

Firm assists Valassis in obtaining \$500 million settlement with News America

Plunkett Cooney assisted its client, Valassis Communications, Inc., in ending a long-standing legal dispute with News America, Inc., a part of Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation.

Just three days before the scheduled start of a jury trial in U.S. Federal Court in Detroit, the case was resolved under the terms of a comprehensive settlement agreement, which required News America to pay Valassis \$500 million and to enter into a 10-year shared mail distribution agreement.

The settlement agreement successfully concluded litigation initiated by Valassis, claiming violations of federal antitrust law as well as theories of unfair competition and tortious interference by its competitor News America Marketing. The initial case was divided into three separate cases, the first of which ended after an eight-week jury trial in Wayne County Circuit Court which considered only the state law claims. The jury awarded Valassis compensatory damages of \$300 million in that case.

Members of Plunkett Cooney's Commercial Litigation Practice Group and Litigation Support team assisted in the successful representation of Valassis in the Wayne County and federal cases. Among the key aspects of the Wayne County case was a coordinated jury selection process, presentation of the opening and closing statements, examination of a key plaintiff witness and otherwise preparing the litigation for trial.

Included in the \$500 million federal court settlement is the \$300 million awarded in the Wayne County case.