

Japan Practice by Kiyoko Kojima

日本チーム

The Japan Practice is one of several country- or region-specific groups at SGR providing legal services to our international clients.



What is the Japan Practice?

SGR's Japan Practice is primarily tasked with providing legal services to:

1. Japanese entities investing into the U.S. market;
2. U.S. entities investing into the Japanese or other Asian markets; and
3. Japanese enterprises already in the U.S. market.

We represent enterprises in a wide variety of industries, including automotive, chemicals, facilities/infrastructure, apparel, food processing, construction, logistics and warehousing, insurance, IT ventures, and others.

The Practice provides services in countless areas of the law, such as general corporate (entity formation, general compliance, etc.), discrete transactions (various agreements, real estate transactions, IP registration and prosecutions), day-to-day HR and corporate strategy matters, dispute resolution (negotiation, mediation, arbitration, litigation), and compliance matters (environmental, tax, antitrust, etc.).

Why is SGR a good fit for clients of the Japan Practice?

SGR's unique culture – collegial, collaborative, supportive and empathetic – makes it a particularly comfortable “home” for start-ups, middle market enterprises and closely held businesses. Often-times, the U.S. subsidiaries of foreign companies start out small, so we are a great fit for that.

However, make no mistake that we have the “horsepower” to service “blue chip companies” and household names as well, and we often do. As small U.S. subsidiaries grow into full-blown players in the local employment scene, with thousands of workers, we are there to support their

needs. SGR also has an incredibly diverse array of practice areas, thus creating a “one-stop shop” opportunity for our clients. Additionally, SGR has a favorable geographical platform, with a strong presence in the southeastern U.S., New York City, Los Angeles and Texas, all of which are

appealing areas for our Japanese clients.

The Japanese culture in general and Japanese enterprises in particular place a high premium on attention to detail, helpfulness and goodwill. We strive to deliver these benefits, at competitive rates, to our clients every day.

What does a typical day look like for the lawyers in the Practice?



- Listening to clients' business plans, intended strategies and desired results, and providing recommendations on details of entity formation (*i.e.*, what, where, when, why and how), taking into account supply routes, customer locations, and distribution networks.
- Discussing operational realities, including incentives (federal, state and local, both statutory and discretionary), workspace/real estate matters (greenfield projects, purchases, leases), personnel possibilities (including visa options), and potential permits/licensing and other compliance issues.
- Working hand in hand with clients on discrete transactional matters, such as mergers, asset purchases, joint ventures, licensing and distribution arrangements, IP ownership and use, etc.
- Providing counsel regarding day-to-day human resource issues (harassment or discrimination allegations, responding to EEOC, NLRB or OSHA filings, etc.) and operational and compliance matters. As the saying goes, “Deals come and go, but people are every day!”
- Vigorously representing clients in various forms of dispute resolution, whether by negotiating settlements informally, or in mediation, arbitration or litigation.

Do you encounter any particular challenges?

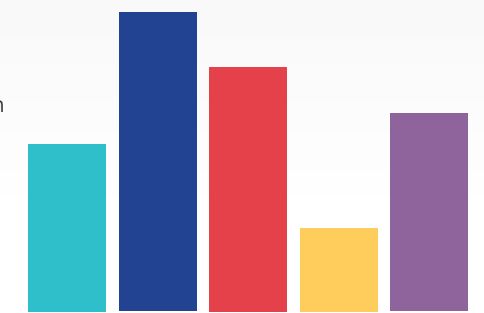
There are, of course, the realities of time zone differences and conference calls in the middle of the night. But the true challenge is working with clients to anticipate the legal hurdles that may come their way, or to properly react to any issue that presents itself, and to do so in a manner that is transparent, understandable and respectful of the clients' business operations, especially the bottom line.

In order to do this, we work very hard to quickly understand the context of any given situation – whether in an incentives negotiation or proposed merger, or in a dispute – and to share that insight with clients so that we can closely work together to better formulate a coherent, realistic strategy and devise efficient and workable methods for achieving the desired result.

DESCRIBE THE KINDS OF COMPANIES YOU WORK WITH.

We work with an incredibly diverse array of enterprises of all sizes, in countless industries and in various stages of maturity. Some are sales offices of a few people, while others are household names consisting of hundreds, if not thousands, of workers.

Depending on the industry, a client served by our Practice could have several hundred employees in a single or a few locations, or a handful of employees in dozens of locations. Workplaces can be manufacturing, warehouse or distribution centers, an office environment or outside sales. Each client is comprised of its unique background, current realities and operational objectives. We must understand each company individually to serve them effectively.



Kiyoko Kojima is a partner in SGR's Corporate Practice. He assists international companies in relocating, operating and establishing subsidiaries in the U.S. He also advises on incentives and site selection, real estate acquisitions and construction agreements, corporate formation and governance, regulatory compliance, and contracts of all types to help ensure a seamless U.S. launch or transition for his clients. kkojima@sgrlaw.com.