



Matthew M. Petersen

Matt Petersen is a partner in BCLP's Denver office, where he helps clients navigate complex business and commercial disputes across Colorado and nationwide. When he's not in the courtroom or the conference room, he channels his passion for the law into his role as coordinating editor of *Colorado Lawyer's* Civil Litigator column.

PROFILE

Hometown:

Bettendorf, Iowa

Law School:

Saint Louis University

Lives in:

Denver

Works at:

Bryan Cave Leighton
Paisner LLP

Practice Areas:

Business and commercial
disputes

What do you like the most about your practice area?

No two cases are alike—each one brings a different cast of characters, a different judge, and a different puzzle to solve. I love that my work demands constant adaptation. One day I might be digging into an agribusiness dispute; the next I'm advising a financial services client on a completely different challenge. That variety keeps the pace fast and the work interesting.

What do you think is the most essential professional skill?

Communication. You can have a sharp legal mind, but if you can't distill a complex argument into something a judge wants to read, or explain a litigation strategy to a client, you will never maximize outcomes. Whether I'm negotiating with opposing counsel, drafting a brief, mentoring a younger lawyer, or calling a client to deliver news, the through-line is always the same: say what you mean, clearly and credibly. It's the one skill that touches every part of the job, every single day.

What's the best advice you've received?

Always respond to emails by the end of the day. In a profession where clients can be anxious, deadlines are tight, and opposing counsel is watching your every move, responsiveness builds trust—even if the answer is just "got it, I'll circle back tomorrow."

What's your best advice for new lawyers?

Find a practice area that genuinely excites you—not one that just looks impressive on a business card. When you care about the work, the long hours feel less like a grind and more like an investment. Passion is a competitive advantage, and over the long arc of a career, it's the difference between burning out and building something you're proud of.

What motivates you to work hard?

Clients. They're the lifeblood of the profession and the reason I get a charge out of the hard work. There's something deeply satisfying about earning a client's trust, learning the ins and outs of their business, and then going to bat for them when the stakes are high.

How do you spend your free time?

I'm the proud dad to an almost 8-year-old daughter and a 10-year-old son, which means my free time is equal parts joy and chaos. I enjoy coaching their teams, cheering from the sidelines, and attending their concerts. It's unpredictable and occasionally exhausting, but I wouldn't trade a single minute of it.

What's your travel destination of choice?

Paris. My wife and I love it there, and somehow no matter how many times we visit, we always manage to find something new.

What's your favorite movie of all time?

Field of Dreams. Growing up in Iowa, this wasn't just a movie—it was a rite of passage. This summer, we brought my son's travel baseball team to a tournament at the actual Field of Dreams, and it exceeded all expectations. Watching them experience the magic of a place that I've seen in the movie since childhood was pretty special.

What's your current passion project?

I've been on the Board of Regents at my alma mater, Wartburg College, for almost three years. It's been an incredible way to give back to the institution that helped shape how I lead, think, and work today. At this stage of my career, I'm increasingly drawn to opportunities where I can create meaningful impact for the next generation—whether that's students, young professionals, or young lawyers. 

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