DONAHUE FITZGERALD ATTORNEYS

Dawn Newton

Partner

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Practice Areas

- Franchise
- Intellectual Property
- Business and Corporate
- Legal Cannabis
- Data Privacy and Security



Overview

Dawn Newton is a business attorney whose practice focuses on franchise law, intellectual property, and data privacy. She is certified as a legal specialist in franchise and distribution law by the Board of Legal Specialization of the State Bar of California.

As a franchise law expert, Dawn represents a broad spectrum of franchised businesses, particularly restaurants and retail concepts, and she serves as outside general counsel for several. Many of her clients' concepts are targeted to children, including tutoring, daycare, and supplemental education. Her experience includes:

- Managing the regulatory and compliance work of mature and expanding franchise systems
- Structuring new franchise systems for start-up franchisors, including drafting Franchise Disclosure Documents (FDDs), franchise agreements, area development agreements, and managing registrations and exemptions.
- Assisting businesses with resolving complex franchise law violation situations

For businesses or attorneys subject to a California DBO requirement to obtain remedial franchise compliance training, she offers a comprehensive full-day training which meets DBO standards.

In addition to her franchise practice, Dawn helps clients safeguard and preserve their intellectual property, such as:

- Trademark and copyright prosecution and licensing
- Creating and registering new marks and expanding marks internationally
- Developing strategies to protect and enhance intellectual property
- Policing and responding to allegations of infringement
- Advising on issues raised by new forms of media

Dawn also advises clients regarding data privacy issues, including compliance with various privacy and security laws including CCPA, GDPR, COPPA, CalOPPA, CAN-SPAM, and more. Her experience includes responding to data breaches, creating compliance plans, and vendor management.

Professional & Community Affiliations

- Member, Women Presidents Organization, 2026
- Member, American Bar Association Forum on Franchising, 2004-present
- Annual Meeting Co-Chair, American Bar Association Forum on Franchising, 2017
- Member, Governing Committee, American Bar Association Forum on Franchising, 2015-present
- Member, International Franchise Association, 2015-present
- Chair and Commissioner, Franchise and Distribution Law Advisory Commission, Board of Legal Specialization, State Bar of California, 2008-2015
- Chair, Intellectual Property Section, Alameda County Bar Association, 2011-2013
- Member, Franchise and Business Opportunity Advisory Committee, North American Securities Administrators Association, 2022

Recognition

- Listed, Lexology Index: Thought Leaders USA - Franchising, *Lexology*, 2025
- Named, *Northern California Super Lawyers*, 2025-present

- Listed, Legal Eagles, *Franchise Times*, 2022, 2024
- Listed, *Who's Who Legal: Franchise*, 2017-2021
- Named, The Best Lawyers in America© – Franchising, *Best Lawyers*, 2013-present
- Named, Rising Star, *Northern California Super Lawyers*, 2010
- Awarded, AV® Preeminent™ (5.0 out of 5) peer-review rated, *Martindale-Hubbell™*
- Recipient, Future Leader Award, Forum on Franchising, *American Bar Association*, 2010

Bar Admissions

- California

Courts

- U.S. District Court, Northern District of California
- U.S. District Court, Central District of California

Education

- **J.D.**, University of California College of the Law, San Francisco, 2000
- **B.A.**, University of California, Berkeley, 1996

Recent Articles/News

- Donahue Fitzgerald Attorneys Contribute to Chambers Franchising 2026 Global Practice Guide, *Franchising 2026*, Chambers and Partners
- Partner Dawn Newton Recognized in Lexology Index: Thought Leaders USA 2027
- Donahue Fitzgerald Attorneys Recognized in the Best Lawyers in America® 2027 Edition, *Best Lawyers in America*, 2027 Edition
- Donahue Fitzgerald Attorneys Named 2026 Super Lawyers and Rising Stars
- CIPA "Wiretapping" Demands Are Surging — Is Your Website a Target?, June 26, 2026
- Donahue Fitzgerald Recognized in the World Trademark Review's 2026 WTR 1000 Ranking, February 26, 2026
- Donahue Fitzgerald Attorneys Recognized as AV Preeminent on Martindale-Hubbell®
- New Prop 65 Claims Target Receipt Paper
- CPPA Announces $1.35M Fine in Tractor Supply Case: What Every Business Should Learn
- Donahue Fitzgerald Attorneys Recognized in the Best Lawyers in America® 2026 Edition, *Best Lawyers in America*, 2026 Edition

Past Articles/News

- Donahue Fitzgerald Recognized in the World Trademark Review's 2024 WTR 1000 Ranking, February 28, 2024
- The Corporate Transparency Act (CTA) – Requirement and Rationale, December 29, 2023
- Donahue Fitzgerald Attorneys Recognized in the Best Lawyers in America 2024 Edition
- Donahue Fitzgerald Recognized in the World Trademark Review's 2023 WTR 1000 Ranking, February 13, 2023
- Dawn Newton Appointed to the NASAA Franchise and Business Opportunity Advisory Committee
- Legal Topics You Need to Know, *Franchise Times*, March 29, 2022
- Donahue Fitzgerald Recognized in the World Trademark Review's 2022 WTR 1000 Ranking, March 3, 2022
- Franchising and Trademarks: Where, Why, and How?, July 29, 2021
- Donahue Fitzgerald Ranked in Top Tier of 2021 "Best Law Firms"
- Donahue Fitzgerald Attorneys Recognized in the Best Lawyers in America® 2021 Edition, *Best Lawyers in America*, 2021 Edition
- EU-U.S. Privacy Shield Framework Found Inadequate. SCCs Still Stand., July 16, 2020
- Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Employee Privacy Issues, March 27, 2020
- Donahue Fitzgerald Ranked in Top Tier of 2020 "Best Law Firms"
- Donahue Fitzgerald Attorneys Recognized in the Best Lawyers in America® 2020 Edition, *Best Lawyers in America*, 2020 Edition
- California Consumer Privacy Act, This post was originally published on November 7, 2018 and updated on July 16, 2019
- GDPR-Year One: Practitioners' Perspective, May 23, 2019
- Impacts of the New Revenue Recognition Rule (ASC 606), November 15, 2018
- Donahue Fitzgerald Ranked in Top Tier of 2019 "Best Law Firms"
- Donahue Fitzgerald Attorneys Recognized in the Best Lawyers in America© 2019 Edition, *Best Lawyers in America*, 2019 Edition
- Donahue Fitzgerald Ranked in Top Tier of 2018 "Best Law Firms"
- Donahue Fitzgerald Ranked In Top Tier of 2017 "Best Law Firms"
- Franchising a Marijuana Business: It's Not Quite Mission Impossible, *Franchise Law Journal*, American Bar Association, co-authored with Shannon L. McCarthy, vol. 35, no.3, Winter 2016
- Advertising and Social Media

Books

- *The Annotated Franchise Agreement*, Forum on Franchising – American Bar Association, contributing editor, 2018

- "Negotiating Key Provisions," Chapter 2, Mergers and Acquisitions of Franchise Companies, second ed., Forum on Franchising – American Bar Association, contributing author, 2014

Recent Speaking Engagements

- October 16, 2025, ABA's 48th Forum on Franchising , American Bar Association, Orlando, Florida 32837
- October 21, 2024, Franchising 102: What You Should Know, From a Franchise Attorney , Inner City Advisors
- September 18, 2024, Global trends for the cannabis market: new frontiers and opportunities , International Bar Association, Mexico City, Mexico
- April 30, 2024, Kiss, Marry, Kill: IP Licensing, Franchising, and DIY Agreements in Cannabis , Lawline, Virtual
- April 19, 2023, 2023 Cannabis IP Law Conference , California Lawyers Association, Santa Monica, CA
- December 01, 2022, NASAA 2022 Franchise and Business Opportunities Training , NASAA (North American Securities Administrators Association)
  , New Orleans, LA
- October 14, 2021, ABA's 44th Forum on Franchising , American Bar Association Forum on Franchising
  , Atlanta, GA
- October 27, 2020, ABA's 43rd Forum on Franchising , American Bar Association Forum on Franchising, Webinar
- November 15, 2019, CLA 44th Annual Intellectual Property Law Section Institute , California Lawyers Association, Las Vegas, NV
- October 17, 2019, ABA's 42nd Forum on Franchising , American Bar Association Forum on Franchising, Denver, CO

Past Speaking Engagements

- GDPR and CCPA: Consumer-Focused Privacy Laws And Their Impact – Contra Costa County Bar Association, October 7, 2019
- Dawn Newton Appointed to the NASAA Franchise and Business Opportunity Advisory Committee
- IFA's 52nd Legal Symposium, International Franchise Association (IFA), May 06, 2019, Washington D.C., DC
- Preparing for the California Consumer Privacy Act, January 24, 2019, Oakland, CA
- ABA's 41st Forum on Franchising, American Bar Association Forum on Franchising, October 10, 2018, Nashville, TN

- ABA's 40th Annual Forum on Franchising, American Bar Association Forum on Franchising, October 18, 2017, Palm Dessert, CA
- Fundamentals of Franchising, American Bar Association's Forum on Franchising, November 02, 2016, Miami, Florida
- The Forgotten Asset: Copyright Law for Estate Planners, East Bay Estate Planning Council, September 12, 2016, Oakland, California
- The Forgotten Asset: Copyright Law for Estate Planners, Bar Association of San Francisco, November 17, 2015, San Francisco, California
- What You Need to Know About Franchising Your Business, November 10, 2015, Oakland, California
- Fundamentals 201: Drafting the Six Most Challenging Items in the FDD, Forum on Franchising – American Bar Association, October 15-16, 2015, New Orleans, Louisiana
- Nationalizing Your Brand, 2015 Cannabis Business Summit, National Cannabis Industry Association, June 28, 2015, Denver, Colorado
- Handling Defaults and Terminations, 48th Annual Legal Symposium, International Franchise Association, May 5, 2015, Chicago, Illinois
- Franchising v. Licensing, National Cannabis Bar Association, February 12, 2015, San Francisco, California
- Advanced Disclosure Issues, Forum on Franchising – American Bar Association, 2013, Orlando, Florida
- Best Practices for Establishing a Franchise Compliance Program, Forum on Franchising – American Bar Association, 2010, San Diego, California