

MVP: Skadden's Steve Sunshine

By **Corey Rothauser**

Law360 (October 24, 2024, 11:32 AM EDT) -- Steve Sunshine, global head of antitrust at Skadden, led a team representing Activision Blizzard through its \$69 billion acquisition by Microsoft and secured the dismissal of major antitrust claims for Apple, earning him a spot among the 2024 Law360 MVPs.

His biggest accomplishment this year:

Sunshine said among his most significant accomplishments of the year was leading his team to a major defense win for Apple in a high-stakes antitrust case.

The case, brought by California Crane School Inc., accused Apple and Google of conspiring to divide the search market in violation of the Sherman Act. Sunshine, serving as global lead counsel, argued that the claims lacked sufficient evidence, leading to their dismissal without leave to amend.

Reflecting on the case, Sunshine noted it required intensely focused and evolving legal strategies to overcome the ongoing challenges.

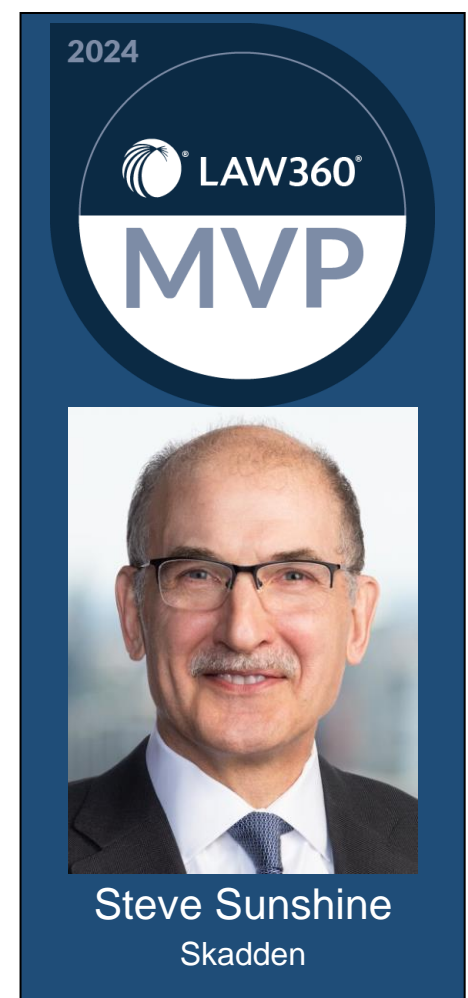
"I argued the motion to dismiss six times because it kept coming back in different forms," Sunshine said. "To finally secure a full dismissal for Apple was incredibly rewarding, especially given the stakes."

For Sunshine, the win was not just about the legal outcome but about being a trusted adviser for one of the world's largest tech companies. "Apple has always been a major client, and knowing they rely on us for their most complex legal challenges is a point of pride for me," he added.

His proudest moment this year:

One of Sunshine's proudest moments of the year came from his leadership in the \$69 billion acquisition of his client Activision Blizzard by Microsoft, a deal that spanned multiple regions and faced significant regulatory challenges.

"Coordinating a global team across 15 jurisdictions and navigating the FTC's fierce opposition was an



incredible challenge," Sunshine said. "To finally get the approval, especially after a hard-fought trial where the judge sided with us on nearly every measure, was immensely rewarding."

For Sunshine, the deal was not just about the legal victory but also the personal satisfaction of building a cohesive legal team to close the monumental transaction successfully. "It was an enormous global fight, and seeing the pieces come together after months of intense work was a proud moment for me and the entire team," he added.

Why he's an antitrust attorney:

Sunshine did not originally plan to become an antitrust lawyer, but the course of his career led him there. Initially focused on mergers and acquisitions, he discovered his passion for antitrust law during a summer associate rotation, during which he found the work far more engaging than he expected.

"I found it fascinating," Sunshine said. "It's a unique blend of law, business, and economics, and I enjoy the complexity of it."

What motivates him:

Sunshine is driven by the intellectual challenges and high-stakes nature of his work. "What motivates me is the complexity of these global deals and the opportunity to solve difficult problems for our clients," he said.

Recently, Sunshine led the \$30 billion sale of Splunk Inc. to Cisco Systems, navigating regulatory scrutiny and coordinating teams across multiple jurisdictions. His expertise was crucial in addressing the evolving AI regulatory framework and ensuring the transaction's success.

"It's incredibly rewarding to see all the pieces come together on such large, intricate deals," he added.

His advice for junior attorneys:

Sunshine advises associates to think critically about their assignments, view them in the broader context of solving client problems, and to think creatively when presented with legal challenges. This mindset, he believes, accelerates career growth and sets junior attorneys on the path to becoming trusted client advisers.

"What I really encourage new lawyers to do is not think of work as a series of homework assignments. Try to understand the big problem we're solving for the client and think creatively about how your work fits into that," Sunshine said.

--As told to Corey Rothausser. Editing by Vaqas Asghar.

Law360's MVPs are attorneys who have distinguished themselves from their peers over the past year through high-stakes litigation, record-breaking deals and complex global matters. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2024 MVP winners after reviewing nearly 900 submissions.