AS SEEN IN
Forbes & Fortune

ORANGE COUNTY **LEADERS IN LAW**



Real-World Representation

Drawing on decades of hands-on experience and complementary legal skills, **Engels O'Brien** takes a practical, client-focused approach to construction, employment, and family law.

"Our focus is always on the client," says Christopher Engels, founding partner of Engels O'Brien. "What are they trying to achieve, and what is the best way to get them there? Running to court to file a lawsuit is never our first thought."

Based in Costa Mesa, Engels O'Brien represents individuals and businesses in construction defect, employment, and family law matters, combining litigation experience with practical knowledge of the industries and circumstances behind each case.



Christopher Engels, Founding Partner

For Engels, understanding a client's situation starts with understanding the real-world context behind the legal dispute.

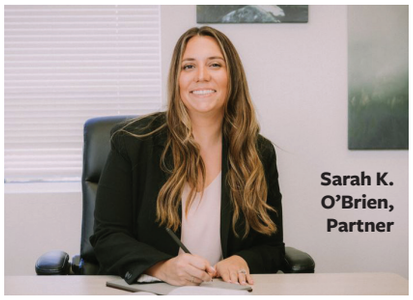
"I'm a little bit of an anomaly because being an attorney is my second career," says Engels. "My first career was as a general contractor. I've also gone through two divorces, which led me to become a Certified Family Law Specialist, and that gives me a different perspective on life than most lawyers have. I know what it's like to live paycheck to paycheck working manual labor jobs and to go through a divorce."

Engels' more than 20 years of residential and commercial experience have given him a firsthand understanding of building regulations, safety procedures, insurance, and other challenges that can shape a construction dispute. As the owner of several businesses, he also has direct insight into employment issues from both sides' perspectives.

"I understand the dynamics between employer and employee because I've been on both sides," Engels says. "I've been where they've been; I know what that experience can do to a person. I've taken all those lessons and applied them to my work."

His practical experience is enhanced by formal credentials, as Engels is both a Certified Family Law Specialist (CFLS) and a Fellow at the Construction Lawyers Society of America™ (CLSA).

That breadth of experience is complemented by a talented support team, including Paralegal Ms. Bacho, who is attending law school, and Law Clerk Ms. Murrietta.



Sarah K. O'Brien, Partner

Multiple Perspectives, One Approach

"Chris is more of a trial attorney; he enjoys the client-facing work of getting out there and putting on the case," says Sarah K. O'Brien, partner. "I prefer to work behind the scenes, handling the research and drafting. That's why we work so well together. He creates the legal, tactical plan, and I figure out how to make it happen."

O'Brien's behind-the-scenes role extends from pre-litigation through appeals, where her research, drafting, and procedural experience help turn the firm's litigation strategy into action. Like Engels, she is also a Fellow at the CLSA. Together, the partners emphasize clear communication and realistic expectations, particularly when a case becomes prolonged or complicated.

This philosophy applies to all three of Engels O'Brien's practice areas, helping clients effectively navigate a legal system designed to make parties into adversaries. Whatever the nature of the dispute, the firm's priority is to resolve it efficiently when possible and prepare to litigate when necessary.

"We're looking at achieving our clients' goals quickly while not leaving anything on the table," says Engels. "We're also careful not to skip steps or cut corners. We're focused on getting the matter resolved."

ENGELS O'BRIEN
— AN ASSOCIATION OF ATTORNEYS —

2900 Bristol St., Suite G205 | Costa Mesa, CA 92626 | 949-269-7709 | www.engels-obrien.com