

# Legal brains

TOP 30 LAWYERS

*Who are the 30 most influential lawyers in global private equity? We asked the market. Here are the results.*

Making the big time as a private equity lawyer is tough. Dealmakers want the transaction process to run as smoothly as possible. When the hunt is on, there is little margin for error, so why risk working with untested legal counsel when you can hire battle-hardened practitioners who have helped you win the day before?

To those legal specialists who sit at the industry's top table, a compelling mix of attributes invariably applies: they tend to be sharp, commercial, great at negotiating terms and even better at working long hours without their attention to detail fading. (It was telling how often those we canvassed for this article pointed to a superhuman propensity for working through the night as one of the reasons why they suggested certain lawyers be included in this article; cold pizza at dawn really does seem to be a staple component of their diet.) Moreover, many of them are also known for their outstanding people skills and can safely be described as 'nice guys' – or girls as the case may be.

The legal practitioners profiled in these pages have all made it to the peak of their profession. After careful deliberation and a multitude of interviews with those who depend on their services, we selected 30 transaction lawyers and fund formation specialists who private equity professionals consider "influential".

All of them have impeccable credentials as advisers, which is to say they are recognised as people who can be relied upon for giving genuine and dependable guidance when it matters most. "He's really in the deal every time and will call me before breakfast to tell me about ideas he's had in the shower about getting it done," commented one GP about why he valued the relationship with his favourite lawyer.

Many of our Top 30 have also been influential as innovators, either in terms of advancing best practice in deal documentation, fund structuring or customer care, or in providing best-in-class legal services to clients in the emerging parts of the private equity world such as Eastern Europe, Asia and Latin America. And many spend substantial portions of their time lobbying politicians and bureaucrats for the greater good of private equity.

In what follows, we present our assortment alphabetically. Be clear that this is no ranking, nor do we make any claims as to it being "comprehensive" in some way, although we did endeavour to include attorneys from around the world.

To produce this selection, our editors quizzed a large crowd of GPs, LPs, bankers and placement agents. Some of our choices may strike you as surprising; others we expect you to agree with unreservedly.

If indeed you feel there are some glaring omissions, please tell us. Again, there was no way for us to capture everyone who matters in this field. Still, we are always very keen to learn more about those people who make a difference in this people-driven asset class. Your feedback will be much appreciated.

Enjoy the article. ■

**ROBIN PAINTER, PROSKAUER ROSE,  
BOSTON**  
*Fundraiser*

Painter was part of the team of lawyers to come over to Proskauer following the 2005 dissolution of Testa, Hurwitz & Thibault, a premier Boston firm serving the venture capital and private equity community. At Testa, Painter and team grew a major fund formation practice. Painter is now a partner in

Proskauer's corporate department and co-chair of the private equity group. With a long and global list of top-shelf clients, including Adams Street Partners, California State Teachers' Retirement, Commonfund Capital, LGT Capital and the Wellcome Trust, Painter is among the highest-profile lawyers in the industry, let alone a high-profile female lawyer.



*Painter: co-chair*

## 30 INFLUENTIAL LAWYERS

*Our choice, ordered alphabetically, of 30 legal specialists with sway in global private equity.*

Jonathan Axelrad	Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati, Palo Alto
Jonathan Bisgaier	Skadden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom, New York
Jonathan Blake	SJ Berwin, London
Franci Blassberg	Debevoise & Plimpton, New York
Christopher Bown	Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, London
Ronald Cami Cravath	Swaine & Moore, New York
Woodrow Campbell	Debevoise & Plimpton, New York
Jeanette Chan	Paul Weiss Rifkind Wharton & Garrison, Hong Kong
Douglas Cifu	Paul Weiss Rifkind Wharton & Garrison, New York
Charles Cogut	Simpson Thacher & Bartlett, New York
Marco Compagnoni	Weil, Gotshal & Manges, London
Alastair Dickson	Dickson Minto, Edinburgh
Carlton Evans	Linklaters, London
Charlie Geffen	Ashurst, London
Jason Glover	Clifford Chance, London
Maurice Hoo	Paul, Hastings, Janofsky & Walker, Hong Kong
John Leopold	Stikeman Elliott, Montreal
Jack Levin	Kirkland & Ellis, Chicago
Zubair Mir	Norton Rose, Dubai
Andrew Ostrognai	Debevoise & Plimpton, Hong Kong
Robin Painter	Proskauer Rose, Boston
Norbert Rieger	Milbank Tweed Hadler & McCloy, Munich
Andreas Rodin	P+P Pöllath + Partners, Berlin
Louis Singer	Morgan, Lewis & Bockius, New York
Beau Stark	Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher, Denver
Jeffrey Tabak	Weil, Gotshal & Manges, New York
Neil Tomlin	Gilbert + Tobin, Sydney
Mark Vickers	Ashurst, London
Duncan Weston	CMS Cameron McKenna, London
Simon Witney	SJ Berwin, London