Barbara M. Russell

Shareholder

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Practice Areas

Labor Management Relations
Transportation
Business Restructuring and M&A
HR Advice and Counsel
Investigations
Hospitality

Overview

Barbara M. Russell is a seasoned labor and employee relations practitioner with extensive experience advising executives and boards on complex labor strategy, workforce transformation, and employee engagement initiatives across industries and geographies.

Barbara brings a rare dual perspective as both outside counsel and in-house executive. Before returning to Littler, she served as a global Director of Employee Relations at a leading e-commerce, logistics, and technology company, where she built and led a global team supporting employees across the Americas, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia-Pacific. Her work included designing global labor and employment compliance programs, collective representation strategies, and large-scale workforce engagement and investigation frameworks.

Earlier in her career, Barbara was a founding member of an airline company's legal and people leadership teams, where she served as Associate General Counsel and later as Director of Teammate and Labor Relations. She played a key role in the airline's labor strategy from launch through its merger with another airline, leading initial collective bargaining negotiations and managing complex labor integration initiatives.

Barbara also served previously as Senior Legal Counsel for a waste management company, overseeing labor relations across the company's western region. Barbara began her legal career at Littler, where she became a shareholder and advised clients in the

transportation, manufacturing, hospitality, and other sectors.

Known for her pragmatic and people-centric approach, Barbara helps clients navigate their most critical labor-management challenges, from representation campaigns and collective bargaining to overarching labor relations strategy, workforce transitions, and organizational transformation.

She has worked with clients in the following industries:

- Aviation, transportation, and logistics
- Warehousing and manufacturing
- Hospitality and service
- Technology
- Environmental and waste services
- Start-up and high-growth operations

Representative Experience:

- Developed and led global employee and labor relations strategies for multinational operations across multiple continents
- Designed and implemented global compliance programs, collective representation strategies, and large-scale workforce engagement frameworks
- Guided employers through labor integration efforts, collective bargaining, and workforce transitions during mergers and organizational restructures
- Partnered with C-suite executives and boards to develop proactive labor relations, employee engagement, and risk mitigation strategies aligned with business goals
- Advised clients in transportation, hospitality, and technology sectors on complex labor law matters, investigations, and employment compliance

Recognition

- Named, Best Labor & Employment Lawyer*, Bay Area Corporate Counsel Awards*, 2013

Education

J.D., University of Michigan Law School, 1998
B.S., Cornell University School of Industrial and Labor Relations, 1993

Bar Admissions

California

Publications & Press

Littler Bolsters Labor Practice Group with the Return of Barbara Russell as a Shareholder in San Francisco
Press Release

November 3, 2025