

Skadden Strong

An Interview with Bruce Goldner,
Partner-Intellectual Property and Technology, Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP and Affiliates

EDITORS' NOTE Bruce Goldner is Skadden's New York office leader and co-head of the firm's Intellectual Property and Technology Group. His areas of concentration include transactions, licensing and counseling involving brands, designs, technology, social media, content, software, persona rights, and pharma and biotech; and he oversees Skadden's U.S. and international trademark clearance and prosecution practice. Goldner also is Chair of the firm's New York office Diversity Committee. He received his J.D. from the University of Michigan Law School and his B.A. from Amherst College.



Bruce Goldner

FIRM BRIEF Founded in 1948, Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP and Affiliates (skadden.com) is widely considered one of the world's most highly respected law firms. Skadden has 23 offices, approximately 1,700 attorneys, and more than 50 distinct areas of practice. The firm's clients include approximately 50 percent of the Fortune 250 industrial and service corporations, as well as financial and governmental entities, start-up companies, and nonprofits.

What has allowed for the firm's consistent success year after year?

Our success is fueled by our continued adherence to the open culture, high ethical standards, and dedicated client service established by our founders, who possessed an energy, perspective, and ingenuity not typically seen in law firms at the time. We focus on attracting and retaining top legal talent because our collaborative approach to serving our clients' legal needs is dependent on exceptional attorneys working together across all of our offices and practices. Though we have grown substantially in our 67 years, these values remain at Skadden's core.

Does the firm have a particular focus on specific practices or regions?

We serve clients from our offices in the world's major financial centers, and continually evaluate whether our balance of practices and geographic presence best positions us to achieve optimal results for clients' most important and complex legal challenges. Skadden's Intellectual Property and Technology Group focuses on complex intellectual property transactions and licensing, and privacy and cybersecurity, as well as trademark, copyright, and advertising litigation, separate from the firm's Patent Litigation Group. Our representation of Nokia

Corporation is an excellent example of the kind of pivotal, high-stakes work the firm handles. In 2013, an international, multi-practice team advised Nokia on the sale of substantially all of its devices and services business, and the license of its patents to Microsoft, and we currently represent the company in its combination with Alcatel-Lucent, which will create the second-largest mobile equipment manufacturer in the world.

Would you talk about the technology space and the growth you've seen there?

When I began my career as an IP attorney about 25 years ago, many of our peer firms were not active in this space. However, this is no longer the case. The growth of our practice is partially a reflection of the development of an information economy, in which content, brands, websites, and social media are extremely valuable assets.

We have experienced an uptick in our patent monetization work, as large tech companies look to monetize sizable patent portfolios. Our IP attorneys with advanced degrees in life sciences also have been playing an increasingly key role in our fast-growing healthcare and life sciences practice to deliver our clients the deep subject matter expertise and industry experience they expect. Our privacy and cybersecurity representations have increased, as companies wrestle with protecting their trade secrets and customer information. Companies more frequently are using their brands for new products and services internationally, including through joint ventures. For example, we recently represented the PGA TOUR in the formation of a new company with EZLinks Golf, Inc., through which the PGA TOUR is contributing its brand name and marketing assets to support the growth of EZLinks Golf LLC.

How important is New York to Skadden's history and culture? Does a firm need a presence in New York to be a global leader?

New York City holds great historic importance to the firm, as it serves as home to our first and largest office. Given the significant economic activity associated with New York's status as a major commercial center, there is a large amount of high-stakes litigation and transactional work here. Our ability to leverage our deep expertise across multiple practices in key geographic locations is critical to our success; having a well-established, substantial presence in New York is certainly a part of that.

Our long-standing commitment to the betterment of the New York City community is part of our New York office history and culture. On pro bono matters, we partner frequently with Lawyers Alliance for New York to assist nonprofits in improving NYC communities, and Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts, which provides pro bono arts-related legal representation and education to low-income artists, and nonprofit arts and cultural organizations. We also have a successful wills and life-planning clinic with the Legal Aid Society; we've increased our representation of children seeking special immigrant juvenile status; and we've advised small businesses through the Neighborhood Entrepreneur Law Project, in partnership with the City Bar Justice Center.

Our continued community service relationships with a number of organizations include: Global Poverty Project, an education and advocacy organization working to end extreme poverty; Harlem RBI, a youth development program; and Citizens Schools, with whom we recently partnered to teach a 10-week debate class to middle school students in Harlem. We also founded and administer The Skadden Honors Program in Legal Studies, a partnership between the firm and The City College of New York that prepares students from low-income and underrepresented groups for successful legal careers.

Does diversity happen organically at Skadden through the process of recruiting and hiring the best legal talent?

Our focus on attracting and investing in top talent includes specifically seeking lawyers with diverse backgrounds, because bringing together a wide variety of experience and perspectives helps create the most positive and productive working environment, and positions us to deliver the most innovative solutions to our clients' challenges. In 2012, we launched the 1L Scholars Program, a paid internship offering highly qualified first-year law students the opportunity to spend several weeks at our firm – followed by several weeks at a firm client – and pro bono experience. The program provides participants across ethnicities, sexual orientations, and socioeconomic statuses the ability to gain valuable practice experience early in their careers.

Programs that specifically foster diversity and inclusion within the firm include our Black Attorneys Conference, which was attended by Skadden attorneys, clients, and alumni; and our Straight-LGBT Alliance, which creates a framework to highlight our straight colleagues' contributions to the firm's LGBT diversity and inclusion efforts. ●