

Jessica Golden Cortes

Partner

212 468 4808

jcortes@dglaw.com



Areas of Focus

Labor + Employment | Employment Counseling and Training | Internal Investigations | Employment Litigation, Arbitration and Mediation | Non-Competes, other Restrictive Covenants, Trade Secrets and Raiding | Wage and Hour Law Compliance and Disputes

“It is my job to carefully lay out all potential benefits and risks to ensure my clients make decisions with their eyes open to potential reactions and consequences. I strive to stay actively in touch with clients to best assess their needs and ensure they are well informed on key legal developments at the federal, state and local level.”

Overview

Jessica Golden Cortes provides clients with comprehensive employment counsel, ensures their regulatory compliance, and resolves workplace disputes when they arise. Her clients include businesses of all sizes from startups to established multinational corporations in industries such as advertising, marketing public relations, finance, fintech and architecture, and nonprofit religious and education-focused organizations.

Jessica is well known for her ability to analyze issues from a legal, practical and business perspective and for devising creative, cost-effective solutions to workplace issues. Business managers and human resources professionals rely on her for guidance on day-to-day issues such as hiring, terminations, reductions in workforce, restrictive covenants, wage and hour issues, federal and state family and medical leave laws, and a host of other employment-related matters. She drafts customized employment policies and handbooks, and structures and enforces employment and separation agreements.

Clients from across the nation call on Jessica to conduct employment trainings on respect in the workplace, diversity, equity and inclusion, eliminating unconscious bias, manager best practices, and many other topics. When issues arise, Jessica manages internal investigations of employee complaints, represents her clients in hearings before administrative agencies, and asserts and defends their interests in federal and state courts, and in mediation and arbitration proceedings. Jessica has prevailed in wide-ranging employment cases including race, sex, age, disability, failure to hire, and other discrimination cases, and breach of contract disputes.

Recognizing that avoiding problems in the first instance is the best strategy, Jessica crafts client-specific workplace policies and procedures, and works proactively with clients to help them foster a work environment where employees thrive, workplace conflicts are addressed constructively, and the risk of employee claims is minimized.

Representative Experience

- Defended a leading social media platform in a pregnancy discrimination litigation initiated by third-party employee, resulting in settlement in our client's favor on the indemnification claim and efficient resolution of the underlying matter.
 - Represented a company in an investigation of same-sex harassment claim resulting in the termination of a senior executive. Partnered closely with third-party crisis public relations experts to mitigate fallout both internally and externally.
 - Selected by the Associate General Counsel of a city municipality to conduct mandatory anti-harassment trainings for all elected council members; also conducted a one-on-one anti-harassment training for member accused of sexual harassment.
 - Conducted an anti-harassment training and provided general employment counseling to an iconic independent New York bookstore, including relating to the impact of the pandemic on staffing.
 - Negotiated settlement of high-profile separation of Executive Director of prestigious school following extensive internal investigation, accomplishing swift resolution without detrimental impact to school's reputation.
 - Counseled nationwide advertising agency in diversity, equity and inclusion initiative, including designing and conducting customized employee survey and interviews following Black Lives Matter protests.
 - Represent a high-profile event space in all aspects of employment law, including issues related to hosting Fashion Week and implementation of gender-neutral dress code for event staff.
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Insights + Events

Event

BRIDGE24 – Inclusion Is Good For Business | The Impact of the SCOTUS Affirmative Action Decision on Business and the ways to Continue to Build towards Equity
May 6, 2024

Event

PR Council | HR Community Meeting
March 13, 2024

Report

Davis+Gilbert 2023 Public Relations Industry Trends Report
November 6, 2023

Event

Jewish Federations of North America | FedPro 2023 | “A Session on Labor Law with special emphasis on how to address employee concerns over the war in Israel”
November 5, 2023

Event

Practising Law Institute’s Employment Law Institute 2023 | “Gender Issues in the 2023 Workplace”
October 16, 2023

Emerging Issues, Event

Danos Group | Supporting Mental Health Practices in the Workplace
May 17, 2023

Emerging Issues, Event

Wesleyan Lawyers Association | Navigating Mental Health Accommodations in the Workplace
May 9, 2023

Alert

New York State Department of Labor Releases Updated Model Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy and Training Guidance
April 25, 2023

Event

Davis+Gilbert Webinar | Navigating Mental Health Accommodations in the Workplace
February 7, 2023

Podcast

New York County Lawyers Association Amicus Curiae Podcast | A Conversation Ending Forced Arbitration of Sexual Assault & Sexual Harassment Act of 2021
October 24, 2022

Report

Davis+Gilbert Public Relations Industry 2022 Survey Trends and Highlights
October 24, 2022

Event

Practising Law Institute | Gender Issues in the 2022 Workplace
October 12, 2022

Building Connections: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Event

The Women in Law Summit Series: The Inclusion & Equity Summit: East | Did You Really Just Say That? Recognizing and Managing Microaggressions
November 17, 2021

Building Connections: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Event

The Women in Law Summit Virtual Series: The Inclusion & Equity Summit: East | Did You Really Just Say That? Recognizing and Managing Microaggressions
November 17, 2021

Event

New York City SHRM Legislative and Legal Conference
October 28, 2021

Press Mention

PRovoke Media | PRovokeGlobal: 'Culture And Compensation Drive Everything'
October 26, 2021

Report

Davis+Gilbert Public Relations Industry 2021 Survey Trends + Highlights
October 2021

Building Connections: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Event

PRovoke Media's Global Public Relations Summit #PRovokeGlobal | The DEI Journey: Innovative and Authentic Actions Take Center Stage
October 25, 2021

Event, New Workforce Models Come With New Risks

ThinkLA | Return To Work: Discussion and Townhall
October 21, 2021

Event

2021 New York Law School Alumni Celebration | Employment Law Primer on the Current State of the COVID Era
October 15, 2021

Credentials

Education

Fordham University School of Law (J.D., 2001)
Wesleyan University (B.A., with high honors, 1998)

Distinctions

- *The Best Lawyers in America*® 2024, Employment Law: Management
- *Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers for Business*® 2012-2016, New York Labor & Employment
- *The Legal 500 United States*® 2013-2021 and 2023, Labor and Employment: Workplace and Employment Counseling
- *New York Metro Super Lawyers*® 2018-2023, Employment & Labor
- *New York Metro Super Lawyers*® "Rising Stars" 2013-2016, Employment & Labor
- *SmartCEO Magazine's CPA & ESQ Awards* 2015, Esquire Industry Practice: New York

Bar Admissions

New York

Court Admissions

U.S. District Court Southern District of New York

U.S. District Court Eastern District of New York

U.S. Court of Appeals Second Circuit

Associations

Member, Davis+Gilbert Growth and Planning Committee

Member, Davis+Gilbert Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee

Member, Society for Human Resource Management

Member, NYC Society for Human Resource Management

— Chair, Legal & Legislative Committee

President, Wesleyan Lawyer's Association