



Erich W. Merrill, Jr.

Partner

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“The win is to provide business owners with easy-to-read contracts that are roadmaps - that answer the question, ‘What do I do in this situation?’ My clients value legal documents that accomplish their business and legal objectives and, equally as important, are written to be comprehensible and practical.”

Erich Merrill works with company management and founders in acquiring or selling businesses, raising funds from investors, negotiating and drafting contracts, and protecting and licensing intellectual property. His practice also frequently involves collaborating on corporate policy and strategy, advising on entity choice and formation, working with start-ups to create an appropriate ownership structure and cap table, and preparing executive compensation documents, including stock option and bonus plans. He has represented clients in a variety of private securities transactions, including offerings, mergers, and private tender offers.

Before going to law school, Erich received an electrical engineering degree and worked for Bell Laboratories in Whippany, New Jersey. He enjoys working with companies where understanding the technology is an important aspect of deciding on appropriate legal strategy.

Clients that turn to Erich provide a variety of products and services. He has represented or currently represents companies in the medical products, diagnostic technology, biotech, software, SAAS, virtual reality, hospitality, consumer products, cannabis, transportation and trucking, logistics, silicon chip manufacturing and support, and heavy equipment manufacturing industries. Erich represents clients in both U.S. and international transactions.

Erich knows that emerging and mature businesses often encounter opportunities in which appropriate legal documents can mean the difference between a successful deal and exposure to liability. That means that one size doesn't fit all and that attention to detail is key. At the same time, too much detail can make legal documents incomprehensible. Erich's clients say he balances these concerns to produce documents they can understand and use.

Education

J.D., Harvard Law School,
1983

B.E., Vanderbilt University,
summa cum laude,
electrical engineering,
computer science, and
mathematics

Bar Admissions

Oregon, 1983
U.S. Patent and Trademark
Office, 1985

Professional Activities

- Oregon State Bar, Member
 - Business Law Section, Past Chair
 - Computer Law Section, Past Executive Committee Member
 - Limited Liability Company Legislation Task Force, Member
- TechAmerica (Oregon Chapter), Past Chair of Emerging Business Committee
- Technology Association of Oregon (fka Software Association of Oregon), Past Program Committee Member
- Organization for Corporate Governance, Washington, D.C., Steering Committee Member

Civic Activities

- Free Geek, Board Member
- Portland Venture Group, Associate Member
- Volunteer Lawyers Project
- Senior Law Project
- Campaign for Equal Justice
- First Presbyterian Church, Member and Trustee
- Friends of Menucha Foundation, Past President, Director
- United Way, Past Firm Campaign Leader
- Habitat for Humanity, Miller Nash Team, Past Organizer

Representative Experience

Mergers & Acquisitions

- Represented a leading agricultural grower and packer in the eight-figure sale of its production operations to a national buyer. The transaction involved detailed structuring, operational transition planning, and environmental due diligence.
- Advised an ecommerce company in the acquisition of a majority interest in another ecommerce business with a strong influencer-driven brand. This high-value, fast-paced transaction was closed in under three weeks, despite a level of complexity typically requiring several months. The integration will allow our client to streamline online consumer purchasing using proprietary technology.
- Represented a workplace furniture and interior design firm in its seven-figure acquisition of an office furniture distributor. The deal enabled the client's strategic expansion into Southern California and was completed under a tight timeline with extensive negotiation.
- Represented a national retailer in the establishment of a 100-acre, nine-figure, state-of-the-art automated distribution center in the Pacific Northwest. The project hinged on a complex acquisition agreement involving overseas suppliers, performance guarantees, warranty terms, and logistical planning—each element critical to the facility's successful launch.
- Formation and sale of packaging logistics business. Erich worked with two founders to form and within two years complete the successful exit sale of a software and AI-driven packaging logistics business. The transaction involved supervising and coordinating the efforts of over twenty attorneys.
- Long-term representation and exit sale of transportation data company. Erich served as lead counsel in the sale of this software company to a strategic acquiror for a mix of cash, acquiror stock, and a multi-stage earn-out.
- Acquisition of established businesses. Erich has recently led transactions for buyers acquiring established businesses in the manufacturing, produce distribution, fuels, and diagnostics industries.

Private Securities Offerings

- Represented an environmental technology company in a seven-figure Series Seed funding round. Our work included preparation of all documents, term sheets, sale agreements, shareholder agreements, and data rooms for due diligence. This financing involved a number of overseas parties which required additional regulatory analysis to ensure compliance.
- Represented an advanced wave-generating technology company in redomiciling the company from Australia into the United States. This sophisticated deal included many securities issues, international tax considerations, and a responsibility to over 450 shareholders. In addition to creating strategy for the primary redomiciling transaction, we advised the company with respect to several side projects including private offerings in the United States.
- Representing a leave management software solution company on recapitalizing the company, converting it to a Delaware corporation, conducting a seven-figure SAFE financing round, and qualifying for securities laws registration exemptions.
- McMenamins Series A offering. Erich served as lead counsel for this \$20 million offering of nonvoting preferred stock being undertaken to provide equity funding to a family-owned pub, restaurant, and hotel business located in Oregon and Washington. The offering was conducted under Rule 506(c), which allows for public solicitation.
- Cannabis industry company convertible note and stock offerings. Erich has been the lead attorney for this company which has raised capital in a series of preferred stock and convertible note offerings. The offerings have raised a total of over \$20 million to date.
- Private placements for diagnostics company. Erich is the outside general counsel for this California-based diagnostics company. He has worked with the company on a number of preferred stock and convertible note private placements, raising approximately \$5 million.
- SAFE offerings. Erich has represented a number of start-up companies who have successfully raised capital through issuance of SAFEs.

Business Contracts

- Cancer therapy start-up license agreement. Erich has long been outside general counsel for this cancer therapy start-up. He recently assisted the company with a major international license transaction, in which the company's therapeutic drug will be used in clinical trials in the U.S. and overseas.
- Key supplier contract. Erich guided the drafting of a contract to be used by a client nationwide in procuring qualified mechanical and electrical maintenance services for its customers' installed products.
- Consulting contracts; NDAs. Erich routinely assists clients with NDAs, consulting agreements, technology and IP licenses, services contracts, and standard terms of sale.

International Transactions

- Overseas private placements. Erich's private securities work includes international offerings. Supported by other members of our international team, Erich recently helped two clients close successful offerings that raised approximately \$5 million and \$8 million, respectively. One client obtained funds exclusively from international investors while the other received investment from a mix of U.S. and international sources.
- Redomestication transaction. Erich was part of the team that worked with an Australian publicly traded company to redomesticate in Delaware.

Publications

- "Supreme Court Expands Rights to Register Domain Names as Trademarks," *Miller Nash Graham & Dunn, IP Law Trends* (July 2020)
- "Amendment of Articles & Bylaws" and "Redemption or Purchase of Corporate Shares," *Advising Oregon Business, OSB CLE* (1989, 2001, 2007, 2017)

- “Startup Tip: New Crowdfunding Regulations,” *Oregon Business Magazine* (Jan. 2017)
- “Building a Better Board of Directors,” *Daily Journal of Commerce*, Law Focus Section (July 2012)
- “Top Three Things to Know Before Hiring a Finance Lawyer,” Miller Nash, *News You Can Use* (Nov. 2011)

Presentations

- “Buyer’s Representations and Warranties in a Business Sale,” Lorman Education Services, webinar (Aug. 2020)
- “Seller’s Representations and Warranties in a Business Sale,” Lorman Education Services, webinar (May 2020)
- “Nonbinding Legal Documentation in Commercial Transactions,” Lorman Education Services (June 2019)
- “Legal Issues When Raising Money,” The Initiative, 2019 Accelerator Program (Jan. 2019)
- “Drafting and Negotiating Effective Letters of Intent for M&A Transactions,” Lorman Education Services (Jan. 2018)
- “Negotiation Exercise,” Oregon State Bar, Business Law—The Life of a Deal (Nov. 2017)
- “Contract Review & Administration—Tips to Avoid Risk and Effectively Manage Your Contracts,” Miller Nash Graham & Dunn, July Breakfast Roundtable (July 2016)
- “‘Public’ Real Estate Securities Offerings - Rule 506(c) and the McMenamins Offering,” Oregon State Bar, Real Estate and Land Use Luncheon Program (June 2014)
- “A Primer: What Corporate Lawyers Should Know About The America Invents Act,” Seattle University School of Law, CLE (Apr. 2012)
- “Contract Review and Administration,” Miller Nash, Breakfast Roundtable (Feb. 2012)
- “Ten Traps for Entrepreneurs to Avoid,” Willamette Management Associates Insights (Dec. 2009)
- “Protecting Your Intellectual Property - Legal Dos, Dont’s, and Tips,” Miller Nash, Roundtable (Oct. 2009)
- “Joined at the IP—A Practical Guide to Joint Development/Collaboration Deals,” Oregon Chapter of the Association of Corporate Counsel (Feb. 2008)
- “Protecting Your Intellectual Capital: Noncompetition and Nonsolicitation Agreements,” panelist (May 2007)
- “Venture Capital Investments and Exits Before and After the Internet Bubble,” Willamette Law Review College of Law, Program in Law & Business (Jan. 2004)
- “Closing the Deal,” Miller Nash, panelist (Jan. 2004)
- “Whom Do You Represent?” Oregon State Bar (May 2003)
- “Keeping and Disclosing Electronic Records,” panelist (Dec. 2002)
- “Intellectual Property Issues” The Seminar Group, Mergers and Acquisitions: Acquiring and Selling the Privately Held Company (May 2000)

Recognition & Honors

- Selected for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America*® (Portland, OR)
 - Securities/Capital Markets Law, 2024-present
 - Mergers and Acquisitions Law, 2013-present
 - Corporate Law, 2006-present; “Lawyer of the Year,” 2021
- Selected for inclusion as an Oregon Super Lawyer, 2006-present
- Recognized as a “Leader in Their Field” by *Chambers USA* for Corporate/M&A—Oregon
- Rated AV® Preeminent™ by Martindale-Hubbell®

Personal Activities

Erich is an avid runner, though not very fast. He has completed six Portland marathons and been on seven Hood-to-Coast relay teams. He and his family actively support and participate in the oversight of Menucha, an ecumenical retreat center in the Columbia Gorge serving only not-for-profit groups, such as arts, education, 12-step recovery, and cancer care groups.