



29th ANNUAL
LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT LAW CONFERENCE

Trade Secret Update – 2023 (And Non-Compete Summary)

KEN HUGHES, PLLC
KHUGHES@KHUGHESPLC.COM
713-588-0890
832-419-2088

The University of Texas School of Law ■ www.utcle.org

1

TUTSA Should Significantly Change The Law

- **TUTSA DISPLACES COMMON LAW ON TRADE SECRETS**
 - this chapter displaces conflicting tort, restitutionary, and other law of this state providing civil remedies for misappropriation of a trade secret. TCPRC § 134A.007
- **TUTSA SHOULD CHANGE THE WAY TRADE SECRET CLAIMS ARE ANALYZED**
 - Whether there is a trade secret is primary
 - Manner of acquisition is a secondary consideration
- **PRE-TUTSA COMMON LAW IS STILL RELEVANT**
 - Generally known cases
 - General skills vs. Specialized skills

2

DTSA And Other States Court Opinions Are Important

- DTSA – TUTSA trade secret definition identical
- 49 states have adopted UTSA
- Purpose is uniformity amongst states
- *There are few differences amongst states*
 - *California allows readily ascertainable items to be trade secrets—NOT TEXAS*

3

What is a Trade Secret 134A.002(6)?

- Any information including formulas, lists, products, designs, devices, etc.
- Owner took reasonable steps to keep secret
- That derives independent economic value from:
 - Not being generally known, **and**
 - Not being readily ascertainable through proper means

4

Trade Secret Cannot Be Generally Known

- Trade Journals
- Published material
- Reference Book
- Sales materials
- Generally known in the trade
- NOT, generally known amongst the general population
- Ultimate issue: can a competitor use available information to obtain the alleged trade secret?

5

Trade Secret Cannot Be Readily Ascertainable

- Plaintiff has the burden to prove trade secret IS NOT readily ascertainable
- *Peppermill* (slot machine)
 - D inserted a device in a competitors machine to obtain the par value [% winners/losers]
 - D was fined \$1m by gaming industry for using key
 - D still entitled to jury instruction that P had to prove that it would take a significant amount of time money or expense to obtain the information
 - Jury found no trade secret in part b/c P casino had no evidence it would be difficult to find par value

6

Find the full text of this and thousands of other resources from leading experts in dozens of legal practice areas in the [UT Law CLE eLibrary \(utcle.org/elibrary\)](https://utcle.org/elibrary)

Title search: Trade Secret Update

Also available as part of the eCourse

[2023 Labor and Employment Law eConference](#)

First appeared as part of the conference materials for the 30th Annual Labor and Employment Law Conference session "Trade Secret Update"