


Doug Mandell


GLOBAL HEAD OF THE FOUNDER PRACTICE | SAN FRANCISCO

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Doug leads our founder practice and is a senior partner.

As head of our founder practice, a niche practice focused on personal general counsel services for company founders, chief executive officers, venture capitalists, senior executives and wealthy families, Doug's core practice is a combination of corporate, employment and executive compensation where he advises clients personally on M&A transactions and complex employment law and corporate issues. Doug also leverages the firm's strengths in litigation, trust and estates, tax, family law, real estate, crypto and digital assets and charities and charitable giving to meet a wide spectrum of needs of individual private clients.

Doug has extensive experience advising emerging growth companies, often as outside general counsel in the areas of corporate law, privacy, data security and technology transactions. Doug has been general counsel of three startups, including the first GC at LinkedIn and the first lawyer to represent LinkedIn when the company was founded and Nauto, Inc., a big data/AI company in the autonomous vehicle space funded by Greylock Partners and Softbank (Doug also represented this company since it was founded). Doug often draws on his experience as general counsel to tech companies when serving as personal general counsel to founders.

Doug is a frequent speaker on personal legal issues for founders and executives and features videos for founders and executives and students on his [YouTube Channel](#) on this topic. He is recognized in the Chambers USA 2024 Guide as a top lawyer in Employee Benefits and Executive Compensation. Since leaving LinkedIn, Doug also regularly gives back to students by speaking at colleges and law schools on how to develop a professional brand management strategy and execute it online and offline to get a job. Doug's full bio can be viewed [here on LinkedIn](#).

Track record

Founders and key executives

Represented founders and all key executive in sale of this software company to a global public software company.

Founder

Represented founder in sale of big data software company in a sale to one of the largest public agriculture companies.

Founders

Represented founders of data analytics company in sale to large public software company.

Private security software company

Represented founder and all key executives in sale of private security software company to large public technology company.

Founder and CEO

Represented the founder and CEO of a popular FinTech company personally in the sale his company to a large public software company. Later represented this founder in his resignation from this company and transition to the next company he launched.

Fund manager

Represented well known fund manager of a global mutual fund company in his departure from the firm and creation of his own fund.

Silicon valley founder

Represented one of the leading founders in Silicon Valley in employment negotiations to join company as CEO and in complex negotiations where she resigned from the Company but remained on the board.

Partner in wealth management firm

Represented partner of a San Francisco based wealth management firm in his departure from the firm and creation of his own competing wealth management firm.

High profile CEOs

Represented several high-profile CEOs in their departure from the companies.

Founder and CEO of tech company

Recently represented founder and CEO of a high-profile technology company in complex negotiations with major investor and board.

Well known fund manager

Represented well known fund manager of a global mutual fund company in his departure from the firm and creation of his own fund.

Founders

Encourage the co-founders of the electronic truck company, Motiv Power Systems to launch the Company when I was advising them at their prior company. First investor in the Company and outside counsel for the Company for years.

Originate

Introduced the two primary partners of software services company Originate, both clients, to each other and the three of us later formed Originate as partners. Outside counsel to this company for years and later advisor.

Co-founder

Represented co-founder of a leading social media company in his departure from the Company.

High-profile founder

Represented one of the most high-profile founders in his separation from the company he co-founded.

Start-up representations

First lawyer to represent several startups which have scaled including: LinkedIn, Nauto, SixApart, Motiv Power Systems and Cricket Health.

CEO

Retained by CEO after company raised \$250 million to advise CEO and CFO on high-level general counsel issues and advise the Director of Legal. Responsible for all "board-level" issues and corporate governance matters.

General Counsel

Retained by General Counsel of global fast scaling micro-mobility startup to advise her on high-level GC issues such as privacy, data-security, patent process and the selection of patent counsel and building out the legal team.

Outside general counsel role

Retained by leading ecommerce big data company to serve as outside general counsel before the Company hired a full-time GC. Projects included data security audit and opening UK office. Responsible for GC search.

Recruitment

Responsible for hiring the general counsel for five technology companies.

Seagate Technology

Responsible for negotiating billions of dollars in international supply agreements for Seagate Technology throughout Asia. Seagate's only outside counsel to regularly attend meetings and offsites with the in-house Corporate Contracts Team for several years.

Talks

- 'Negotiating Your Next GC Role,' 9th Annual L Suite Fullstack GC Conference - May 2, 2024, speaker
- 'Vines & Visionaries: A Client Appreciation Event,' Withers Fireside Chat & Wine Tasting Event - September 20, 2023, host & speaker
- 'Anatomy of a Transaction - Key Issues for Executives and Founders Selling Their Business and What Protections are Worth Fighting For?' International Forum of Senior Executive Advisers (IFSEA) 4th Annual Conference - June 20, 2023, speaker
- 'Personal: Negotiating Your Next GC Role,' TechGC Fullstack GC Conference - May 19, 2023, speaker
- 'Everything You Need to Understand if Your Company is Being Acquired,' Compound Livestream Discussion - May 18, 2023, speaker
- 'Considerations for Executives in PE M&A,' 2023 TechGC PE Buyout M&A Virtual Forum - January 26, 2023, speaker
- 'When your founder, CEO (or you) are the client: Protecting you and your team when things get personal,' TechGC Global Summit - November 4, 2021, presenter
- '[Withers talks: founders counsel | Episode 5 - Keeping founders and families secure: Issues with cyber and physical security](#),' Withers podcast - June 3, 2021, moderator
- 'Senior Executive Contracts - What New Protections, Powers and Provisions should Executives and Founders be Seeking,' International Forum of Senior Executive Advisors Conference (IFSEA) Second Annual Conference: Risk, Reward & Reputation Management Issues for Senior Executives & Founders - February 16, 2021, presenter
- '[Withers talks: founders counsel | Episode 4 - How can VCs best help founders?](#)' Withers podcast - December 7, 2020, moderator

- *'Withers talks: founders counsel | Episode 3 - Should age matter for founders?'* Withers podcast - September 8, 2020, moderator
- *'Withers talks: founders counsel | Episode 2 - Do operators make the best VCs?'* Withers podcast - July 15, 2020, moderator
- *'Withers talks: founders counsel | Episode 1 - Using entrepreneurial skills for good.'* Withers podcast - June 9, 2020, moderator
- *'Legal issues faced by founders, entrepreneurs, executives and wealthy family members amid the coronavirus outbreak.'* Withers webinar - April 17, 2020, moderator
- *'Restrictive Covenant and Confidential Information Issues for International Senior Executives and Founders,'* International Forum of Senior Executive Advisers, IFSEA Podcast in London - February 4, 2020, speaker
- *'Restrictive Covenant and Confidential Information Issues for International Senior Executives and Founders,'* International Forum of Senior Executive Advisers in London - February 4, 2020, panelist
- *'From Scaling Companies to Protecting Founders, Advice from Doug Mandell, Silicon Valley GC and Consigliere.'* Raising your Attenea Podcast Episode 13 - February 25, 2019, speaker
- *'How to Leverage the Power of Your Second Degree Network,'* Presentation to Hastings Law School, San Francisco, CA - February 19, 2020 & August 14, 2019, speaker
- *'Scaling fast growing venture-backed Silicon Valley startups internationally - An In-House Counsel Perspective,'* ABA Section of International Law, International Startup and Emerging Companies Forum, San Francisco, CA - September 13, 2019, moderator
- *'Building a World Class 21st Century Talent Organization from the Ground Up,'* ABA Section of International Law, International Startup and Emerging Companies Forum, San Francisco, CA - September 12, 2019, panelist
- *'Applying Artificial Intelligence,'* Washington University in St. Louis Bay Area Entrepreneurship Summit, Palo Alto, CA - June 22, 2019, moderator
- *'From Scaling Companies to Protecting Founders, Advice from Doug Mandell,'* Antenna Group Podcast, Silicon Valley GC and Consigliere, Episode 13 - February 25, 2019
- *'Restrictive Covenant and Confidential Information Issues for International Senior Executives and Founders,'* International One-Day Conference on Risk, Reward & Reputation Management Issues for Senior Executives & Founders, and their Specialist Advisers - February 4, 2019, panelist
- *'Selecting Paying for and Implementing Legal Technology for VC-Backed Startups,'* TechGC Webinar - August 21, 2018, presenter
- *'Workforce on Demand,'* ABA Section of International Law Spring Meeting, New York, NY - April 13, 2016, panelist
- *'Leveraging the Power of LinkedIn for Law Students & Attorneys,'* Columbia Law School, New York, New York - April 16, 2012, guest speaker
- *'Rainmaking Using Social Media, Bar Association of San Francisco,'* Bar Association of San Francisco, San Francisco, CA - February 24, 2011, panelist
- *'The Execution of a Professional Brand Management Strategy for Law Students,'* Golden Gate University Graduate School of Business and School of Law, Golden Gate University, San Francisco, CA - February 23, 2011, speaker
- *'Social Media in the Workplace,'* ABA Section of International Law 2010 Fall Meeting, Paris, France - November 5, 2010, moderator
- *'Pathways to Employment in International Law,'* ABA Section of International Law 2010 Fall Meeting, Paris, France - November 2, 2010, panelist
- *'Pathways to Employment in International Law,'* ABA Section of International Law, Hastings Law School, San Francisco, CA - August 5, 2010, panelist
- *'Professional Brand Management for Entrepreneurs,'* Entrepreneurs' Organization Cleveland Chapter. Corporate College East; Cleveland, Ohio - July 30, 2010, speaker
- *'Networking, Prospecting and Rainmaking Using Social Media,'* California Minority Counsel Program & UC Hastings College of the Law, Hastings Law School, San Francisco, CA - July 8, 2010, panelist

- 'Social Media Panel,' National Association of Legal Placement (NALP) 2010 Annual Conference, Caribe Hilton, San Juan, Puerto Rico - April 28, 2010, panelist
- 'Social Media Panel,' Advocating Conference, Bell Harbor Conference Center, Seattle, Washington - January 21, 2010, panelist. Represented LinkedIn on a panel with an executive from Facebook. Also presented on the development and implementation of a professional brand management strategy for attorneys using LinkedIn.
- '[The Next Generation: Trekking Through Technology](#),' 11th Annual Legal Marketign Association (LMA) Technology Program, The Palace Hotel, San Francisco, California - September 17, 2009, keynote speaker
- '[Legal Risks of Social Network Sites and Employee Screening](#),' Northern California HR Association (NCHRA), San Francisco, CA - September 11, 2009, speaker
- '[Overcoming Obstacles in the Web 2.0 World](#),' (Legal Risk Management Conference hosted by Pike & Fischer (a BNA business) Closing Keynote Address, AED Conference Center; Washington, DC. - September 17, 2008, keynote speaker

Videos

Founder Series - Why founders need their own counsel

Founder Series - Internal conflicts in an M&A Deal

Founder Series - Areas of founder practice

External publications

'Helping founders protect and defend their position,' Withers Insight - April 11, 2024, featured

'[From couch surfing to wine making: How US tech founders' lives and families evolve](#),' Withers Insight - February 1, 2024, co-authored

'Recent CEO Exit Latest in a String of Misconduct Resignations,' Agenda - November 18, 2022, quoted

'[Withers' Bet on Private Clients in California Is Powering US Growth](#),' The Recorder (Subscription Required) - June 14, 2022, quoted

'[Starbucks Ties D&I to Comp. Will Others Follow?](#)' Agenda - November 2, 2020, featured and quoted

'[Doug Mandell joins Withers in San Francisco to form dedicated international practice for founders and senior executives](#),' Withers Insight - April 3, 2020, featured and quoted

'[Withers Hires New Founder Practice Leader](#),' Daily Journal - April 2, 2020, featured and quoted

The following are videos where Doug addresses many issues that founders and executives in Silicon Valley encounter personally. The videos below cannot be construed as legal advice but rather are offered to clients and potential clients as a resource to gain an overview of these issues.

'[My founder practice](#),' Doug Mandell YouTube Channel [Founders Series: Issues Faced by Founders and Senior Executives](#) Episode 1 video - September 12, 2019, featured

'[When should a founder hire a personal general counsel?](#),' Doug Mandell YouTube Channel [Founders Series: Issues Faced by Founders and Senior Executives](#) Episode 2 video - September 12, 2019, featured

'[What does acceleration mean?](#),' Doug Mandell YouTube Channel [Founders Series: Issues Faced by Founders and Senior Executives](#) Episode 3 video - September 12, 2019, featured

'[Negotiating the post termination exercise period](#),' Doug Mandell YouTube Channel [Founders Series: Issues Faced by Founders and Senior Executives](#) Episode 4 video - September 12, 2019, featured

'[What does it mean to early exercise stock options?](#),' Doug Mandell YouTube Channel [Founders Series: Issues Faced by Founders and Senior Executives](#) Episode 5 video - September 12, 2019, featured

'[How often are founders forced out and what can founders do to prepare for disputes](#),' Doug Mandell YouTube Channel [Founders Series: Issues Faced by Founders and Senior Executives](#) Episode 6 video - September 12, 2019, featured

'[What are the typical issues negotiated when a founder leaves his or her company?](#),' Doug Mandell YouTube Channel [Founders Series: Issues Faced by Founders and Senior Executives](#) Episode 7 video - September 12, 2019, featured

'Can founder disputes be prevented?' Doug Mandell YouTube Channel Founders Series: Issues Faced by Founders and Senior Executives Episode 8 video - September 12, 2019, featured

'Interviews with Nancy Lublin about representing founders and CEOs personally,' Doug Mandell YouTube Channel video - September 12, 2019, featured

'Why founders need their own counsel in M&A deals,' Doug Mandell YouTube Channel Founders Series: Representing Founders in M&A Deals Episode 1 video - September 12, 2019, featured

'When is there a conflict between a founder and his company in an M&A deal?' Doug Mandell YouTube Channel Founders Series: Representing Founders in M&A Deals Episode 2 video - September 12, 2019, featured

'Areas of founder practice,' Doug Mandell YouTube Channel Founders Series: Representing Founders in M&A Deals Episode 3 video - September 12, 2019, featured

'Deal consideration,' Doug Mandell YouTube Channel Founders Series: Representing Founders in M&A Deals Episode 4 video - September 12, 2019, featured

'The noncompete,' Doug Mandell YouTube Channel Founders Series: Representing Founders in M&A Deals Episode 5 video - September 12, 2019, featured

'Joining the acquiring company,' Doug Mandell YouTube Channel Founders Series: Representing Founders in M&A Deals Episode 6 video - September 12, 2019, featured

'Being a therapist to founders and how to find and interview a founder lawyer,' Doug Mandell YouTube Channel Founders Series: Representing Founders in M&A Deals Episode 7 video - September 12, 2019, featured

'Legal needs of today's founders,' Doug Mandell YouTube Channel Founders Series: Representing Founders in M&A Deals Episode 8 video - September 12, 2019, featured

'The 4 Top Law Firms in Silicon Valley, According to Tech CEOs,' Inc. Magazine, June 15, 2016, featured

Admissions

California, 1994

Education

Washington University in St. Louis, B.A.

Tulane Law School, J.D.

Languages

English

Memberships

[Founder Series - Why Founders Need Their Own Counsel](#)

[Founder Series - Internal conflicts in an M&A Deal](#)

[Founder Series - Areas of founder practice](#)

[Founders Series - Deal consideration](#)

[Founder Series - The Noncompete](#)

[Founder Series - Joining the acquiring company](#)

[Founder Series - Being a therapist to Founders and how to find interview a founder lawyer](#)

[Founder Series - Legal Needs of Today's Founders](#)

Key dates

Year joined: 2020

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