

Event Recap

A Look at the Recent Evolution of Brand Licensing

September 22, 2025

Akerman LLP proudly hosted and co-sponsored its inaugural New York State Bar Association Intellectual Property Section Fall Meeting on September 10, 2025. The event, co-chaired by Akerman Intellectual Property, Franchise and Licensing Partner Marc Lieberstein, along with Brooke Singer of Davis & Gilbert, and Rebeca Kravitz of GIII, brought together leading voices in the IP and brand licensing space for a day of insightful discussion and networking.

In the panel “A Look at the Recent Evolution of Brand Licensing,” Marc moderated a discussion with panelists Nicole Dolgon, Esq. (ESCA Legal), Evan Naar, Esq. (WHP Global), and Gregory J. Sullivan (J.P. Morgan Private Bank) and explored the dynamic landscape of brand licensing, focusing on the impact of emerging technologies, evolving deal structures, and new market opportunities.

Key Takeaways

- **Navigating New Technology Risks in Licensing**
The panelists emphasized that artificial intelligence (AI), cryptocurrency, and privacy concerns are now important elements in brand licensing negotiations. Both licensors and licensees are adapting their agreements to address risks related to new trade channels, compliance, deepfakes, and counterfeiting. Licensors are increasingly focused on

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maintaining quality control, conducting audits, and strengthening enforcement rights to protect against brand dilution and misuse. Meanwhile, licensees are being asked to take on broader obligations to secure the supply chain, minimize infringement and counterfeiting, and monitor for brand harm across all distribution channels.

- **The Growing Role of Data Analytics and AI**

Data analytics and AI are playing a transformative role in forecasting the success of licensing deals, improving valuation accuracy, and identifying high-value opportunities. The panel encouraged both licensors and licensees to leverage these technologies to enhance the efficiency and accuracy when evaluating new licensing opportunities.

- **Expanding Opportunities Through Social Media and Collaborations**

The proliferation of platforms like TikTok and the rise of social media channels have opened up new avenues for brand licensing. Brand collaborations, co-branding, influencer partnerships, and immersive experiences are creating fresh opportunities for growth in licensing. However, the panel cautioned that brands should conduct thorough due diligence to ensure that these new partners, products, and channels align with their reputation and goodwill.

- **Financial and Regulatory Headwinds**

The evolution of brand licensing is also being shaped by new risks associated with tariffs, supply chain disruptions, pricing pressures, and shifting consumer purchasing power. The panel noted that these financial and regulatory challenges, along with the ongoing shift from brick-and-mortar retail to e-commerce, are critical factors for brands and their partners to consider when evaluating the value of future licensing deals.

- **Agile Licensing Strategies Needed**

As technology, consumer behavior, and

regulatory landscapes continue to evolve, both licensors and licensees must remain agile and proactive in adapting their strategies and agreements.

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