LEADERS OF INFLUENCE: M&A

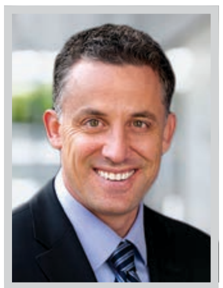
NAVIGATING A SUCCESSFUL MERGER OR ACQUISITION IS A COMPLEX, HIGH-STAKES PROCESS THAT REQUIRES careful planning, collaboration, and expertise across multiple disciplines. Whether the goal is growth, market expansion, or operational synergies, the M&A process begins with a clear strategic rationale. Companies must first define their objectives—such as acquiring new technologies, expanding geographically, or increasing market share—and ensure the deal aligns with long-term business goals.

A successful M&A relies on assembling the right team of professionals, each bringing unique expertise to the table. The executive leadership team sets the vision, provides decision-making authority, and champions the deal internally. Corporate development or strategy teams manage the overall process, identify potential targets, and coordinate communications between stakeholders.

There are some particularly stellar M&A experts and thought leaders in the LA region and we've alphabetically listed some of the very best of them here, along with key information about their careers, practice and some relevant recent successes they've achieved. These are the M&A pros we chose to recognize for exceptional leadership, knowledge, skill and achievements across the full spectrum of M&A and fiscal guidance.

Methodology: The professionals featured in these pages did not pay to be included. Their profiles were drawn from nomination materials submitted to the Los Angeles Business Journal. Those selected for inclusion were reviewed by the editorial department. The professionals were chosen based on a demonstration of impact made on the profession and on the Los Angeles community.

LEADERS OF INFLUENCE: M&A

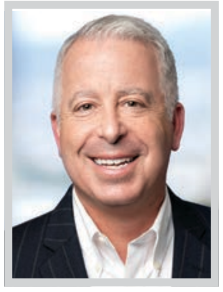


TREVER ACERS

Managing Director
Objective, Investment Banking & Valuation

Trever Acers has built a distinguished career as both an M&A advisor and entrepreneur, establishing himself as a leading figure in the middle market through his ability to build, grow and lead a high-performing advisory platform. As founder and managing director of Objective, Investment Banking & Valuation, he has spent more than two decades advising business owners on strategic transactions while driving the firm's growth through vision, leadership, and relationship development.

A defining hallmark of Acers' career is his ability to originate and lead high-quality engagements by building trust with business owners and the broader advisory community. Over the past five years, he has been instrumental in driving more than 25 sell-side transactions across the middle market, including notable engagements.



ANDREW APFELBERG

Partner
Greenberg Glusker LLP

Andrew Apfelberg represents a "who's who" of middle-market companies and high net worth individuals/family offices throughout the United States. He has considerable depth of experience in the branded consumer products, manufacturing and distribution, and professional service industries. Based on the results he achieves for them, his clients describe him as a practical, empathetic practitioner in an outside general counsel capacity or in significant transactions.

Apfelberg has also overseen operations for various for-profit and non-profit organizations. Such experience allows him to structure transactions and negotiate agreements more effectively—maximizing value to the client through a personal understanding of the real-life issues that make a given solution more likely to be implemented and viewed as an effective outcome by both sides.

KATHERINE BAUDISTEL

Partner
Goodwin Procter LLP

Since 2018, Katherine Baudistel, a Santa Monica-based partner in Goodwin's Private Equity group, has been a key force behind the growth and development of the firm's Private Equity practice on the West Coast. One of the first partners to relocate to Goodwin's new Santa Monica office shortly after its opening in 2019, Baudistel's work has been integral to Goodwin's establishment as a leading firm in the region, and has helped the office expand from a small team of lawyers to nearly 120 legal professionals today.

A versatile advisor, Baudistel focuses her practice on representing private equity sponsors and their portfolio companies as well as technology startups in connection with mergers and acquisitions and private equity investment transactions.

JAMES BERGER

Partner
Norton Rose Fulbright

James Berger, a partner at global law firm Norton Rose Fulbright in the Los Angeles office, has more than 12 years of M&A deal experience in California. James represents sponsors, lenders and equity investors in connection with the acquisition, financing and development of energy projects, with an emphasis on renewable energy. He has established himself as a top renewable energy lawyer by providing counsel on a string of wind, solar and energy storage deals throughout the United States. James has led significant M&A deals for a wide range of clients, including The AES Corporation, Harbert Infrastructure, Orsted and PGGM.

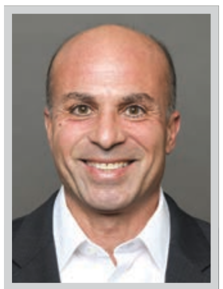
Berger's most recent notable transactions in the M&A space include representing a private equity fund in connection with the acquisition of a large battery energy storage project.

KEVIN BERSON

Mergers and Acquisitions Advisor
Kinected Advisors

Kevin Berson is a founder, dealmaker, and trusted advisor to business owners navigating one of the most consequential decisions of their lives. As founder of Kinected Advisors — a Los Angeles–based M&A firm focused on the lower middle market ($10–$100 million in revenue) — Berson has spent more than 25 years combining the rigor of Big Six consulting, hands-on operating experience, and sophisticated M&A advisory to help business owners sell on their terms, at premium valuations.

Over the past year, Berson closed two notable transactions: the sale of a utility services firm to a private equity acquirer, and the sale of an entertainment production rental company to a strategic buyer — both in competitive, multi-buyer processes that delivered outcomes well above initial seller expectations.



DAVID BONROUHI

Co-Founder; Managing Director
Calabasas Capital

David Bonrouhi has been in investment banking and private equity for over 30 years and he brings bulge bracket Wall Street experience to the lower middle market. He and his team at Calabasas Capital focus on representing family businesses, emerging growth companies and women-owned businesses in the lower middle-market in sell-side M&A transactions, private equity and debt capital raising and buyside M&A.

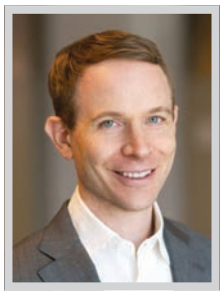
Bonrouhi executes complex transactions while negotiating on behalf of his clients with private equity firms and large public companies, leading to above-market valuations and favorable terms for his sell-side clients. He has originated and successfully executed a number of transactions in food, packaging, software, industrial manufacturing and distribution, technology and consumer products.

STEPHEN BRADFORD

Partner; Chair, Corporate and Business Law Group
Musick, Peeler & Garrett LLP

Stephen Bradford serves as a partner, chair of the Corporate and Business Law Group, and a member of the Musick Peeler's Executive Committee. Bradford provides pivotal strategic leadership at the highest levels.

With a career spanning several decades, Bradford is a trusted advisor to public and closely-held businesses worldwide. He navigates complex domestic and international landscapes to guide clients through critical inflection points, including global expansion, strategic consolidation, and high-stakes successions. A powerhouse in the M&A space, Bradford acts as lead counsel on numerous marquee transactions annually. He has been serving as lead counsel to numerous California-based private and public companies, family offices and cooperatives culminating in transactions valued at over $1.5 billion.



JASON BREEN

Partner
Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati

Over nearly two decades in practice, including the past four years as a partner at Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati, Jason Breen has established himself as a go-to advisor for biopharma and medical device companies executing transactions that fall well outside traditional M&A playbooks. His work is defined by deals that require bespoke structures—including option-based acquisitions, joint ventures, and asset-level transactions—often tied to evolving clinical data and uncertain development timelines.

Breen's practice is centered on transactions that require an understanding of the underlying science that drives them. He brings not only technical legal skill but also a deep familiarity with drug development and the life sciences sector, allowing him to identify risks and structure agreements that hold together under pressure.

SHERRY CEFALI

Managing Director
Duff & Phelps Opinions Practice of Kroll, LLC

Sherry Cefali is a managing director in the Duff & Phelps Opinions Practice of Kroll, LLC. She is also a member of the firm's Fairness & Solvency Opinion Senior Review Committee. Cefali has been with Kroll for over 30 years, advising companies and boards, rendering fairness opinions and solvency opinions and determining valuations of companies and securities.

Cefali's recent transactions include a relative fairness opinion in connection with the roll-up IPO of Knowledge Realty Trust, an Indian REIT sponsored by the Blackstone Group; a solvency opinion in connection with IAC's spin-off of Angi (formerly known as Angi's List); and a surplus opinion for Grindr in connection with the authorization of an incremental $400 million share repurchase by its board.

DOMINIC CHAN

Managing Director; Head, Global Financial Sponsors Coverage
Berenson & Company

Dominic Chan is a managing director and head of global financial sponsors at Berenson & Company, based in Los Angeles. Having begun his finance career in New York at Goldman Sachs, he has over 15 years of experience in the industry, and has a sterling reputation within the investment banking and private equity/venture capital community.

In his role, Chan works with leading private equity funds, family offices, alternative credit, and sovereign wealth funds around the world. He works closely with some of the largest private equity firms such as Apax Partners, Blackstone, Ares Management, Insight Partners, and Hg Capital. His clients includes hundreds of middle market private equity firms, venture funds, and founders/CEOs. He often headlines panels on capital markets and M&A.

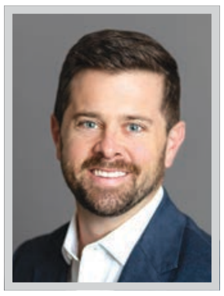
LEADERS OF INFLUENCE: M&A

WILL CHUCHAWAT

Partner; Co-Leader, Mergers and Acquisitions Practice
BakerHostetler

Will Chuchawat is a nationally recognized mergers and acquisitions attorney whose career reflects a rare combination of hard to match deal experience, strategic leadership, and market-shaping results. Over more than two decades in practice, Chuchawat has closed more than 500 transactions, advising private equity sponsors, venture capital firms, public companies, and founder-led enterprises globally.

Chuchawat's practice spans technology, healthcare, aerospace and defense, life sciences, consumer, media, and financial services, giving him the cross-sector insight needed to anticipate risk, unlock value, and drive outcomes in complex transactions. As co-leader of BakerHostetler's M&A practice, he plays a central role in shaping firmwide strategy.

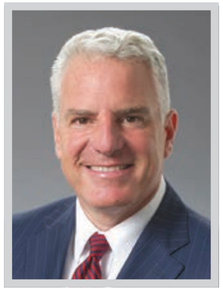


NICK CIPITI

Managing Director
CriticalPoint

Nick Cipiti joined CriticalPoint in 2020 and quickly established himself as a trusted advisor and emerging leader within the firm. With a foundation in technology, media, and telecommunications (TMT), he has expanded CriticalPoint's presence in the sector while broadening his expertise across consumer products and business services, contributing meaningfully to the firm's growth.

In a challenging M&A environment, Cipiti continues to source and close successful transactions, demonstrating resilience, creativity, and strong execution capabilities. Recent highlights include advising Merrill's Packaging on its sale to Nelipak; representing Gulbranson Services on its sale to TAK Communications; and advising COMQUEST on its sale to TrueLearn.

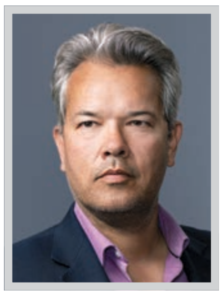


DAN CLIVNER

Partner
Sidley Austin LLP

Dan Clivner is a member of Sidley's Executive Committee and serves as managing partner of the firm's Greater Los Angeles offices, comprising more than 150 lawyers. He previously served as global co-leader of Sidley's 500+ lawyer M&A and Private Equity group. With more than 30 years of experience, Dan maintains an active practice advising some of the world's leading companies and private equity firms.

Clivner's work spans leveraged buyouts, joint ventures, public company acquisitions, and restructurings, with a focus on high-profile transactions across the media and entertainment, telecom, technology, financial services, and retail sectors. He is a key driver of the firm's transactional practice growth, contributing to year-over-year expansion of Sidley's M&A and Private Equity practice.

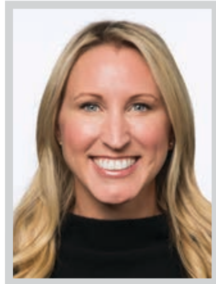


PAUL de BERNIER

Co-Leader, Corporate & Securities
Mayer Brown LLP

Paul de Bernier is co-leader of Mayer Brown's global Corporate & Securities practice, and a senior corporate and M&A partner based in the firm's Los Angeles office. Over a 25-year career rooted in California and shaped by extensive international experience, Paul has combined a transactional practice focused on infrastructure, energy transition, and critical minerals with a sustained commitment to community welfare, pro bono service, and the development of ESG-oriented legal frameworks in which California has played a leading role.

Alongside his transactional work, de Bernier has devoted hundreds of hours to pro bono and community-focused matters throughout his career. His pro bono practice has included representation of individuals seeking humanitarian relief.



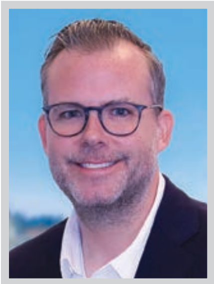
DARCY DOWN

Partner
Baker McKenzie

Darcy Down started her legal career working on US/domestic mergers and acquisitions. Wanting to pursue deals with more of an international focus, she joined Baker McKenzie in 2012 as an associate and was promoted to partner just four years later. After spending eight years in Baker McKenzie's Chicago office, she relocated to the firm's Los Angeles office to develop and grow the transactional practice in Los Angeles. Currently, she is an M&A partner and key leader in the Los Angeles and wider California transactional group.

Over the last 14 years at Baker, her practice has covered a wide range of transactional matters, including domestic and cross-border mergers, carve-outs, spin-offs, pre-transaction restructurings and post-acquisition integrations and reorganizations.

LEADERS OF INFLUENCE: M&A

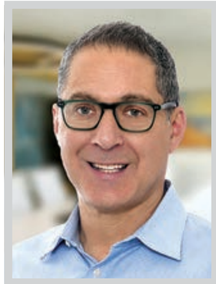


JOSHUA DRISKELL

Managing Partner
Lagerlof, LLP

Joshua Driskell, managing partner of Lagerlof, LLP, has built a distinguished career advising business owners, investors and multi-generational families on complex transactions that intersect estate planning, business succession, and corporate strategy. While his practice is rooted in private wealth and tax planning, Driskell plays a critical role in facilitating and structuring transactions that allow businesses to successfully transition, scale and evolve.

Driskell's work often involves guiding closely held companies through ownership changes, including sales, recapitalizations, and generational transfers, ensuring that both the legal and financial components of these transactions are aligned for long-term success. One of Driskell's most notable strengths is his ability to approach transactions holistically.

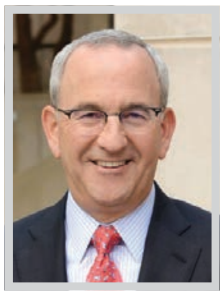


SCOTT R. EHRLICH

Partner; Co-Chair, Corporate Department; Department Head, Mergers and Acquisitions Practice
Sklar Kirsh LLP

Scott R. Ehrlich serves as co-chair of Sklar Kirsh's Corporate Department and the department head of the Sklar Kirsh's Mergers and Acquisitions Practice, his practice focuses on corporate M&A and finance transactions, with an emphasis in the entertainment and media industry, representing diverse public and private clients in corporate transactions.

Ehrlich joined Sklar Kirsh after serving nearly nine years as the general counsel of Deluxe Entertainment Services Group where he was the chief legal officer handling dozens of high-stakes post-production and new distribution technology deals, mergers and acquisitions, corporate finance and joint venture activity along with providing day to day legal and commercial advice to business units around the world.

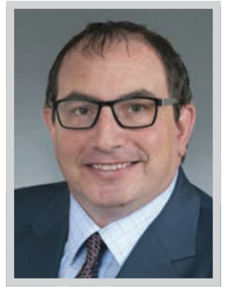


LLOYD GREIF

President; CEO
Greif & Co.

Lloyd Greif launched his own investment bank, Greif & Co., in 1992.

Greif's "greatest hits" include 3G Capital's $11.1 billion acquisition of Skechers U.S.A.; Bacardi's multi-billion-dollar acquisition of Patrōn Tequila; four M&A transactions involving Bumble Bee Seafoods; the IPOs of Smart & Final and L.A. Gear; the sales of the largest independent real estate brokerages in California (Jon Douglas and Fred Sands); the leveraged buyout of Pinkerton's Security; CRH plc's and Brookfield's $1.7-billion acquisition of C.R. Laurence Co.; the merger of Mrs. Gooch's Natural Food Markets into Whole Foods Market; the acquisition of Trimark Pictures by Lionsgate; the sale of Rose Hills Mortuary & Memorial Park to Blackstone and the Loewen Group; and the recapitalization of Kinko's (now FedEx Office), to name but a few.



DAVID GRINBERG

Partner
Sidley Austin LLP

Widely recognized as a leading M&A advisor in the consumer sector, David Grinberg brings more than 25 years of experience and spearheads Sidley's industry-leading beauty and wellness practice, one of the few dedicated groups of its kind globally.

Grinberg and his multidisciplinary team serve as trusted advisors to companies from formation through exit, supporting clients at every stage of growth. In addition to advising on high-profile transactions, including M&A, equity financings, joint ventures, and licensing agreements, they counsel clients on regulatory compliance, consumer protection, and litigation matters such as supply chain issues, employment matters, and product recalls. Since 2022, Grinberg has led the team in more than 45 capital raises and M&A transactions totaling over $10 billion in value.

CHANNING HAMLET

Managing Director
Objective, Investment Banking & Valuation

Channing Hamlet's career is defined by sustained excellence in middle-market M&A advisory, a differentiated ability to align complex stakeholder objectives, and a long-standing reputation for integrity-driven leadership. As co-founder and managing director of Objective, Investment Banking & Valuation, he has spent over 30 years advising business owners through some of the most consequential decisions of their careers.

A hallmark of Hamlet's career is consistent transaction execution at scale and quality. Over the past five years alone, he has closed more than 25 sell-side transactions across diverse sectors including business services, healthcare, and technology, representing hundreds of millions of dollars in aggregate deal value. He is frequently sought out for complex situations.

TYLER HILTON

Partner
Baker McKenzie

Tyler Hilton is a standout M&A practitioner whose work exemplifies the sophistication, scale, and cross-border complexity shaping Southern California's transactional markets. As a partner at Baker McKenzie in Los Angeles, Hilton has built a practice advising on sophisticated, high-end M&A and investment transactions that span both private equity and strategic deals across various industries both in the United States and internationally. His practice is broad but focused on the equity side for both strategic investors and acquirors and private equity firms.

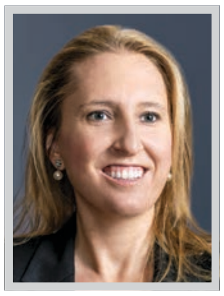
From the outset of his career, Hilton has earned the respect of senior team members by successfully establishing early ownership of key roles in client matters. His ability to swiftly assimilate complex information and devise strategic solutions has been instrumental in managing high-stakes transactions.

STEVE HURDLE

Partner, Corporate & Financial Services
Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP

Steve Hurdle is a partner in the Corporate & Financial Services Department and the Entertainment Transactions Practice. Hurdle advises investors and companies on mergers and acquisitions, strategic relationships and joint ventures, and equity offerings at all stages. Hurdle's practice crosses a wide variety of industries.

Hurdle has developed particular experience helping celebrities, entertainment companies and sources of capital in business formation, fundraising, investing, and business combination transactions. He has represented television production companies, film studios, digital and post-production companies, content distributors, music publishers, talent management firms, talent agencies, business management firms, influencers, professional athletes, musicians and other public personalities.



STEPHANIE HURST

Partner, Corporate & Securities and Mergers & Acquisitions
Mayer Brown LLP

A key partner in Mayer Brown's Los Angeles-based Corporate & Securities practice, Stephanie Hurst has played a leading role in expanding the practice's capabilities and client roster and increasing its diversity. She has worked on dozens of innovative and complex deals, involving multiple jurisdictions and in evolving and emerging areas, including tech, venture capital (including corporate venture capital) and ESG.

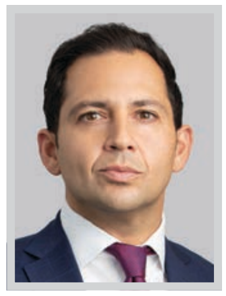
Hurst spent nearly two years in Mayer Brown's Hong Kong office, where she advised on capital markets and M&A transactions and was seconded to serve in the in-house legal department at a major global bank. Following her secondment, Hurst moved back to LA in 2015 and expanded the team's work in targeted growth areas key to the LA market, including in-bound Asian investment in the US.

CHI HUYNH

Partner
Sheppard

Chi Huynh represents healthcare clients in complex, high-profile mergers and acquisitions. Huynh joined Sheppard in 2015, bringing her extensive in-house experience as associate general counsel at IPC Healthcare, Inc., a publicly traded corporation that operates a leading, national physician group practice. As the principal transactions attorney, Huynh managed a team of in-house attorneys and paralegals in the successful negotiation, documentation and closing of more than 35 acquisitions.

Recently, Huynh has represented an industry-leading clinical asset management company and service provider delivering all-encompassing clinical engineering services, medical device cybersecurity and clinical asset informatics, in multiple transactions to acquire the clinical engineering business of various health care entities.

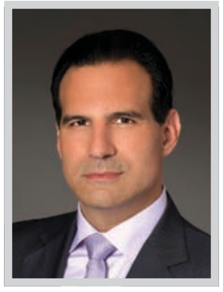


ARASH KHALILI

Firmwide Co-Chair; Current Co-Chair, Corporate & Capital Markets Department
Loeb & Loeb

Arash Khalili is a go-to dealmaker for high-stakes corporate, mergers and acquisitions, and commercial transactions, known for handling complex transactions with a pragmatic, results-oriented approach. What sets him apart is the breadth of his M&A experience, which spans a wide range of industries, including media, entertainment, sports, technology, manufacturing, retail, fashion, food and beverage, and health and wellness, allowing him a cross-disciplinary perspective.

Khalili represents an equally diverse client base, from global and domestic companies to entrepreneurs, founders and family offices, as well as high net worth individuals, professional athletes, celebrities, public figures and influencers. He regularly leads transactions at the intersection of entertainment, sports and private equity.



MEHDI KHODADAD

Partner; Global Co-Leader, M&A and Private Equity
Sidley Austin LLP

Mehdi Khodadad is one of the leading private equity and M&A attorneys in the US and a central figure in many of the transactions shaping today's market. Based in Sidley Austin's Century City office, he serves as a partner and global co-leader of the firm's M&A and Private Equity group, advising some of the world's most active private equity firms on their most complex and consequential transactions.

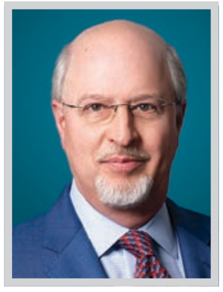
His work reflects a combination of strategic insight, technical precision, and commercial judgment that enables clients to execute transactions efficiently even in volatile market conditions. Among his most significant recent accomplishments is as principal advisor to Clearlake Capital Group in its $7.7 billion take-private acquisition of Dun & Bradstreet.

TAI KIMOTO

Partner
Covington & Burling LLP

Taisuke (Tai) Kimoto co-leads Covington's Japan Practice, which advises a number of Japan's largest corporations as well as individuals, trade associations and governmental agencies on their most sensitive and complex legal challenges in the United States, Europe, China, and elsewhere. Drawing upon his long-standing relationships and robust business and legal networks in Japan, Taisuke serves as an ambassador of the firm to the Japanese business community and to global companies with interests in the Japanese market.

Kimoto is a corporate lawyer whose practice focuses on M&A transactions, general corporate matters, and real estate transactions for companies based in Japan. He also serves as an outside US general counsel for a number of Japanese companies.



ERIC KLEIN

Partner; Co-Leader, Healthcare Team
Sheppard

A driving force in healthcare law, Eric Klein is the leader for transformative M&As, joint ventures and other strategic transactions across hospitals, health systems, post-acute care providers and physician organizations. He regularly serves as lead transactional counsel on some of the most high-profile and industry-shaping deals throughout the US, and is one of the most experienced deal lawyers in population health management, physician alignment and global risk, helping hospitals and physician entities transition to or operate under value-based and risk-based payment models.

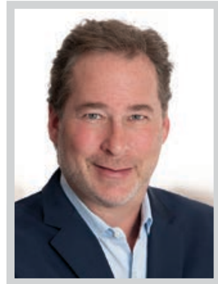
With 13 purchase/sale projects for hospitals in progress and over 120 hospital M&As and/or joint venture projects previously completed, Klein's expertise enables clients to seize the most significant opportunities.

DENA KLOTZ

Partner
Lagerlof, LLP

Dena Klotz, partner and managing attorney of the Encino office of Lagerlof, LLP, has built a distinguished practice centered on estate planning, trust administration, and business succession planning. She advises individuals, families, and closely held business owners on preserving and transferring wealth, navigating post-death administration, and structuring plans that support long-term financial and family stability.

As managing attorney, Klotz has played a key role in leading and growing the firm's Encino office, contributing to the firm's broader strategic expansion and strengthening its presence in the San Fernando Valley. Her leadership reflects a commitment to both operational excellence and client-centered service, ensuring that clients receive thoughtful, timely, and practical guidance.



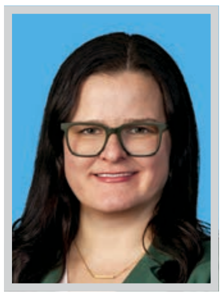
ANDREW KRAMER

Partner; Chair, Motion Picture, Television & Entertainment Finance
Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP

Andrew Kramer is a leading figure in entertainment M&A and finance, with over 30 years of experience advising major studios, production companies, financiers, lenders and distributors on deal structuring, acquisitions and transformative corporate transactions.

As chair of Willkie's Motion Picture, Television & Entertainment Finance practice, he structures complex transactions for film, television, and digital media, helping clients navigate the evolving landscape of content and library acquisitions, financing, licensing and distribution, as well as other complex corporate transactions for intellectual property, AI and other content-based companies. Kramer has earned a reputation for structuring creative solutions that bridge business objective and legal execution.

LEADERS OF INFLUENCE: M&A



KELLY SIOBHAN LAFFEY

Partner

Pryor Cashman LLP

Kelly Siobhan Laffey is a partner in Pryor Cashman's Corporate Group and a member of the firm's Mergers + Acquisitions and Emerging Companies + Venture Capital Practice Groups. Laffey's practice focuses on advising emerging growth and middle-market companies on a wide range of transactional and general corporate matters, including corporate governance and formation, venture capital and other financings, mergers and acquisitions, joint ventures, cross-border transactions, employee compensation, and complex shareholder and operating agreements.

Laffey's clients include companies spanning the technology, media and entertainment, clean energy, healthcare, e-commerce and manufacturing industries. She also counsels on venture financing and has particular expertise in structuring deals involving talent and brand partners.

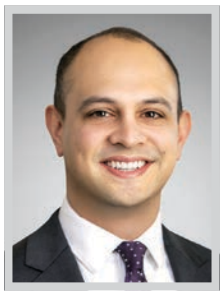
VERONICA LAH

Partner

Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP

Veronica Lah is a partner in Manatt's Cross-Industry M&A, Private Equity, Capital Markets and Finance practice. She is a highly sought-after adviser representing public and private companies, investors and financial institutions in a wide range of corporate matters. Lah focuses her practice on M&A, capital markets, securities, joint ventures, corporate governance and board advisory services, and other corporate and financial transactions. She represents clients in corporate transactions spanning numerous industries, including financial services, entertainment, technology, consumer products, health care and real estate.

Lah co-led Manatt's team as counsel to CVB Financial Corp., a bank holding company which owns Citizens Business Bank, in connection with its acquisition of Heritage Commerce Corp for approximately $811 million.



DAVID LEFEBVRE

Special Counsel

Covington & Burling LLP

As special counsel for Covington & Burling LLP, David Lefebvre co-led a Covington team assisting Roku on content and platform distribution in its $185 million acquisition of Frndly TV, including $75 million tied to performance milestones.

Among his other high-profile successes, Lefebvre also co-led a team of Covington lawyers representing The Walt Disney Company in the media licensing aspects of its agreement to merge its Star India business in a joint venture with Reliance's Viacom18. According to Variety, "The deal is estimated to be worth $8.5 billion…" and "The JV will also be granted exclusive rights to distribute Disney films and productions in India, with a license to more than 30,000 Disney content assets…" The transaction was approved by India's National Company Law Tribunal.

MARK LINDON

President

Lindon Law Corporation

Mark Lindon is a Los Angeles-based corporate attorney, private equity principal and founder of Lindon Law Corporation whose ethos of "WE GET IT DONE" has resulted in billions of dollars of completed transactions across numerous sectors. His 40-year career has spanned Big Law, in-house, board chair, boutique M&A firm and private equity co-founder, and has given Lindon a reputation as a pragmatic dealmaker who delivers results in complex, high-stakes situations. He is a notable small-firm contrarian and exception to the Big Law partners that typically populate M&A recognition lists.

Through Lindon Law Corporation, Lindon offers a boutique alternative to Big Law—providing sophisticated M&A and corporate finance counsel to small and middle-market companies and private equity sponsors.

JOSHUA LOVE

Partner

Reed Smith LLP.

Joshua Love is one of the leading dealmakers in today's music-rights investment market. An equity partner at Reed Smith, he has become a principal architect of billion-dollar catalog transactions, complex rights acquisitions and high-stakes music industry investments.

Over the past 12 months, Love has led or co-led more than $3 billion in music transactions, including several of the year's most significant catalog and platform deals. Most notably, he represented the buyer in the acquisition of the master recordings and publishing catalog of Abel Tesfaye (The Weeknd), widely reported as the largest transaction ever involving a contemporary artist. He also advised Concord in its acquisition of Stem Distribution, a carve-out of Stem Disintermedia, reportedly valued above $50 million.

GAURAV MALHOTRA

M&A Partner

Lucas Horsfall

Gaurav Malhotra has built his career at the intersection of technical rigor and human judgment, qualities that define the best advisors in middle market M&A. Where larger transactions benefit from robust infrastructure and clean data, the middle market demands something different: the ability to bring clarity to fragmented systems, inconsistent financials, and limited visibility. That is precisely where Malhotra thrives.

At Lucas Horsfall, Malhotra has served as a key executive leader across both the audit and M&A practices, playing a central role in scaling the firm's capabilities and market presence. Under his leadership, M&A revenue grew by more than 50% year-over-year, a result made more significant by the broader volatility and uncertainty that characterized the economic and political environment.

CHRIS MANDERSON

Partner

Glaser Weil

Chris Manderson is a distinguished corporate attorney with more than two decades of experience guiding companies, investors and executives through complex, high value transactions at the intersection of business, law and finance. A trusted advisor to public and private companies, private equity funds, venture-backed growth companies, and entrepreneurial founders, Manderson is known for his strategic insight, technical precision, and ability to structure transactions that maximize value and mitigate risk in rapidly evolving industries.

Manderson's practice spans the full spectrum of corporate transactional work, including mergers and acquisitions, venture capital and private equity financings, restructurings, distressed M&A, and transactions involving the preservation and monetization of Net Operating Loss assets.

HEMAL MASTER

Managing Shareholder

Frandzel Robins Bloom & Csato, L.C.

Hemal Master, the managing shareholder of Frandzel, is a preeminent leader in financial services law, distinguished by his dual-threat expertise in high-stakes transactions and complex lender-side disputes. As a trusted advisor to commercial banks, private equity funds, hedge funds, and commercial finance companies, Hemal navigates the full lifecycle of the lending relationship. His practice is particularly recognized for its sophistication in structuring commercial loan transactions, executing complex loan workouts, and defending lenders in high-profile liability claims.

A defining pillar of Master's professional standing is his three-year secondment with a major regional bank, where he supervised litigation across 45 states and advised on hundreds of matters involving distressed debt.

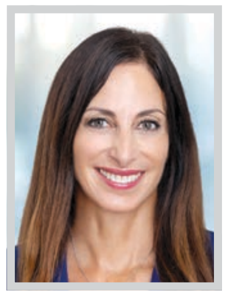
GLEN MASTROBERTE

Partner

Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP

Glen Mastroberte is a highly regarded M&A adviser known for leading complex, high-stakes transactions across a wide range of industries. He advises buyers, sellers, investors, investment funds, private equity firms, financial institutions and operating companies on sophisticated domestic and cross-border mergers, acquisitions, dispositions, joint ventures, minority investments and other strategic corporate matters.

Mastroberte has developed a particularly distinguished practice representing clients in the film, television, music, sports, video gaming, beauty, technology, branded consumer products and financial services sectors, where transactions often involve significant intellectual property, brand value and evolving market dynamics. He is a go-to counsel for clients pursuing significant strategic opportunities.



TORREY McCLARY

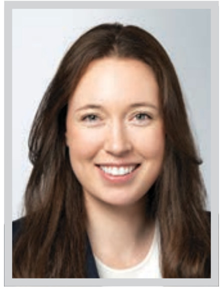
Partner

Ropes & Gray

Torrey McClary has structured and negotiated some of the most prominent and complex health system deals in California and across the country, guiding organizations on key strategic, legal and operational decisions. Her practice focuses on transformational projects for California and western region clients while maintaining a robust national presence. She advises academic medical centers, nonprofit hospitals, and health systems through highly-regulated, mergers, consolidations, affiliations and other innovative transactions.

A founding partner of Ropes & Gray's Los Angeles office, which opened in 2022, McClary has demonstrated strong leadership and entrepreneurial vision. She has grown the firm's top-tier health care platform and built a talented legal team to serve clients on complex deals, regulatory matters and other critical legal issues.

LEADERS OF INFLUENCE: M&A

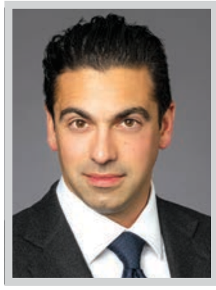


KELLY MERIC

Partner
Proskauer Rose LLP

Kelly Meric's elevation to partner at Proskauer in 2025 reflects not only her exceptional legal acumen, but also the trust she has earned as a strategic advisor to sophisticated clients. She counsels private equity sponsors, portfolio companies, founder-led businesses and strategic clients across a wide spectrum of complex M&A transactions, including domestic and cross-border acquisitions, carve-outs, minority investments and joint ventures.

Informed by her experience as in-house counsel at Scopely, a leading mobile gaming company, Meric brings a distinctly commercial perspective to her practice—delivering advice that is both technically rigorous and closely aligned with her clients' business objectives. Meric served as co-lead partner advising Railbird on its sale to DraftKings.

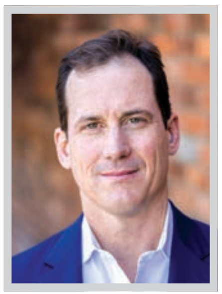


HAMED MESHKI

Partner
Kirkland & Ellis LLP

Hamed Meshki is a senior corporate partner in Kirkland's Los Angeles office. His practice primarily focuses on highly structured and complex private equity transactions, including mergers & acquisitions, leveraged buyouts, restructurings, recapitalizations, and financings. Hamed has distinguished himself as a preeminent M&A attorney, advising as lead counsel on over $10 billion in transactions in the last 18 months alone. He represents several of the world's leading private equity and asset management firms and their portfolio companies, as well as several public and private companies, in their most significant and complex matters.

Hamed currently serves as a managing partner of the Los Angeles office and a leader in the M&A practice.



JOEL MONTMINY

President; CEO
Montminy & Co., LLC

Joel Montminy is the founder and driving force behind Montminy & Co. and a highly respected leader in investment banking. With more than 25 years of experience in mergers and acquisitions, he has built a reputation for executing complex, high-value transactions with precision and vision.

Montminy's impact extends globally. He has advised on more than $6 billion in middle-market transactions and over $2.8 billion in cross-border deals across 30 countries. In the past year alone, he strengthened the firm's profile through several notable transactions, including the sale of California Drilling & Blasting to Southwest Energy; the recapitalization of Jose Andres Group; the sale of Glasgow Rangers Football Club to 49ers Enterprises; and the sale of Pizza Factory, Inc. to Wonder Franchises.

STEVE MOON

Deputy Head, M&A, Americas;
Managing Director
Kroll Investment Banking

Steve Moon has been with Kroll Securities (formerly known as Duff & Phelps Securities) for over 25 years. He is a deputy head of mergers and acquisitions for Americas and is the co-head of the firm's Aerospace, Defense and Government Mergers & Acquisitions Group.

Moon has over 28 years of investment banking and corporate finance experience. He has completed a range of investment banking engagements including mergers, acquisitions, sales, divestitures, recapitalizations, leveraged buyouts, debt and equity financings, strategic alternative reviews and fairness opinions on behalf of private equity firms, public corporations and private company clients. Moon recently advised the shareholders of Stratton Aviation in its sale to IOP Funds.

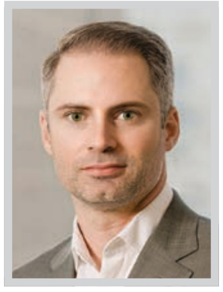
FARZAD MUKHI

Managing Director,
Food and Consumer M&A
Kroll Investment Banking

Farzad Mukhi is a trusted advisor to business owners and is highly skilled at executing M&A transactions on their behalf. With over 20 years of experience, he is responsible for project execution and client management for a broad range of investment banking engagements, including sell side and buy-side transactions, leveraged buyouts, divestitures, recapitalizations, debt and equity financings and strategic alternative reviews.

Mukhi's practice is focused on midsized companies where he can make a meaningful impact on the lives of his clients. He prides himself on providing thoughtful advice that is relevant to his clients, their families and their employees. Mukhi leads Kroll's US Food, Beverage and Nutrition practice as well as the Western US Consumer M&A practice.

LEADERS OF INFLUENCE: M&A

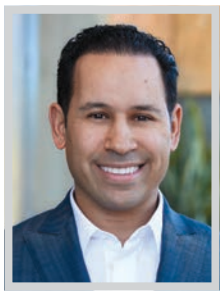


DAVID NIEMEYER

Partner
Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP

David Niemeyer is a highly accomplished M&A lawyer and a partner in Skadden's Los Angeles Corporate Group. With more than 15 years of experience, Niemeyer has developed a reputation for his strategic insight, innovative problem-solving and adept handling of challenging negotiations.

Niemeyer recent work has included representing Scopely, Inc. in its $3.5 billion acquisition of Niantic, Inc.'s mobile games business, which includes popular titles such as "Pokémon GO," "Pikmin Bloom" and "Monster Hunter Now." Niemeyer led the representation, which required navigating the complexities of a multi-jurisdictional carve-out that separated Niantic's mobile games business from its broader platform operations.

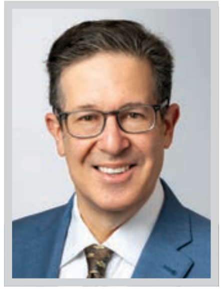


CYRUS NIKOU

Founder; Managing Partner
Atar Capital, LLC

Cyrus Nikou is the founder and managing partner of Atar Capital, a Los Angeles-based global private investment firm he established in 2016. In the years since, he has built one of the most consequential lower-middle-market investment platforms in the country that is defined both by its financial performance as well as the deliberate values embedded in the firm's decisions and operations.

Under Nikou's leadership, Atar Capital has acquired and actively manages a global total of 12 companies, employing over 14,500 people. The firm has executed more than 90 transactions across 18 countries in under a decade, with a specialized focus on complex carve-outs, corporate divestitures, and operational transformations in the lower middle market. Nikou oversees all aspects of the firm's strategy.



BEN ORLANSKI

Partner
Proskauer Rose LLP

Ben Orlanski is a leading California dealmaker who delivers results on companies' and funds' most consequential transactions. For more than 30 years, he has guided clients through headline-making mergers, acquisitions, investments and other transformative deals across California's markets.

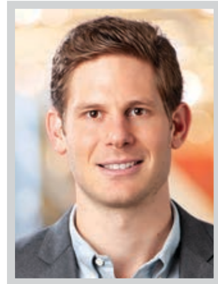
Acting as lead M&A counsel to Zello Group, Orlanski led the leveraged buyout of Cinelease from NYSE-listed Herc Rentals. A cornerstone provider of lighting and grip equipment, Cinelease is embedded in the fabric of Los Angeles' production ecosystem. The transaction was covered extensively in the media, as was Orlanski's work serving as lead counsel to Kinematics, a global leader in intelligent motion control and portfolio company of Angeleno Group, in its leveraged acquisition of Spain-based P4Q.

ANANT PATEL

Partner; Advisory Services Practice Leader
GHJ

Anant Patel is GHJ's Advisory Services Practice leader and is a nationally recognized professional in private equity consulting across industries. He has more than 30 years of experience guiding buy- and sell-side deals ranging from $20 million to $1.2 billion.

As the leader of GHJ's national Advisory Services Practice, Patel plays a significant role in driving strategy and contributing to growth throughout the organization. He oversees a cross-functional team of experts across transaction advisory, data and analytics, client accounting and advisory services and more. Patel advises private equity firms, venture capitals and institutional investors through complex transactions and invests in building long-term relationships with them. He advises privately held companies in all aspects of exit planning, preparedness and execution.



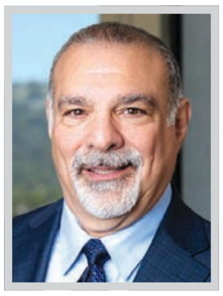
ERIC PERLMUTTER-GUMBINER

Partner
Greenberg Glusker LLP

Eric Perlmutter-Gumbiner is a partner at Greenberg Glusker and a trusted M&A and transactional advisor to founders, entrepreneurs, strategic acquirers, investors, family offices, private equity sponsors, and high-growth companies across consumer products, media, entertainment, technology, sports, food and beverage, and branded businesses.

Over more than a decade, Perlmutter-Gumbiner has built a sophisticated corporate practice spanning mergers and acquisitions, strategic investments, private equity and venture capital transactions, joint ventures, financings, restructurings, and outside general counsel representation. Perlmutter-Gumbiner combines elite transactional execution with practical, forward-looking judgment.

LEADERS OF INFLUENCE: M&A



JOSEPH PETRO

Partner; Chair, Corporate Department
Ervin Jessup Cohen LLP

Joseph Petro, a partner and chair of the Corporate Department at ECJ, is a distinguished strategist who navigates the complexities of the business lifecycle with surgical precision. Specializing in the representation of entrepreneurs, founders, and privately held companies, Petro delivers sophisticated counsel that bridges the gap between ambitious growth and successful exits.

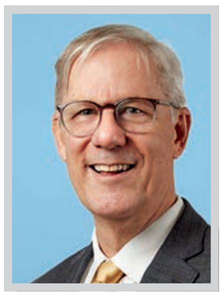
Petro's practice is defined by its versatility, encompassing high-stakes mergers and acquisitions, private equity transactions, joint ventures, and complex financing arrangements. As a department leader, he orchestrates multidisciplinary teams to provide seamless, results-driven guidance, ensuring that every transaction—from initial formation to final liquidity event—is executed with a clear focus on the client's long-term commercial objectives.

LA KEISHA LANDRUM PIERRE

Founder; General Partner
Emmeline Ventures

La Keisha Landrum Pierre is a transformative force in the Los Angeles venture capital and M&A landscape, distinguished by her ability to scale high-impact digital platforms and her recent success in institutionalizing early-stage investment for underrepresented founders. Her most significant accomplishment to date is the successful launch and rapid expansion of Emmeline Ventures, where she serves as co-founder and general partner.

Following a successful "Fund 0" pilot that invested in 14 companies, Pierre led the firm's transition into its debut institutional fund, targeting $25 million. Under her strategic oversight, the firm has built a robust portfolio of over 20 tech-enabled startups.



JAMES ROBERTSON

Of Counsel
Hahn & Hahn LLP

James (Jim) Robertson advises clients in structuring, negotiating and closing various types of business transactions. Using his deep knowledge of mergers & acquisitions, corporate governance, commercial transactions, commercial finance, project finance, and public works construction projects, Jim has assisted clients—ranging from public companies to small start-ups—with numerous domestic and cross-border transactions.

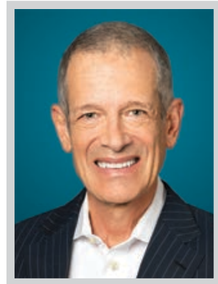
Robertson has drafted and negotiated complex transaction agreements, including purchase and exchange agreements, financing documents, equity and debt investment agreements, employment agreements, LLC operating agreements, shareholder agreements, equity incentive plans, confidentiality and IP assignment documents, and indemnifications agreements.

MICHAEL ROSENBLUM

Partner
Thompson Coburn LLP

Few M&A attorneys bring the combination of transactional depth, in-house executive experience, and industry versatility of Michael Rosenblum. He has handled more than $3 billion in mergers and acquisitions, private equity, and financing transactions across highly regulated and rapidly evolving industries, including cannabis, healthcare, consumer products, transportation, and higher education.

Rosenblum's approach is distinguished by a general counsel-style perspective shaped by prior roles as in-house counsel at Goldman Sachs and as general counsel of STIIIZY Inc. In that role, he led approximately $300 million in transactions and developed a pragmatic, business-oriented approach to structuring and executing deals that aligns legal strategy with long-term company growth.



DAVID SANDS

Partner
Sheppard

David Sands is a recognized dealmaker in Los Angeles who guides companies of all sizes through major strategic, financial and operational transactions. Drawing on deep experience in both legal and business strategy, he helps media, entertainment, technology, and financial services industry clients navigate risks, understand market realities, and achieve their personal and professional goals.

Sands is recognized for his practical, business-focused approach and his ability to distill complexity into actionable solutions. Clients value his creativity, responsiveness, and dedication to their success. As a member of Sheppard's Executive Committee and former practice leader of its Corporate and Entertainment practice groups, Sands is sought after for his expertise in structuring high-value, cross-border, and industry-defining deals.

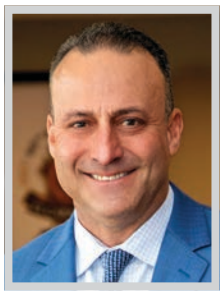
LEADERS OF INFLUENCE: M&A

JOSHUA SCHNEIDERMAN

Partner
Snell & Wilmer

Josh Schneiderman is the managing partner of the firm's Los Angeles office and is a member of the firm's corporate and securities group. He advises clients on a wide range of transactional matters, including mergers and acquisitions, joint ventures and public and private offerings of debt and equity securities. In addition, he advises public and private companies on corporate governance matters and advises his clients on matters related to franchising. Schneiderman also advises clients in the cannabis industry.

Schneiderman is familiar with the unique needs of industry clients in light of the present conflict between federal and state laws and local regulations in the space, and he helps clients navigate the challenges that arise in that context.

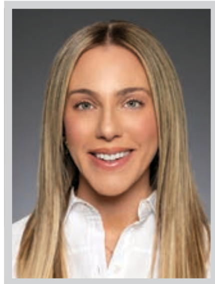


JASON SHAPIRO

Senior Vice President
WestPac Wealth Partners

Jason Shapiro has maintained a career defined by consistent excellence and meaningful client impact. In his first year at WestPac, he achieved the #2 ranking within the organization and surpassed his previous personal records by doubling his best year ever—an impressive testament to both his skill and drive to continuously improve.

What truly differentiates Shapiro, however, goes beyond his professional accolades. His approach to success is deeply rooted in a holistic commitment to his community. He combines strong leadership with hands-on service, financial support, and active family involvement. This well-rounded engagement reflects his belief in making a meaningful difference through mentorship, personal connection, and long-term support.

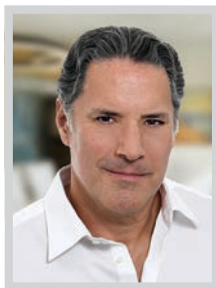


HAYLEY SILVERTOWN

Lead Counsel, Music Industry Practice
Paul Hastings LLP

Lead music counsel Hayley Silvertown joined Paul Hastings from Willkie Farr in February 2025 and plays a central role across the practice. At Paul Hastings, she leads many of the industry's most complex and high-profile music transactions and serves as primary adviser to Create Music Group, while also providing strategic support to Primary Wave and BMG on key matters.

Silvertown is the go-to representative for clients on major transactions, including high-stakes buy-side and sell-side music catalog acquisitions, investments in and acquisitions of music companies, and complex joint venture arrangements. Over the past 12 months alone, Silvertown and team have advised on more than $2 billion in music catalog acquisitions, joint ventures, equity investments and asset-backed transactions.



JEFFREY SKLAR

Founding Partner
Sklar Kirsh LLP

Since co-founding Sklar Kirsh LLP in 2013, Jeffrey A. Sklar has redefined the role of the modern legal architect. As a founding and co-managing partner, he has overseen the firm's rapid ascent to a 60-attorney powerhouse, but his true impact is felt in his sophisticated approach to complex deal-making. A veteran of the M&A landscape, Sklar is known for his ability to navigate high-stakes mergers, acquisitions, and joint ventures with an "entrepreneurial-first" mindset.

Sklar's practice is defined by an expansive strategic range, providing critical strategic counsel to a portfolio of clients spanning the media, technology, consumer products, and alternative energy sectors. Sklar's focus remains on unlocking value and securing sustainable growth.

AARON SOLGANICK

CEO
Solganick & Co.

As the founder and CEO of Solganick & Co., Aaron Solganick has built a nationally recognized, data-driven investment bank from the ground up—specializing exclusively in mergers and acquisitions for software, IT services, and healthcare IT companies. Since launching the firm in 2009, Solganick has led a deal team that has advised on and completed over $20 billion in M&A transactions.

Under Solganick's leadership, Solganick & Co. has completed landmark transactions across the technology landscape, including advising on Accenture's acquisition of Nextira, Atos's acquisition of Snowflake Elite Partner Visual BI, Wipfli's acquisition of data analytics consulting firm Waypoint Consulting, and Data Storage Corporation's acquisition of IBM partner Flagship Solutions, among many others.

LEADERS OF INFLUENCE: M&A

MICHAEL STEUCH

Partner; Co-Chair, Mergers & Acquisitions Group
Jeffer Mangels & Mitchell LLP

Mike Steuch is co-chair of JMM's M&A Group and has led hundreds of mergers and acquisitions and non-control equity financings. Building on early experience handling nine-figure transactions for Los Angeles-based companies acquired by public companies such as Best Buy and Intuit, he has developed a strong middle-market M&A practice at the firm. Steuch also plays a key role in mentoring and developing the firm's next generation of M&A attorneys, contributing to the continued growth of JMM's platform.

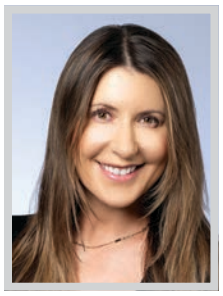
Steuch represents operating companies, buyers, investors and sellers across a range of industries, including technology, media and telecom, business services, consumer products, manufacturing and distribution, and food & beverage.

DAVID SUTTON

Partner; Transaction Advisory Services Practice Leader; Private Equity Practice Leader
GHJ

David Sutton is GHJ's Transaction Advisory Services and Private Equity Practice leader. He oversees a dynamic team of buy- and sell-side transaction advisors — in addition to guiding clients through transactions ranging from $10 million to $3 billion. He supports a vast client base, from emerging family offices to large institutional funds.

Sutton focuses on delivering thoughtful guidance throughout M&A transactions, deal-related due diligence and restructurings. His natural knack for Quality of Earnings, deal structuring and forecasting has made him a go-to advisor across industries, including entertainment, manufacturing and technology. He brings a unique perspective as a former aerospace engineer.



TANYA VINER

Partner
Buchalter

Tanya Viner is a shareholder in Buchalter's Los Angeles office, where she serves as co-chair of the firm's Mergers and Acquisitions Practice and Los Angeles chair of the Corporate Practice Group. Her practice focuses on mergers and acquisitions, representing both buyers and sellers in large and complex transactions ranging from the sale of closely held and family-owned businesses to transactions in excess of one billion dollars.

In addition to her mergers and acquisitions practice, Viner provides day-to-day counseling on a broad range of transactional and corporate governance matters. She regularly advises emerging growth companies on corporate formation, venture capital financing, licensing, and employment matters, and frequently acts as outside general counsel and trusted advisor throughout every stage of a company's growth.

JEREMY WEITZ

Partner
Buchalter

Jeremy Weitz is a shareholder in Buchalter's Los Angeles office and serves as chair of the firm's Corporate Practice Group, co-chair of the firm's Mergers and Acquisitions Practice, and a member of the firm's Board of Directors. His practice focuses on corporate law and mergers and acquisitions, with extensive experience advising clients on complex transactional matters across a wide range of industries.

Weitz's expertise covers mergers and acquisitions, private equity and venture capital transactions, publicly and privately traded securities, corporate finance, licensing, and ongoing corporate maintenance and formation. He represents both buyers and sellers in merger and acquisition transactions, with his M&A practice focused on the middle market and transaction values ranging from approximately $10 million to $3 billion.

CRAIG WELIN

President
Frandzel Robins Bloom & Csato LC

For nearly three decades, Craig Welin has been a definitive force at Frandzel, specializing in high-stakes creditors' rights and sophisticated business resolutions. As the firm's president since 2016 and a former managing partner, Welin's leadership is as foundational to the firm as his legal expertise is to his clients. His practice encompasses a broad spectrum of commercial real estate and bankruptcy litigation, with a particular mastery of real and personal property secured transactions.

Nationally recognized for his work with state and federal equity receivers, Welin is celebrated for a collaborative, "team-first" philosophy that aligns legal strategy with the core business objectives of his clients. A respected thought leader, he frequently shares his deep industry insights at premier trade conferences across the country.

LEADERS OF INFLUENCE: M&A

LOUIS WHARTON

Partner; Co-Chair, Venture Capital & Emerging Growth Practice
Stubbs Alderton & Markiles, LLP

Louis Wharton, partner of Stubbs Alderton & Markiles and co-chair of the firm's Venture Capital and Emerging Growth practice group, serves as expert counsel to clients in the technology, e-commerce and digital media industries, among others in the Los Angeles business community.

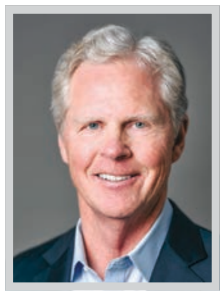
Wharton practice focuses on advising middle-market, emerging growth, early-stage and public companies in corporate finance, mergers and acquisitions, securities compliance and general corporate matters. Louis also represents venture capital funds, angel networks and other professional advisors in connection with a variety of investment transactions. Wharton serves as a strategic advisor to his clients, marshalling his decades of experience to assist with navigating the complex business issues they face.

ANDREW WILLIAMSON

Managing Director
Calabasas Capital

Andrew Williamson has 20 years of experience in investment banking and corporate development in addition to CFO and operating management roles in private equity and venture capital backed companies. He brings more than 25 years focused on growth stage companies. At Calabasas Capital, Williamson specializes in mergers, acquisitions, divestitures, leveraged recapitalizations and growth capital financings in technology and aerospace and defense.

Williamson's recent transactions include: sale of Applied Photon Technology to Amglo; sale of Invotech Systems to HID Global; sale of UFP Technologies' Molded Fiber Business to CKF; sale of Berkley Molded Fiber to International Paper; acquisition of Sisco Corporation by Berkley; and the acquisition of Innovative Plastics by Global Supply.



ROBERT WOOLWAY

Managing Director, Food & Beverage
CriticalPoint

At CriticalPoint, Bob Woolway is responsible for sourcing and executing strategic and financing transactions across the food, agriculture and restaurant sectors. With more than 30 years of investment banking experience, he has advised on a broad range of mergers, acquisitions, divestitures, and capital raises for both private and public companies. He brings clients a rare combination of large-firm expertise and boutique-level attention, enabling middle-market businesses to access sophisticated advice with highly personalized execution.

Woolway has established a leading investment banking food practice in Southern California advising companies across the entire "farm-to-fork" value chain—from growers and producers to branded food companies and restaurant operators.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE LOS ANGELES BUSINESS JOURNAL'S

2026 LEADERS OF INFLUENCE: M&A

Strategic Shifts, Deal Patterns, and Valuation Benchmarks Define E-Commerce and Retail M&As

'Leaders who integrate these insights into their strategic planning will be the ones best positioned to identify attractive opportunities and negotiate favorable outcomes.'

RYAN SCHWAB
MergersandAquisitions.net

Mergers and Acquisitions, a leading source of middle market mergers and acquisitions research, earlier this year announced the release of its latest industry report: "*E-Commerce/Retail M&A Trends & Deal Analysis Report 2026*." This comprehensive study delivers data-driven insight into the latest merger and acquisition activity across e-commerce and retail sectors, including deal volume and value trends, shifting strategic priorities, and emerging valuation dynamics that are shaping M&A decisions in 2025.

The report provides a detailed view of how macroeconomic conditions, digital transformation, and consumer behavior are influencing buyer behavior and transaction outcomes. It highlights resilient end-demand in digital channels, a rebound in overall deal value driven by larger strategic transactions, and a notable pivot toward assets with strong data, advertising, and omnichannel capabilities.

"2025 has been a landmark year for e-commerce and retail M&A," said Ryan Schwab, managing director of MergersandAcquisitions.net. "Our latest research shows that buyers are increasingly focused on scalable, data-enabled business models that can navigate evolving consumer preferences and economic uncertainty. This report equips dealmakers with the market intelligence they need to benchmark performance, evaluate valuation multiples, and anticipate where strategic capital is flowing."

Key insights from the report include:

- **Stronger deal value despite reduced volume:** While overall deal counts have moderated, total transaction value is materially higher, driven by larger strategic transactions and megadeals in key sub-sectors.
- **Digital transformation as a strategic driver:** E-commerce growth continues to reshape retail M&A, with buyers prioritizing platforms that offer data monetization, personalized marketing, and omnichannel fulfillment advantages.
- **Valuation dispersion across sub-segments:** Specialty retail and online-first businesses are commanding differentiated valuation multiples compared with traditional brick-and-mortar formats.

"For corporate development teams, private equity investors, and business owners preparing for a transaction, understanding these trends is no longer optional — it's essential," Schwab added. "Leaders who integrate these insights into their strategic planning will be the ones best positioned to identify attractive opportunities and negotiate favorable outcomes."

The E-Commerce/Retail M&A Trends & Deal Analysis Report 2025 is available now for download on MergersandAcquisitions.net. The full report includes proprietary data, trend charts, sector breakdowns, and a forward-looking analysis of where the market may be headed in 2026 and beyond.

MergersandAcquisitions.net is a premier provider of M&A research, analysis, and advisory support for middle market dealmaking. The platform delivers proprietary insight into trends, valuations, and strategic drivers across key industry sectors to inform corporate executives, advisors, and investors throughout the deal lifecycle. Learn more at MergersandAcquisitions.net.