



By Rebecca Larsen

# The Frutkin Law Firm, PLC

One reason why Hooman Nikzad, owner of National PEO in Scottsdale, refers business acquaintances to The Frutkin Law Firm is that principal Jonathan Frutkin always looks at businesses from the client's point of view.

"So many lawyers I've worked with say to you first of all, 'No, you can't do that,'" said Nikzad. "But Jon asks me, 'What is it you want to do?' and 'Here is what you can do about it.'"

Providing businesses with the expertise that leads to success comes naturally to the firm, Frutkin said, because he comes from a family of lawyers who like to run and own businesses.

"I grew up in a family of lawyers and a family of tailors, originally from Ohio," Frutkin said. His great-grandparents had a tailoring business; then his grandfather became a lawyer in 1931 and married a young woman, his grandmother, who became a lawyer as well. Together the couple practiced at their own firm, Frutkin & Frutkin.

Frutkin's father, Harvey, now a senior counsel with his son's firm in Phoenix, was until recently the president of a Cleveland law firm that had a staff of 40 attorneys. He has been practicing law for more than 35 years.

"When Jonathan started his firm, I thought what a wonderful opportunity it would be to come out here and



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work with him,” said Harvey Frutkin.

“I told my father that moving to Arizona would be a great opportunity not just to work with me but to help build this law firm,” said Jonathan. “And he could spend more time with his grandkids.”

Harvey is well known to lawyers throughout the nation for his many books and articles on taxation, trusts and estate planning. His expertise makes him a great asset to local businesses and to business people nationwide. In fact, Ken Philip of Philip & Co. Inc., a national business turnaround consulting firm based in Cleveland and a client of Harvey Frutkin’s for many years, still uses his expertise now that Harvey is in Phoenix. “We have a very strong relationship,” Philip said, “and the quality of his work and advice is superior.”

Before opening his Phoenix area firm in 2008, Jonathan Frutkin was general counsel and also chief operating officer for Doceus Inc. in Washington, D.C., a leading provider of Internet software for associations and non-profits. He also served as managing partner of an area development company for a national franchise chain, worked in residential rehabilitation and was previously an associate at the Cleveland law firm of Kahn, Kleinman, Yanowitz and Arnson, a regional practice recognized for its work with entrepreneurs and private and public companies.

The firm he founded in Phoenix concentrates on assisting businesses with all aspects of commercial law including taxation, asset protection, wills, trusts and estates and litigation needs. But because of the current economic climate, a key focus has become helping businesses with insolvency and bankruptcy issues.

“We’re known for helping businesses restructure and families rebuild,” said



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Frutkin. “We work with clients who are going through some of the most troubled times in their lives, difficulties that occurred not because of anything they did but because of the economy. It’s one of the most difficult areas of law because of the personal challenges that go with it. It’s similar to divorce, but worse because no one involved in this situation is there by choice.”

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Frutkin said his firm succeeds in helping clients handle these financial hurdles because the firm's attorneys understand what it means to run a business and to deal with the cycles in the economy.

"I've seen both ends of it," he said. "I ran a successful software company and a development firm. I have also had the real life experience of running a business with problems. So I have unique sympathy for entrepreneurs for whom things go badly."

But Frutkin's optimism about the Arizona economy is growing: "We see business transactions picking up – particularly in the buying of businesses and buildings. In the next year or two, things will be on the way to getting back to the way they were."

In that vein, Frutkin has worked extensively on breathing new life into a law and technology committee for the Arizona Technology Council. "We took what was a dormant committee and transformed it into a core for helping attorneys in the technological area," he said.

"Lawyers in Arizona have mainly been in the real estate world until now. Technology is the next way that Arizona could grow."

Jonathan has quickly become a big fan of Arizona sports teams. "Maybe because I spent all those years in Cleveland where the last time they won a championship was in 1964," he said. He himself has also played in the championship event of the World Series of Poker four times in Las Vegas.

The firm now has six attorneys on board, including Frutkin and his father. The other senior counsel on staff is Carolyn Tatkin, who has practiced 25 years in business and commercial law, bankruptcy and general civil litigation. About 90 percent of her cases currently involve consumer and business bankruptcies.

"We offer free initial consultations for people who are often at their wit's end, who never thought they'd be filing for bankruptcy," she said. "Hopefully when they leave that first meeting they have some knowledge that can make them feel better."



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## At a Glance

**Focus of the firm:** To provide exceptional legal representation to clients throughout Arizona in business and corporate law and related areas, ranging from taxation and asset protection to estate planning.

**Firm:** 6 attorneys: includes Senior Counsel Carolyn Tatkin and Harvey Frutkin (Jonathan Frutkin's father) as well as three associate attorneys: Shannon E. Hennessey, Matthew J. Linn, and David Epstein

**About the Principal:** Jonathan Frutkin

**Education:** University of Virginia Law School

**Hometown:** Cleveland, Ohio

**Family:** wife, Tara and two sons, Alexander and Samuel

**Reasons for Starting Your Own Firm:** "I've had broad experiences understanding the needs of business owners. I want to create a law firm responsive to those needs, while providing quality legal representation and outstanding client communication."

### THE FRUTKIN LAW FIRM, PLC

**Contact information:**

101 North First Avenue, Suite 2410  
Phoenix, 85003

14362 N. Frank Lloyd Wright Blvd. Suite 1000  
Scottsdale, 85260

1820 E. Ray Road  
Chandler, 85225

12725 W. Indian School Road  
Avondale, 85392

**Phone: (602) 606-9300 • Fax: (602) 606-9351**

**Web site: [www.frutkinlaw.com](http://www.frutkinlaw.com)**

Tatkin went to work at the firm because she was impressed with Jonathan Frutkin's entrepreneurial abilities.

"Even though it's a young firm, I really believe he can take it places," she said.

Frutkin enjoys helping client companies grow: "I like start-ups and the areas of capital formation, raising money and doing mergers and acquisitions."

The firm has three associates: Shannon E. Hennessey, with more than 12 years of law firm experience, working in bankruptcy, juvenile law and civil litigation; Matthew J. Linn, who has an M.B.A. in addition to his law degree and has worked in the securities industry; and David Epstein, who has both a J.D. and L.L.M. in taxation.

Both Epstein, who joined the firm recently, and Tatkin have ties to Cleveland.

"Believe it or not," Jonathan Frutkin said, "Carolyn, David and I all went to the same high school – Orange High School, although we attended many years apart. After they were hired, we had to change one password on our bank account because it used to be the name of our high school mascot – the Orange Lions. I didn't think that half the staff should know the password."