

Ex-EBay General Counsel Returns To Cooley After 17 Years

By **Melissa Daniels**

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After spearheading legal affairs for one of Silicon Valley's early pioneers through nearly two decades of technological change and numerous patent and acquisition issues, eBay's former general counsel Mike Jacobson is heading back to his roots in private practice at Cooley LLP, the firm announced Monday.

Jacobson, who argued key internet and intellectual property cases and handed legal affairs for eBay from 1998 through 2015, is rejoining Cooley as of counsel in the business department at its Palo Alto office. He told Law360 he looks forward to helping Cooley's clients navigate their legal issues using lessons from his own experience.



Michael Jacobson

Over the course of his 17 years at eBay, Jacobson headed up a 400-person legal team and navigated the company through its 1998 IPO, its 2002 \$1.5 billion acquisition of PayPal and its \$2.6 billion acquisition and later sale of Skype.

"I've experienced just about every kind of crisis you can imagine over the years, and it is immediately reassuring when something comes up to be able to say to a client, 'You know, I've been there. Here's what happens. Here's what you're feeling. Don't worry about it,'" he said.

Mike Lincoln, chair of Cooley's business department, praised Jacobson as "a legal luminary in the technology world" and called him one of the longest-serving general counsels in Silicon Valley.

"We are excited to welcome him back to Cooley, where the legal and business insights he developed as a leader at one of the most prominent and revered technology companies will be a highly valued asset to our public and private company clients alike," Lincoln said in a news release.

Jacobson was a partner at Cooley when he left to join eBay, where he would go on to serve as senior vice president, general counsel and secretary. By his own recollection, Jacobson was the 96th employee eBay hired; when he left, it was a Fortune 200 company with more than 35,000 employees, he said.

Working in Silicon Valley across 17 years gave Jacobson a front-row seat to transformational advances in internet technology and associated issues. This experience and ability to adapt, he said, gives him a broad experience to draw from to help advise future clients.

“The internet when people accessed it by modem was very different than when people accessed it by broadband, and for the last five years, the vast majority of access comes from mobile,” Jacobson said. “That technological change actually meant that the issues and the things you needed to do are quite different.”

Jacobson won several key cases on behalf of eBay including patent case eBay v. MercExchange, trademark case Tiffany v. eBay and eBay v. Bidder’s Edge, which involved trespass as applied to the internet.

“I really like getting tough problems and helping solve them,” Jacobson said. “I’m looking forward to doing that on behalf of Cooley’s clients moving forward.”

Adding Jacobson is the latest in a series of hires in recent weeks, including Colm Murphy at the counseling and prosecution practice in London and former Dentons privacy and cybersecurity group co-chair Andy Roth at the privacy and data protection group in New York.

The firm further expanded its private equity group in early May when it hired Ron Hopkinson, Stephen Rosen and Eric Schwartzman at the firm’s New York, London and Palo Alto offices.

Cooley, which has 900 attorneys across 12 U.S. offices, works with clients on litigation, deals, intellectual property and regulatory matters.

Jacobson earned his law degree from Stanford Law School where he was a Nathan Abbot Scholar and a member of the Order of the Coif. He graduated from Harvard University magna cum laude with a bachelor’s degree in economics.

--Editing by Philip Shea.