

VLP Partner Michael L. Whitener Quoted in Corporate Counsel Article, “Baseball Hacking Scandal? It's Just Business as Usual”

Michael L. Whitener, a Partner in VLP’s technology transactions group, was quoted in the Corporate Counsel article, “Baseball Hacking Scandal? It's Just Business as Usual.”

The article reported that sports fans look at their favorite professional teams and see athletes, while hackers look at sports teams and see data. So, when news broke in June that the Justice Department is investigating front-office personnel for the St. Louis Cardinals for allegedly hacking into an internal network of the Houston Astros, attorneys who deal with trade secret theft were hardly surprised.

“It’s in the lexicon. Stealing a base is an established part of the game,” said Michael. “But now it has gone high-tech.”

In fact, most cyber hacks are not sophisticated, he added. Thieves can gain access because employees have weak passwords and don’t change them regularly. The article notes that early reports, which have since been denied, said the Astros general manager, who built the data system when he was with the Cardinals, used the same passwords in Houston that he had used in St. Louis, making access easy.

“The bottom line is someone had to know they were getting into another team’s system,” Michael said. “It’s like spying with the goal of deciphering another team’s signs but more calculated and high-tech.”

The entire article may be viewed on the *Inside Counsel website*.