

## CASE STUDY



### Student Entrepreneur Launches Interplay With Pro Bono Assistance

#### KANSAS CITY, MOOVERVIEW

Ever since high school, Jonaie Johnson had a vision for an interactive and automated pet crate that would represent a significant advancement over other options available in the marketplace, and as she advanced to college and began to further develop the idea, it became clear to her that translating her vision into reality required a trusted resource that could provide a practical legal and business framework.

Jonaie teamed up with Husch Blackwell as part of the E-Scholars program at the University of Missouri-Kansas City at a biannual Speed Lawyering event where Husch Blackwell attorneys regularly volunteer their time to help early-stage entrepreneurs and companies address and overcome growth-stage legal issues.

#### Challenges

Armed with the underlying idea for Interplay and the programming and support of the E-Scholars program, Jonaie needed to address foundational legal matters as her venture moved from an idea to an actionable business plan. Among other common concerns, Jonaie's concept required special consideration regarding her approach and strategy for protecting Interplay's intellectual property.

#### Solution

#### Legal Team

Jenna Brofsky

Our firm brought on Interplay as a pro bono client and has provided a wide range of legal services free of charge. Since first engaging with Jonaie in 2019, our team of attorneys has helped the young venture with various corporate, intellectual property, and labor and employment matters. Our corporate team facilitated the formation of Interplay and guided the company to achieve other early legal milestones and best practices. To help secure Interplay's intangible assets, our intellectual property group aided Jonaie through the process of selecting and filing an application to register a trademark while also crafting a tailored intellectual property strategy to leverage various legal protections for the company's needs. Also, as Interplay began to grow, Jonaie utilized our labor and employment attorneys to discuss early employment considerations.

## Result

Since launching Interplay, Jonaie has had notable success and garnered many accolades, including being named Student Entrepreneur of the Year from the Henry W. Bloch School of Management's Regnier Institute for Entrepreneurship and Innovation at the University of Missouri-Kansas City and winning pitch contests, participating in various accelerators and forming several partnerships. As Jonaie continues to prototype Interplay's product and grow the business, we are excited to continue to support her and her company along the path from concept to a successful business.