



R. Henry Pfutzenreuter

Shareholder

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Henry Pfutzenreuter is a trial lawyer who represents businesses in high-stakes franchise, distribution, employment, and commercial litigation. Outside the courtroom, he combines his litigation experience with practical, client-focused guidance to develop creative solutions for mitigating risk and maximizing business objectives.

Henry represents a diverse range of clients—from closely held and publicly traded companies to emerging and international franchisors—guiding them through fast-moving, bet-the-company litigation with strategic insight, practical judgment, and aggressive trial preparation. From day one, he approaches every case with a disciplined, courtroom-focused strategy, leveraging early motion practice, emergency injunctive relief, and rigorous discovery, to position his clients for success before arbitrators, judges, and juries seated across the country.

For his franchisor clients, Henry relentlessly protects their brands, safeguarding business interests, reputation, and competitive edge, so they can focus on strengthening and growing their systems. When franchisees attempt to exploit knowledge and experience gained from franchisors to operate competing businesses, he enforces noncompete, nonsolicitation, and confidentiality agreements, as well as trademarks, trade secrets, and other intellectual property rights—often on expedited timelines where outcomes turn on preparation, credibility, and courtroom execution. When the franchise relationship breaks down, he defends franchisors against claims of sales misrepresentations, wrongful termination, and other alleged unfair practices. His litigation experience and deep understanding of franchising enables him to proactively counsel franchisors about best practices and risk mitigation strategies throughout the lifecycle of a franchise relationship—from sales and compliance to notices of default and termination.

Representative Experience

Henry prides himself on the variety of commercial litigation matters that he assists his clients with, including all types of contract disputes, sales under Article 2 of the Uniform Commercial Code, insurance recovery, enforcement of restrictive covenants, business torts such as tortious interference, misrepresentation, and defamation, as well as trade secret misappropriation and intellectual property infringement. He also has experience litigating employment disputes, including wrongful discharge, discrimination, retaliation, whistleblower, and wage and hour claims.

Services

- Business Litigation
- Employment and Labor Litigation
- Employment and Labor Law
- Franchise and Distribution
- Franchise Litigation
- Insurance Recovery and Advice
- Litigation
- Manufacturing
- Privacy and Data Security
- Intellectual Property and Technology Litigation

Franchise and Distribution Litigation

- **Sales Misrepresentation Claims.** Henry defended a national franchisor from its former franchisee's claims alleging that it misrepresented the financial performance of the franchise opportunity, resulting in an arbitrator awarding nothing to the franchisee.
- **Breach of Contract and Support Claims.** Henry represented a national franchisor in litigation brought by a group of franchisees alleging damages in excess of \$7 million dollars for breach of contract in connection with the operation of the franchise, including by compelling the franchisees to bring their claims separately in arbitration.
- **Franchise and Dealership Agreement Terminations.** Henry advises franchisors, manufacturers, and suppliers in issuing notices of default and termination to franchisees and dealers who have breached their agreements and defends claims of wrongful termination and unfair practices under state laws governing franchise relationships.
- **Noncompete Agreements.** Henry is regularly involved in enforcing franchise agreements' noncompete terms against current and former franchisees who attempt to take the knowledge and experience gained from franchisors and use it to operate their own competing businesses, both domestically and abroad.
- **Trademark Infringement.** Henry brought suit against a business that was knowingly and willfully using a franchisor's trademarks to market its own services.

Employment Litigation

- **Discrimination Claims.** Henry defends employers from claims under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, the Family and Medical Leave Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Age Discrimination Act, and the Minnesota Human Rights Act.
- **Noncompete and Confidentiality Claims.** Henry has enforced noncompete and confidentiality agreements against employees who attempt to leave their job to work for competitors and take customer lists, trade secrets, and other proprietary information with them.
- **Government Complaints and Investigations.** Henry counsels employers in responding to investigations and complaints filed with state and federal employment discrimination agencies like the Minnesota Department of Human Rights and the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Commercial Litigation

- **Software Disputes.** Henry represents developers, distributors, and purchasers of software in breach of contract, warranty, and misrepresentation claims involving both software products and services for implementation, support, maintenance, and custom development.
- **License Disputes.** Henry obtained an arbitration award protecting a software company's perpetual license to distribute the programming language used to develop its \$2 million per year product line.
- **Breach of Warranty Claims.** Henry represented a California lighting manufacturer in breach of warranty and fraud claims against a Fortune 500 manufacturer and distributor of LEDs.
- **Commercial Real Estate Transactions.** Henry successfully opposed a reluctant buyer's motion to enjoin the termination of a purchase agreement for the Rand Tower in downtown Minneapolis, forcing the buyer to close at the agreed-upon purchase price of \$18.65 million dollars.
- **Copyright Infringement.** Henry defended a start-up online service provider from claims of copyright infringement by a well-established national competitor.

Education

- University of Minnesota Law School (J.D., magna cum laude, 2010)
 - Managing Editor, Minnesota Law Review
- University of Minnesota (B.A., 2007)

Bar/Court Admissions

- Minnesota, 2010

Professional Affiliations

- American Bar Association
- Minnesota State Bar Association
- Hennepin County Bar Association
- Defense Research Institute
- Minnesota Defense Lawyers Association

Recognition

- U.S. Elite List, Commercial Disputes Rankings, Legal 500, 2025
- Legal Eagle, Top Franchise Lawyers in the U.S. and Canada, Franchise Times, 2021-present
- Rising Star®, Super Lawyers magazine, 2016-2025