

Rising Star: O'Melveny's Ryan Yagura

By **Samuel Howard**

Law360, New York (April 01, 2010) -- O'Melveny & Myers LLP's Ryan Yagura merges minute technical know-how with stellar legal counsel, making him the go-to attorney when titans of the technology sector, like Apple Inc., Samsung Electronics Co. Ltd. and Belkin International Inc., face high-stakes patent litigation and earning him a spot on Law360's list of 10 intellectual property lawyers under 40 to watch.

Since joining O'Melveny's Los Angeles office 12 years ago, Yagura, 38, has combined the technical wizardry that previously led him to work as an engineer at Intel Corp. with a litigator's steel, becoming a partner in the IP and technology practice and a fixture in the most visible patent disputes across the electronics industry.

Yagura boasts many of the technology field's most recognizable companies — and by extension, those most frequently targeted by competitors and patent-holders — as clients. None more so than Apple, whose signature products, like the iPhone, the iPod and iTunes, are constantly under fire.

While Yagura has cultivated an impressive client base, meriting perhaps a little swagger, his success is based less on bravura performances than on an acute awareness of how his skills can benefit a client at any one time.

"Younger attorneys need to capitalize on every opportunity to demonstrate their value to clients. You need to commit fully to the matter at hand, no matter the assignment," Yagura said. "One strong performance creates numerous other opportunities. Clients respond to great service and remember attorneys who go all out to meet their needs."

That thorough approach has led Yagura to become an instrumental member of Belkin's legal team. After he was brought in to address a particular patent issue in an antitrust case, that engendered other assignments, eventually establishing Yagura as a trusted advisor.

He has represented Belkin in 13 patent suits nationwide, dealing with technologies ranging from wireless networks to USB cables.



Not that the Yagura's engagements end with Apple and Belkin. He is also counsel for Samsung in cases involving microprocessor and digital television technology and represents one of the world's largest digital television manufacturers, Top Victory Electronics Co. Ltd., in an ongoing patent dispute at the U.S. International Trade Commission.

Yagura's talents bring him in on other major cases outside the IP bailiwick, and his expertise was never more appreciated than in Advanced Micro Devices Inc.'s landmark antitrust case against Intel.

With Yagura's experience in the microprocessor field, O'Melveny had on hand a litigator with a complete understanding of the technology in question and, Yagura's contributions to the case helped AMD secure a \$1.25 billion settlement.

While Yagura's technical understanding is an immense advantage, he prides himself on being a deft and effective litigator, being able to leverage his legal arts as much as his engineering background to bring clients results.

A minute comprehension of the technology alone isn't going to help a client, unless you can also provide top-notch legal counsel and a commensurate understanding of how the different aspects of a dispute, like the conduct of discovery, can bring about a desired end, Yagura said.

"It's important for the attorneys making day-to-day decisions in the case to delve into the technical details and understand the technology at issue as well as the nuances of the litigation strategy," Yagura said. "I'm always cognizant of how important every stage of the process is to attaining the client's goal and approach each stage as an opportunity to do what's best for their business, which is sometimes different from what's best for the lawsuit."

Headline-grabbing wins certainly attract clients, but Yagura believes the mainstay of any prominent practice, whether the lawyer is under 40 or not, is the client service aspect.

Not only must attorneys always be attentive to a client's business needs and litigate a case accordingly, they must also demonstrate their commitment by getting to know their clients on their own time, establishing a bedrock trust and offering counsel off the clock.

"First and foremost, attorneys are in a client service business," Yagura said. "Our job is to make clients' lives easier. That means being available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, no matter the time zone. No dark periods, no being out of reach, and no billing for every phone call.

Darin Snyder, chair of O'Melveny's intellectual property and technology practice within the litigation department, championed Yagura's exceptional abilities and affability, as well as O'Melveny's emphasis on giving younger attorneys substantial responsibility.

"Ryan's combination of technical expertise, litigation experience and business savvy has made him a trusted adviser to a number of marquee clients already at this early stage in his career," Snyder said. "Not to be overlooked, however, is the fact that he's as personable as he is talented — one more reason why his practice is in such high demand."



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