

Blair Rebane

Partner

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Franchise Licensing & Distribution
Retail & Hospitality
Leasing
Construction Disputes
Automotive
Disputes

Blair is passionate about providing solution-driven advice to help clients of both established companies and growth-stage enterprises achieve their business goals. A trusted advisor respected for his enthusiasm and responsiveness, Blair's practice combines a deep expertise in business organization and expansion with skillful dispute resolution and mediation strategies.

As the National Leader of the Franchise and Distribution Group, Blair advises a wide variety of franchisors, master franchisees, distributors, and manufacturers across multiple industries. He regularly negotiates, prepares, and structures complex franchise and distribution arrangements such as master franchises, unit franchises, area development, dealerships, and distribution agreements. As both a solicitor and litigator of franchise issues, Blair counsels clients on enforcement and termination of all types of franchise and distribution agreements, including through litigation or arbitration.
In the franchise and distribution sector, Blair represents a number of Canada's largest retail, food and beverage, hospitality, automotive, janitorial and home services companies, including:

- Prominent restaurant/quick-service/coffee chains and operators
- Well-known hotel chains and operators
- A number of the world's most prominent automotive manufacturers as well as major vehicle repair and maintenance chains
- The world's largest junk removal company
- Major national and international retailers of clothing, skin care products, hot tubs, barbeques, food smokers and a vast array of other products
- Prominent grocery chains, convenience stores as well as other food and liquor distributors

- National and international home improvement, construction, painting and cleaning franchisors
- Leading fitness, healthcare and education chains.

As litigation counsel, Blair has extensive experience in construction disputes, landlord/tenant issues, and creditor's remedies. He advises contractors, developers, bonding companies, property managers, private lenders, service providers, and suppliers, providing effective, imaginative solutions to meet and exceed their business objectives.

Blair's commercial disputes clients include a number of Canada's largest construction companies, real estate investment and management firms, and various retail and service providers:

- Global providers of infrastructure and renewable energy projects
- Significant joint venture construction projects for some of Canada's largest port, highway, pipeline and sewage projects
- Leading land and marine construction contractors and subcontractors
- Mechanical and manufacturing companies
- Multiple retail, residential, and hospitality real estate groups
- Several premiere commercial property management firms.

In addition to his practice, Blair teaches, publishes and presents extensively on franchise law, and frequently provides commentary for various media outlets and organizations such as *The Globe & Mail, Construction Business* (B.C. & Alberta's construction magazine), and *Business in Vancouver.*

Blair has appeared before the Supreme Court of British Columbia, Court of Appeal and Federal Court of Canada, and is consistently recognized as an industry leader in franchise law and commercial litigation. He was an Adjunct Professor at the University of British Columbia Faculty of Law for more than a decade.

Experience

- Negotiated and structured the right for a restaurant operator to acquire and develop 100 quick-service outlets in Canada.
- Structured and prepared agreements and disclosure documents required for a significant U.S. education based franchisor to expand into Canada.
- Conceptualized, structured and advised on the conversion of a corporate owned business to a franchise model.
- Advised a national franchisor on changes to and restructuring of its marketing fund.
- Acted as mediator in a number of franchise disputes.
- Successfully defended various franchise rescission claims.
- Advised large national franchisors on terminating their relationship with non-compliant franchisees.
- Led teams that restructured and reorganized businesses in the retail, franchise, restaurant and other sectors that resulted in succession of ownership.
- Led teams that acquired all assets of national franchisors, retailers and other businesses.
- Acted for numerous contractors with respect to prosecuting and successfully mediating significant delay and additional compensation claims arising from infrastructure, commercial and other projects.
- Recovered money owed to contractors and suppliers through filing builders' liens.
- Acted for a number of developers in relation to deficient construction claims against contractors.
- Counsel on numerous rent arbitrations, resulting in significant rent savings for tenants.

- Advised landlords with respect to the eviction of significant retail tenants.
- Assisted landlords on various issues arising with tenants including noise complaints, COVID restrictions, rent collection, environmental compliance, operating costs calculations and subletting issues.

Insights & Events

Beyond Our Walls

Professional Involvement

- Member, Canadian Bar Association, Construction and Civil Litigation Sections
- Member, Ontario Bar Association, Franchise Law Section
- Editorial Board Member, ICSC Shopping Center Legal Update, 2008 - present

Community Involvement

- Director, Fulmer Charitable Foundation
- (Past) Director, The Entrepreneurs' Assistance Society of East Vancouver

Awards & Recognition

- Recognized in the 2027 edition of *The Best Lawyers in Canada* for Franchise Law (since 2008) and Corporate and Commercial Litigation (since 2013).
- Recognized as the 2024, 2021, 2019, 2017 and 2013 "Vancouver Franchise Law Lawyer of the Year" by *The Best Lawyers in Canada*.
- Recognized in the 2027 edition (and since 2017) of *Chambers Canada* (Franchising (Nationwide - Canada)).
- Recognized in the 2026 edition (and since 2013) of *The Canadian Legal Lexpert* Directory (Franchise Law).
- Recognized in the 2025 edition (and since 2020) of *Lexpert Special Edition: Litigation.*
- Recognized in the 2024 edition (and since 2022) of *Who's Who Legal: Canada* (Franchising).
- Recognized as a 2023 *Thomson Reuters* Stand-out Lawyer.
- Recognized as a 2017 Acritas Star.
- Received the 2012 Canadian Franchise Association's Vince Nichol Award for "demonstrating an entrepreneurial spirit and dedication as a volunteer for the betterment of the franchise community." Also received the association's 2006 Franchise Support Services Recognition Award.

Bar Admission & Education

- British Columbia, 1995

- LLB, University of Alberta, 1994
- BA, University of British Columbia, 1987

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As the largest, truly full-service Canadian law firm, Borden Ladner Gervais LLP (BLG) delivers practical legal advice for domestic and international clients across more practices and industries than any Canadian firm. With over 800 lawyers, intellectual property agents and other professionals, BLG serves the legal needs of businesses and institutions across Canada and beyond – from M&A and capital markets, to disputes, financing, and trademark & patent registration.

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