

Todd A. Van Thomme

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DES MOINES OFFICE

An inventor and entrepreneur, Todd Van Thomme’s experience with his own start-up company helps him understand both the legal challenges and the day-to-day issues of running a business.

In his [intellectual property](#) practice, Todd partners with clients to identify and collaborate on mechanical, chemical, nutraceutical, pharmaceutical, and food science-related intellectual property needs. He drafts and prosecutes both utility and design patent applications. He also drafts patentability, non-infringement, and invalidity opinions, especially for patents and patent applications. He counsels clients on how to avoid IP disputes and works with clients to resolve them when they do occur. Todd also prepares, files and prosecutes trademark applications.

“Because they are inventors and innovators, I get to work with some of the smartest people on the planet every day,” Todd says. “In their fields, they’re absolutely brilliant. We develop relationships, and they teach me about their inventions. Many times my clients become some of my closest friends.”

His combination of legal and entrepreneurial experience brings unexpected benefits for clients. As a former secondment in-house counsel for Whirlpool Corp. and the inventor and owner of Giftzapz, a unique patent pending gift list-sharing app, Todd has gained a client’s perspective of a business. As a result, he understands the importance of legal and business advice that is both strategic and cost-effective.

He talks about benefits and risks with his clients—offering them the choices available and providing recommendations—without forcing a decision on them. “Often, I internalize the client’s problem,” he says. “I become vested in their problems—and finding solutions.”

As president of the Association of Intellectual Property Firms, Todd developed close personal relationships with thought leaders in the larger intellectual property legal community around the world. He uses those personal connections to aid clients in protecting their IP worldwide, taking a globally strategic view of patent and trademark prosecution.

That mix of experiences helps Todd achieve his main goal: partnering with his clients to identify and strategically protect their IP assets, brands, products, and processes. “Every new product is dear to its creator,” Todd says. “I endeavor to help them protect it the best I can.”

RECOGNITION

The Best Lawyers in America®

2016–2023

Client Choice Award—USA & Canada, IP—Patents in Iowa

2017, 2021



PRACTICE AREAS

- [Intellectual Property](#)
- [Copyrights](#)
- [Licensing](#)
- [Patents](#)
- [Trademarks & Legal Brand Management](#)

EDUCATION

- Iowa State University (B.S., Chemistry)
- Drake University (J.D., with honors)

BAR ADMISSIONS

- Iowa
- Michigan
- U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, Registered Patent Attorney

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Price Heneveld LLP
- Whirlpool Corporation, Secondment Intellectual Property Counsel

IAM Patent 1000

Recommended

CLIENT REFERENCES:

“Todd is extremely responsive and collaborative. On numerous occasions, Todd has listened to my needs as in-house counsel and has customized his work product to incorporate my feedback. I encourage others to consider Todd for great results and a good value.”

—Vince Egolf, director—IP and Products Counsel, Bissell Homecare, Inc.

“Todd is highly creative and an insightful attorney committed to timely and detailed deliverables that assist his clients to maximize the value of their protected innovations.”

—Kirk Goodwin, chief patent counsel, North American Region & senior counsel, Global Information Systems, Whirlpool Corporation

“I’ve had the pleasure to work with Todd for about three years. He and his firm have worked on dozens of patent applications for our company in various technology areas. The work is of high quality and the relationship works well with good give and take. I heartily endorse Todd’s services.”

—Steven Kuehl, principal technologist, Whirlpool Corporation

“I have worked with Todd for a number of years on various patents and trademarks. Todd is great at explaining the patent and trademark legal process. I have greatly appreciated his commonsense approach in regard to legal expenditures related to patents and trademarks. I would highly recommend to anyone needing legal advice for patents and trademarks to work with Todd.”

—Michael Sorenson, president and GM, Milne Fruit Products Inc.

“I have worked with Todd for a number of years on a variety of projects, and I can verify that he is 100 percent professional and always a pleasure to collaborate with. He goes the extra mile in terms of learning as much as he can to make sure he fully understands our business objectives as well as the markets in which we operate. I would recommend Todd without reservation for any IP-related project; you will get top-notch advice, very fair pricing, and timely attention.”

—Mike Callahan general counsel/director of operations, Stiles Machinery, Inc.

“For the past four years, Todd has been the primary IP counsel for OrVance. In that time, I have worked with Todd on U.S. and international copyrights, copyright infringement letters, multiple patents, and discussions with patent examiners. With Todd’s guidance and expertise, OrVance has been successful in all of these matters. Todd’s ability to listen, his technical background, his attention to detail, and his first-rate character have been and continue to be an important part of OrVance. Having worked with multiple IP attorneys over the years, I would put Todd at the top of my list.”

—Mike Silver, managing partner, director of technical affairs and operations, OrVance LLC

PROFESSIONAL & COMMUNITY AFFILIATIONS

[Association of Intellectual Property Firms](#)

President, 2010–2012

[Institute of Food Technologists](#)

- Food Laws and Regulatory Division, Chair, 2022-2023
- Iowa Section, President, 2019-2020
- Iowa Section, President-Elect, 2018-2019

- Iowa Section, Member at Large, 2016–Present
- Section Leadership Forum, Attendee, IFT Annual Meeting and Food Expo, 2017
- Great Lakes Section, Outstanding Section Volunteer, 2015
- Great Lakes Section, Treasurer, 2014–2015
- Great Lakes Section, Scholarship Committee Chair, 2013

[Leadership Iowa](#)

Graduate LI 37, 2018-2019

[American Intellectual Property Law Association](#)

[Iowa Intellectual Property Law Association](#)

[AgriTech Accelerator](#)

Mentor, 2019

[American Bar Association](#)

[Iowa Bar Association](#)

[Michigan Bar Association](#)

[Michigan Intellectual Property Law Association](#)

[Opera Grand Rapids](#)

Board Member, 2009–2015

[Iowa Rush Soccer Club](#)

U10 Boys Coach, 2019

[Grand Rapids Area Soccer Association](#)

Soccer Coach, 14- to 18-year-olds

[American Youth Soccer Organization](#)

Soccer Coach, 5- to 12-year-olds

REPRESENTATIVE PATENTS

8,062,710

Vegetable oil-based coating and method for application

8,048,459

External coating composition for toaster pastries and other pastry products

8,043,643

Coated cereal pieces

8,020,360

Device to produce a modified atmosphere for food preservation

8,015,937

Continuous feed tablet coating system

7,998,512

Dough-enrobed foodstuff

7,992,604

Ripsaw stabilizing device

7,989,647

Polyols derived from a vegetable oil using an oxidation process

8,991,794

Humidifier utilizing filtered water to Keith Boonstra

9,522,354

Filter assemblies and methods for producing filter assemblies to John Zurliene

9,987,103

Orthodontic protection device to OrVance, LLC

SPEECHES & PUBLICATIONS

Todd speaks frequently at the ISU Startup Factory and at Iowa State University.

"Getting to Know Todd Van Thomme"

[Food Technology Magazine](#), July/August 2020

"Pathways to Patents" program, [Western Carolina University](#)

Sylva, NC, October 23, 2019.

Global Innovation Forum with [Kenneth Ma](#), [Robin Browne](#), [Stephen Yang](#), [Ricardo Pinho](#), and [Victor Garrido](#)

Startup Factory, Ames, October 21, 2019

Patent Drafting Webinar: Trends, Reality, and Avoiding Rejections

LexisNexis/[IP Watchdog](#), November 9, 2017

"Significant Intellectual Property Agreements Every Business (and IP) Lawyer Should be Aware of"

Business Section of the Iowa Bar, October 9, 2019

Patent Drafting Webinar: Tips for Avoiding and Arguing 112 Rejections,

LexisNexis/[IP Watchdog](#), April 25, 2019

2014 IP Solutions Conference

June 2014, keynote panel member

"Must Have Apps for IP Lawyers"

Annual Meeting, Association of Intellectual Property Firms, 2014

"The Leahy-Smith America Invents Act"

Intellectual Property Law Center's 5th Anniversary Gala, Drake University, February 2012, panel speaker

["Changes Are on the Way in U.S. Patent Law"](#)

West Michigan Business Review, November 2011

"A Year of Evolution"

World Intellectual Property Review, Digest 2010

"When Food Science Becomes Intellectual Property"

Food Product Design, August 2008

