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Services

Litigation and Dispute Resolution
Appeals
Commercial and Corporate
Litigation
Real Estate and Construction
Litigation
Intellectual Property
Intellectual Property Litigation

Industries

Craft Beverage Manufacturers
Manufacturing

Education

Ohio State University College of
Law, J.D., 2005
Michigan State University, B.S.,
2002

Bar Admissions

Illinois



Joseph M. Infante

Principal

Joseph Infante's practice focuses on complex commercial litigation and alcoholic beverage manufacturing regulation.

Joe has broad corporate litigation experience that includes representing clients in state and federal trial and appellate courts, as well as in mediation and arbitration proceedings. Joe regularly litigates contract disputes, non-compete agreements, trade secret disputes, employment issues, real estate lease and easement disputes, construction law and negligence law. By focusing on providing in-depth analysis of complex legal issues, Joe strives to advance the most appropriate course of action for his client's needs. In order to provide more complete representation for his clients, Joe obtained admission to practice before the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

Joe is the head of Miller Canfield's alcoholic beverage regulation team. In his practice, Joe serves as outside general counsel to numerous breweries, wineries and distilleries and advises them on the myriad of issues faced by companies operating in the highly regulated alcoholic beverage industry. This includes advising companies on distribution agreements and disputes, regulatory compliance, trademark issues, litigation, licensing, branding and many other areas. Joe's expertise in the alcoholic beverage world is highly sought after as he regularly speaks at state and national alcoholic beverage conferences and currently serves as the President of the Craft Beverage Lawyers Guild.

You can also follow Joe on Twitter: @alcoholbevatty

Joseph M. Infante

Michigan
U.S. Patent & Trademark Office

Court Admissions

U.S. Court of Appeals

- Sixth Circuit
- Seventh Circuit
- Ninth Circuit

U.S. District Courts

- Western District of Michigan
- Eastern District of Michigan
- Northern District of Illinois
- Southern District of Indiana

Representative Matters

Joe's experience includes:

- Drafting and negotiating dozens of craft beverage distribution agreements throughout the country.
- Assisting in the opening of numerous craft breweries, wineries and distilleries.
- Representing buyers in the purchase of Michigan craft brewery.
- Assisting client with sale of self-distribution rights to wholesaler.
- Negotiating license agreement between craft beverage producer and media company related to use of TV series IP for beverage products.
- Successfully representing clients before Michigan Liquor Control Commission in license denial appeals.
- Overseeing the growth of the Craft Beverage Lawyers Guild as its President.
- Successfully defending a craft beverage manufacturer in franchise termination litigation which resulted in the release of the franchise rights by the wholesaler.

Additional matters include:

- Successfully secured a landmark constitutional victory for a group of small, family-owned wineries on Michigan's Old Mission Peninsula, resulting in \$50 million in lost-profits damages being awarded to our clients after an 11-day federal bench trial challenging restrictive local zoning laws, and affirming constitutional protections for entrepreneurs everywhere, especially in the agriculture and craft beverage industries.
- Successfully resolved litigation between a beverage manufacturer and a wholesaler following the wholesaler's attempted sale of the beverage manufacturer's distribution rights without prior approval.
- Negotiated distribution agreements between beverage manufacturers and wholesalers across the country and across both franchise and non-franchise jurisdictions.
- Litigated a beverage distributor termination as a result of the distributor's failure to abide by the terms of the distribution agreement with a client brewery
- We represent a national insurance company in disputes arising under its health care plan, including defending the company and its insured in lawsuits filed by providers and plan beneficiaries.
- Assisted numerous breweries, wineries and distilleries through the complicated state and federal licensing process.

Joseph M. Infante

- Successfully appealed an adverse decision before an En Banc panel of the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals on behalf of a prisoner in a Section 1983 case resulting in a change in the law to apply federal law in spoliation cases and a remand of the case.
- Represented a start-up microbrewery through the licensing process and, ultimately, a successful appeal of a Liquor Control Commission license denial.
- Represented a winery/cidery in negotiations with the Department of Agriculture and obtained a successful determination that certain regulations were inapplicable to the client.
- Represented a brewery in litigation resulted in return of the brewery's property.
- Advised a large multi-state grocery chain on the process of transferring alcohol and tobacco inventory when closing a store and coordinated the transfer with the required state regulatory agencies.

Honors

Crain's Grand Rapids Business, Law Newsmaker of the Year, 2026

Michigan Lawyers Weekly, Leaders in the Law Class of 2024

Grand Rapids Business Journal, Top Lawyers: Food & Beverage, 2019 & 2022; Top Lawyers: Litigation, 2022; 40 Under 40 Business Leaders, 2016 & 2018

Grand Rapids Magazine, Top Lawyers, 2022-present:

Commercial Litigation

Food and Beverage Law

"Leading Lawyers in Michigan," Commercial Litigation; Government, Municipal, Lobbying & Administration; Intellectual Property Law, 2014-present

Michigan Super Lawyers, Business Litigation, 2013-present; Rising Star, 2011-2012

DBusiness Magazine, Top Lawyers, Food and Beverage Law, 2023

Award-winning homebrewer

Professional Activities

Federal Bar Association

State Bar of Michigan

Grand Rapids Bar Association

Michigan Brewers Guild

Joseph M. Infante

Brewers Association

Michigan Craft Distillers Association

President and co-founder – Craft Beverage Lawyers Guild

Civic, Cultural & Social Activities

Hospice of West Michigan Collaborative Board Member

Hospice of Michigan Barley, BBQ & Beats Fundraiser Co-Chair, 2016-present

Speeches

"Litigation Trends," Wine, Beer & Spirits Law Annual Conference, Denver, October 9, 2024

"Zoning Uncorked: Legal Perspectives on Winery Challenges and Other Issues in Navigating Modern Use Regulations," State Bar of Michigan Real Property Law Section Summer Conference, Traverse City, MI, July 18, 2024

"Are You a Craft Beer Aficionado?" Association of Corporate Counsel, October 27, 2021

Michigan Craft Brewery Industry Update, ACG Detroit, October 20, 2016

Brewery and Distillery Law, National Business Institute teleconference, April 19, 2016

Brewery Worker Health & Safety OSHA/MIOSHA Issues with Attorney Doug Crim, Michigan Brewers Guild Winter Conference, Kalamazoo, Michigan, January 14, 2016

"Prepare for the Regulators" with Attorney Douglas W. Crim, Craft Spirits Conference and Vendor Expo, Louisville, Kentucky, April 1, 2015

"Our Bumpy Ride to Opening a Brewery" with Land Grant Brewing Company, Ohio Craft Brewers Conference, Wooster, Ohio, February 5, 2015

"Brewery & Distillery Law: Practical Considerations for Advising Brewery & Distillery Clients," CLE International, Orlando, FL, September 18, 2014

"Brewery & Distillery Law," Thomson Reuters, Teleconference, September 11, 2014

"Distillery Regulatory Compliance": American Distilling Institute, Holland, Michigan, September 10, 2014

"Enforcing Your Non-Competes," Miller Canfield Cappuccino with Counsel Series, July 15, 2014

"Brewery and Distillery Law," National Business Institute Teleconference, June 19, 2014

"Protecting Your Brand," 2014 Michigan Grape & Wine Conference, Traverse City, Michigan, February 26, 2014

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Publications

PRESS

- "Judge revives federal lawsuit against Napa County by three wineries," Napa Valley Register, April 15, 2026
- "'Enough is enough': Kalamazoo-area restaurant sues township over what counts as an event," MLive, January 14, 2026
- "Litigation erupts — again — in Michigan's wine country over events, loud music," The Detroit News, December 9, 2025
- "A Northern Michigan winery is suing Peninsula Township — again," Crain's Detroit Business, December 3, 2025
- "Wineries offer to settle lawsuit," Traverse City Record-Eagle, October 30, 2025
- "Second insurer sues Peninsula Township over \$50M winery case," Crain's Grand Rapids Business, September 19, 2025
- "Old Mission wineries eye 'cautious' growth after \$50M court win," Crain's Detroit Business, August 25, 2025
- "A Michigan Town Clamped Down on Its Wineries. Now It Owes Them \$49 Million," Wall Street Journal, August 16, 2025
- "Michigan's wine country considers selling lighthouse to pay for \$50M lawsuit," MLive, August 6, 2025
- "Small town locked in \$50M brawl with wineries is forced to sell its beloved lighthouse to pay court fees," This is Money (section of the Daily Mail), August 6, 2025
- "Mission Point Lighthouse could be sold to cover township's \$50M winery judgment," Crain's Detroit Business, August 4, 2025
- "Peninsula Township Considers Measures from Shutting Down Departments to Selling Off Parkland in Response to Lawsuit Damages," theTicker, July 31, 2025
- "Napa's Aq Preserve Law at Risk," Wine-Searcher, July 14, 2025
- "Old Mission wineries near Traverse City awarded \$50M in fight over township restrictions," *Crain's Detroit Business*, July 7, 2025
- "Your Michigan beer may cost more thanks to Trump's trade war," MLive, March 13, 2025
- "40 Under 40 Business Leaders," *Grand Rapids Business Journal*, October 3, 2018
- "Craft brewers continue to eke out growth despite increased volatility," MiBiz, May 26, 2018
- "Inside Track: Brewing up a career," *Grand Rapids Business Journal*, Sept. 16, 2016
- "Alternating proprietorships could alleviate capacity constraints for craft brewers," MiBiz, Aug. 21, 2016

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"Homeland Security takes action against Grand Armory Brewing over trademark," *MiBiz*, Aug. 7, 2016

"An industry at a crossroads: Closely-held craft brewers — noted for fierce independence — weigh options for succession," *MiBiz*, Aug. 7, 2016

"Detroit's Atwater Brewery expands, looks to tap into national market," *Crain's Detroit Business*, July 13, 2016

"West Michigan's booming craft beer industry grapples with growth," *MiBiz*, May 29, 2016

"Miller Canfield's Infante helps launch national Craft Beverage Lawyers Guild," *MiBiz*, May 27, 2016

"Lager law: Attorneys' guild formed for craft brewers, others," *Chicago Tribune*, May 27, 2016

"Michigan's craft beverage industry could prove attractive for acquisitions," *MiBiz*, Jan. 24, 2016

"DeVos-held Windquest Group acquires Coppercraft Distillery of Holland," *MiBiz*, Jan. 22, 2016

Articles

Michigan Expands Development District Liquor License Availability

OSHA Injury & Illness Recording of Intoxicated Employee Injury

Michigan Legislature Loosens Restrictions on Microbreweries