



Five Nationally Ranked Food and Beverage Attorneys Expand Spencer Fane Services in the Alcohol Industry

Spencer Fane is pleased to announce that [Hannah Becker](#), [Richard Blau](#), [Valerie Haber](#), [Alexis Mason](#), and [Lauren Voke](#) have joined the firm, bringing nationally ranked food and alcohol beverage law practices to the firm's established Tampa, Florida, office while also expanding its reach into Miami.

The five attorneys represent clients across all tiers and product segments of the alcohol beverage industry, including manufacturers, importers, suppliers, wholesalers, distributors, retailers, other licensees, investors, nontraditional entrants, and unlicensed third-party service providers.

The firm's new colleagues provide strategic, cross-industry guidance on federal, state, and local laws and regulations governing the production, importation, distribution, promotion, sale, service, and consumption of alcohol beverages, also working in similar capacities with food, tobacco, hemp, cannabis, lottery and gaming, fuel, and other regulated products. Hannah, Richard, Valerie, Alexis, and Lauren are widely recognized as leading counsel for investors, established alcohol industry companies, and businesses seeking entry into the sector, particularly for their extensive experience advising on complex mergers and acquisitions. The team also brings deep knowledge of multistage, multi-location regulated product licensing matters, including new location approvals, franchise and ownership transfers, changes in officers and directors, licensed premises modifications, and other related regulatory and license filings.

"One of the many reasons Spencer Fane caught our attention is the unique way the firm encourages collaboration and has built a platform designed for integration. It has been clear from the beginning that collegiality and multi-disciplined

collaboration on a nationwide platform are core components of the firm's success," said Richard, who will lead the group in launching the firm's Food and Beverage Market Team. "Our Food and Beverage team will bring focused, industry-specific strengths to a complex regulatory environment, and looks forward to connecting with the firm's broader regulated products platform to deepen relationships and deliver even more value to clients."

The team maintains a nationally recognized track record for handling complex matters within the highly regulated food and beverage industries. For example, *Chambers USA* has continuously recognized Richard and his colleagues with national rankings in the prestigious legal publication's "Food & Beverages: Alcohol" category; in fact, Blau is the only attorney in the U.S. to have been ranked Band 1 National for the "Food & Beverages: Alcohol" category every year since 2008. Furthermore, *Chambers USA* highlights clients praising members of the team for "unparalleled expertise, business common sense and well-honed client service skills," while also noting their "powerful command of the industry and where [clients] play in the industry."

"In launching a Food and Beverage Market Team, this group immediately reflects the firm's commitment to organizing around client needs and delivering practical value in highly regulated industries," Spencer Fane Chair [Patrick J. Whalen](#) said. "True to our market team structure, the team will be positioned to collaborate across the firm's 90+ market teams, helping their clients capture additional value through coordinated insights, shared experience, and a deeply connected platform."

Hannah, Richard, Valerie, Alexis, and Lauren are prolific industry speakers and authors, regularly presenting at national trade conferences and providing insights for a diverse assortment of publications. They are also proactive legal, business, and community advocates, participating in and holding leadership positions across dozens of associations and nonprofits.

Pertinent to supporting clients and expanding services in South Florida business communities, Valerie and Alexis are fluent in Spanish and Hannah maintains a working proficiency. Valerie is also fluent in French.

The five lateral additions join Spencer Fane as it maintains its standing as the fastest-growing law firm in the nation per the *AmLaw 200*, with a strong commitment to intentional, culture-led hiring throughout this endeavor. In addition, the firm's focus on attorney empowerment, autonomy, and professional development has resulted in increased innovation consistently recognized by clients and external industry sources alike.

ABOUT THE ATTORNEYS

Hannah Becker

Hannah's cutting-edge practice is marked by her energetic, detail-oriented approach to licensure and permitting, labeling, advertising, trade practices, product classification, importation and distribution agreements, Tied-House and cross-tier issues, and alcohol franchise laws. Frequently distinguished for her prowess in the emerging technology space and new regulated product categories, she carefully monitors market trends to provide sound, forward-thinking advice on best practices for commercial and operational aspects of a client's business, including sales facilitation, delivery apps and platforms, artificial intelligence, central distribution centers, and mobile driver's licenses and digital IDs. She also provides regulatory and licensing support for transformative mergers and acquisitions in the hospitality industry.

After earning her bachelor's degree *magna cum laude* from the University of Florida, Hannah obtained her Juris Doctor from The George Washington University Law School.

Richard Blau

An industry trailblazer with more than 40 years of experience as a litigation and administrative law attorney, Richard will chair the Spencer Fane Food and Beverage Market Team. He advises some of the largest drink companies in the world and represents regional and national multi-location licensees across the U.S. in alcohol beverage, tobacco, and lottery licensing; health and food service inspection compliance; responsible vendor and employee training; trade regulation; administrative proceedings; and litigation and dispute resolution. Through a track

record of successful litigation outcomes, he has set some of the most important industry precedents in alcohol beverage regulation, including imposing constitutional limits on the application of a state beer franchise law and defining “brand extension” under Florida law. In addition, he works with state and federal government representatives to draft proposed legislation and administrative rules on behalf of both clients and regulators.

Richard completed his bachelor’s degree at Brandeis University and earned his Juris Doctor from Georgetown Law, where he served as the associate editor for topics for the *Georgetown Law Journal*. Additionally, he served for several years as the chairman of the American Bar Association’s (ABA) Committee on Beverage Alcohol Practice and was recently appointed the ABA’s Advisor to the Alcohol Direct Shipping Compliance Act Committee of the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws.

Valerie Haber

With a focus on alcohol beverage development, licensing, and promotional activities, Valerie regularly works with wineries, breweries, distilleries, wholesale distributors, national restaurant groups, supermarkets, movie theaters, and other retailers. Her promotional activities counsel – for both alcohol industry members and unlicensed third parties – includes sampling, working with promoters or influencers, general advertising, and social media. Her work often intersects with the government lobbying, intellectual property, and real estate industries, in which she is well-versed in areas such as health department licensing, food law permitting, and land use and zoning diligence and approvals.

Valerie completed her bachelor’s degree at Duke University and, following a career in hospitality and entertainment marketing, earned her Juris Doctor *magna cum laude* from the University of Miami School of Law.

Alexis Mason

Combining broad experience in both corporate law and regulated products, Alexis advises alcohol beverage, cannabis, and food industry clients on trade regulation and compliance. A significant portion of her practice focuses on mergers and

acquisitions in the regulated products space, in which she regularly manages transactions in the multimillion- to multibillion-dollar range. Earlier in her career, she served as in-house counsel to a technology company, gaining in-depth experience advising stakeholders on local, state, and federal regulations applicable to a wide variety of business models and associated logistics.

After obtaining her bachelor's degree *magna cum laude* from the University of Southern California, Alexis earned her Juris Doctor *magna cum laude* from the University of Miami School of Law.

Lauren Voke

Lauren advises individual and corporate clients on compliance, licensing, and large-scale transactions in highly regulated markets with a focus on the alcohol beverage system, where she brings a foundational understanding of all three tiers, tied-house issues, trade practice compliance, and alcohol licensing. Her tailored strategies have yielded a track record of optimal, effective solutions for a wide range of clients, from small startups to global organizations. As former in-house corporate counsel, she adeptly guides clients through all aspects of corporate governance, contract negotiation, lobbying, intellectual property, and regulatory compliance. She also regularly guides clients through multimillion-dollar mergers and acquisitions, ensures compliance with post-transaction regulatory requirements nationwide, and oversees large-scale licensing projects.

Lauren completed her bachelor's degree *magna cum laude* at the University of Alabama before earning her Juris Doctor from Nova Southeastern University College of Law.