

## Stephen A. Gigot

Partner

### Overview

Steve works closely with client executives to strategically manage patent portfolios, taking into account the commercial realities of client products, the relationship of client patent portfolios to client products and business strategies, client budgets, and competitor activities, patent portfolios, products and strategies.

He places special emphasis on helping companies eliminate unnecessary expenses by streamlining workflows and purging underperforming or unnecessary assets from bloated or aging portfolios.

Steve handles all aspects of U.S. and international patent prosecution for companies in a variety of technical fields, including:

- Automotive
- Agriculture
- Heat transfer
- Nuclear power generation
- Nuclear fuels and reactor fueling, security and safety
- Excavation, forestry and construction equipment
- Power generation
- Medical imaging

In helping his clients structure their portfolios, Steve uses data analytics to develop patent maps and filing strategies that advance their business goals, adhere to budgets, protect their most valuable intellectual property assets, and respond to competitive challenges. He supports these strategies with counsel on enforcement and the avoidance of competitor portfolios, frequently monitoring competitors' patent activity and preparing patentability and non-infringement opinions.

Steve has significant experience drafting license agreements, joint development agreements, confidentiality agreements and non-disclosure agreements. He has also helped clients manage IP issues before, during and after mergers and acquisitions.



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### Milwaukee

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### Legal Assistant

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### Practices

Intellectual Property

Patent

## **Experience**

### **Protecting years of invention — virtually overnight**

When a company specializing in the design and supply of nuclear reactors was given the opportunity to bid on construction of a new reactor, it was required to disclose all design details to regulators, their competitors and customers. The company turned to Michael Best to quickly protect the designs developed over approximately five years by its team of 5,000 engineers and physicists.

Steve and his colleague Chris Austin devised a strategy, assembled a team and managed the emergency filing of 47 provisional patent applications — all in the space of five days. Steve, Chris and the team spent the next year preparing formal patent applications and non-U.S. applications for the company, which continues to work with Michael Best even though it is based in Canada and has no U.S. employees.

### **Quickly clearing a patent backlog**

Shortly after retaining Michael Best in the summer of 2015 by a leading manufacturer of heavy equipment, our client discovered a substantial backlog in their patent filings. Steve and his colleagues Chris Austin and Plymouth Nelson led a team of 15 partners, associates and engineers in the preparation of 44 patent applications in approximately six weeks. The work Steve and his colleagues did on this project impressed our client so much that we are now receiving the majority of their outside patent prosecution work.

### **Streamlining a bloated portfolio, providing substantial savings**

When a large manufacturing client was looking for ways to save money, it retained Michael Best to streamline its bloated worldwide patent portfolio. Steve and his colleagues brought in groups of employees from every part of the client's business and evaluated each patent asset.

This input from employees helped Steve and his colleagues make significant cuts to the company's portfolio, removing patents and applications that provided little value without sacrificing protection of the client's most profitable operations. In all, Steve and his colleagues were able to reduce the client's annual patent expenses by more than 50 percent.

### **Helping a client compete while staying out of litigation**

When a manufacturing client wanted to manage the risks of competing with a rival with a robust patent portfolio, Steve helped them develop strategies to reduce or eliminate potential licensing and litigation costs. He helped them develop non-infringing design-around options that allowed them to compete profitably in a space their competitor thought they had locked up, without being sued.

### **Turning a business around by growing, not cutting**

When Steve's client bought a distressed asset in the automotive industry, he counseled them through a business turnaround and developed a multi-year global patent and business realignment plan, which has proven to be very successful for this now highly profitable business.

### **Developing IP budget management systems**

In today's economy, companies want to carefully manage their IP budgets to avoid unexpected expenses. Steve works with clients having portfolios ranging in size from five to more than 1,000 patents, setting up highly efficient workflows and establishing streamlined working arrangements that save companies money and time. Steve's focus on efficiency is backed by his Lean Sigma training.

### **Helping restructure corporate IP departments**

Steve has provided guidance to Fortune 100 companies in the restructuring of their Intellectual Property departments, including the redesign of all intellectual property forms, agreements, committees and workflows.

### **Education**

- Marquette University Law School, Juris Doctor (J.D.), *cum laude*, 2001; Editor, *Marquette Law Review* and Alpha Sigma Nu, the National Jesuit Honor Society
- Marquette University, Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering (B.S.M.E.), 1998

### **Admissions**

- United States Patent and Trademark Office
- Wisconsin
- United States District Court, Eastern District of Wisconsin
- Supreme Court Wisconsin

### **Community Involvement**

- Chair, Michael Best Milwaukee Committee
- Coordinator of Michael Best's Milwaukee-area community involvement, fundraising, and volunteer efforts
- Chair, Michael Best Milwaukee United Performing Arts Fund (UPAF) Campaign, 2014-2015
- Chair, Michael Best Milwaukee United Way Campaign, 2014-2015
- St. Dominic's Auction Committee
- St. Dominic's 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Baseball Coach

### **Related News**

#### **PUBLICATION**

March 21, 2018

*Law360*

Michael Best Adds 4 Ex-Lathrop Gage IP Attys In Denver