping with compliance from employment, corporate and tax perspectives.
- Advises a global consulting firm on risk management and compliance with federal, state and international law with respect to global lateral partner recruiting and hiring strategies and due diligence.

Articles

Labor & Employment Law Blog Posts

- "The End of Non-Competes in New York? State Legislature Passes Non-Compete Ban Moving One Step Closer to the Edge," June 22, 2023

Media Mentions

Legislative lowdown: SCOTUS edition

HR Brew, 07.13.2023

Companies Expect New Challenges to Diversity Policies After Court Ruling

The Wall Street Journal, 06.30.2023

Employers' diversity fear after Supreme Court affirmative action ban

The Times, 06.30.2023

Sheppard Mullin Partner Makes Debut As Orchestra Conductor

Law360, 06.16.2023

Vaccine Mandate Slated to End; Prepare for Pullbacks, Challenges in Personnel

Part B News, 05.11.2023

Memberships

Member, American Employment Law Council (AELC)

Member, International Labor & Employment Law Section, American Bar Association

Trustee, New York Youth Symphony

Member of the Board of Directors, Jazz at Lincoln Center (Wynton Marsalis, Managing and Artistic Director)

Practices

Labor and Employment

Industries

Entertainment, Technology and Advertising

Financial Services

Healthcare

Life Sciences

Music

Nonprofit

Retail, Fashion & Beauty

Sports

Telecom

Education

J.D., Fordham University School of Law, *cum laude*, Symposium Editor, Fordham Urban Law Journal

B.S., Cornell University School of Industrial and Labor Relations

Admissions

New York

Supreme Court of the United States

U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York

U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York