Overview

With automotive-related technologies evolving at the speed of light, protecting and defending intellectual property rights is top of mind for all OEMs and suppliers. To survive and thrive in our fast-paced global marketplace, automotive businesses need partners—like Dykema—with in-depth industry and strong technical knowledge and business and legal acumen to successfully protect their invaluable intellectual assets.

Named a “Go-to Law Firm” for intellectual property by general counsel at America’s top companies (Corporate Counsel, 2010), Dykema IP attorneys deliver solutions that safeguard the intellectual property rights of our automotive industry clients. We provide the full range of services to procure and protect the licensed, patented, trademarked and copyrighted innovations and ideas that define a brand. Many of our attorneys and patent agents have backgrounds in automotive and transportation technologies, and/or in mechanical, electrical and computer engineering, which enhance the depth of our knowledge and understanding of their business and legal issues.

We offer comprehensive and thought-leading counsel on intellectual property litigation, copyright, patent, trademark, licensing and trade secrets issues—involving nearly every major system associated with an automobile—as follows:

Licensing

Our team manages all aspects of domestic and foreign product licensing—from applications to enforcement—for a diverse group of automotive OEMs and suppliers. Because our clients do business throughout the world, Dykema has established a strong network of industry-experienced lawyers which enables us to cover licensing matters in countries around the globe.

Litigation

Dykema attorneys aggressively prosecute and defend matters arising from patent, trademark, copyright and licensing violations. We have litigated lawsuits involving seating, powertrain products, commercial vehicle and industrial hardware, steering wheels, tire pressure monitoring systems (TPMS) and many other automotive components and parts, on behalf of global manufacturers and all levels of suppliers. We have protected many famous automobile brands from dilution. While we always seek to settle issues out of court and avoid costly litigation, we will zealously try infringement cases to final resolution and through appeal when necessary.

Patents

Patents are monetized and leveraged in a manner never before seen. Cited as a “go-to” firm for patent prosecution by a Tier 1 supplier, Dykema leads the effort to find new ways to monetize our clients’ patent assets. In addition to preparing and prosecuting patents, we help build and manage worldwide portfolios, and design patent acquisition and monetization plans. As part of those efforts we engage in extensive due diligence programs, provide patentability and freedom-to-operate opinions, and when necessary, aggressively defend and enforce our clients’ patents.
Trademarks and Copyrights

We help our automotive clients protect their good names as well as other critical corporate assets. We handle the full brand cycle, from clearance and procurement to monitoring, enforcement and licensing. We help our clients identify their copyrightable materials and implement copyright registration and protection programs. We also regularly review our clients' advertising to ensure they are not engaged in acts of unfair competition. Once our clients’ intellectual property protection is set, we can assist our clients in using their brands and copyrights as leverage for licensing and secured transactions.

Experience Matters

Dykema’s automotive representation includes:

- Procuring patent protection covering components associated with virtually every major automotive system.
- Managing the infringement and anti-dilution trademark policing programs for a luxury brand automobile manufacturer. Dykema’s efforts have resulted in the shuttering of hundreds of diluting and otherwise infringing web sites as well as agreements restricting the use and registration of the trademark by third parties.
- Serving as trademark and unfair competition litigation counsel to an aftermarket automotive parts manufacturer, the financing arm of a global automaker, and other automotive industry clients.
- Successfully serving as patent counsel in defending a number of suits brought by non-practicing entities (NPEs) against automotive/transportation related clients—ending most in very early stages of litigation.
- Obtaining an injunction and $1 million damage award at trial for trademark infringement and unfair competition in favor of a machine tool manufacturer client and preserving the award on appeal.
- Filing and prevailing in numerous proceedings under the Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy, resulting in the transfer of many valuable domain names to a number of major automobile manufacturers.
- Negotiating software and patent licensing agreements for OEMs and Tier 1 suppliers.

Publications

“Successful Manufacturing Contracting—It’s More than Standard Terms and Conditions”  
February 2018  
Manufacturing Today

"Service and Software-based Revenue Streams to Sculpt Legal Activities"  
September 1, 2017  
Automotive World

“Who Will Own the Rights to Autonomous Cars?”  
July 26, 2017  
Legaltech News

"State of the Automotive Industry"  
October 17, 2012  
Dykema Publication

"The Buzz On Electric Vehicle Safety"  
February 14, 2012  
Law360

"The Legal Implications of the Disaster in Japan"  
July 3, 2011  
Autobeat Insider Perspectives

"Speed Bumps Ahead"  
May 20, 2011  
The Deal Magazine
"Regulation of the 'Connected Vehicle'—Issues and Models"
March 14, 2011
Product Safety & Liability Reporter, BNA

**Speaking Engagements**

*New PVC Regulations and the Implications on Customer/Supplier Pricing*, Motor Vehicle Metals and Resins Conference
Automotive Industry Outlook 2013
December 12, 2012

Autobeat Insider Conference: Getting it Right
September 20, 2012

Automotive Institute: Retail Auto Distribution Today
May 17, 2012

Automotive Institute: Legislative and Regulatory Issues Currently Impacting the Automotive Industry
April 18, 2012

*Blockbuster Developments in Class Action Litigation*, Co-Panelist, 22nd ABA Conference on Automotive Product Liability Litigation, Phoenix, Arizona
March 28-30, 2012

*Bridging the Divide: Plaintiff and Defense Counsel Mediation Summit*, Panel Co-Moderator and Co-Chair of Conference, 22nd ABA Conference on Automotive Product Liability Litigation, Phoenix, Arizona
March 28-30, 2012

March 28-30, 2012

Automotive Institute: Opportunity, Risk and Liability Social Channels
October 19, 2011

Autobeat Insider Conference
June 23, 2011