

# Daily Journal

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## TOP 100 LAWYERS IN CALIFORNIA 2017

### CORPORATE

## Christopher D. Brearton

LATHAM & WATKINS LLP | LOS ANGELES

SPECIALTY: ENTERTAINMENT, SPORTS & MEDIA

**B**rearton specializes in transformative deals including strategic alliances, joint ventures and investments, mergers and acquisitions, motion picture financings and sports project development. Clients include Starz Entertainment LLC, JPMorgan Chase & Co., Tencent Holdings Ltd., Participant Media LLC, Verizon Communications Inc. and Univision Communications Inc.

“From a trend perspective, there are a lot of new players, new entrants to the original content game such as Netflix and Snap Inc.,” he said. “Media companies are trying to secure talent like Brad Weston to lock up access to ensure empowerment.”

In the strategic alliances arena, Brearton represents producer Weston, a former New Regency CEO, in his March launch of Makeready, a funded production company backed by Entertainment One Ltd. and supported by a five-year deal with Universal Pictures to handle worldwide distribution and marketing on two feature films per year.

“In cases like this we’re on the talent side, bringing talent together with capital and distribution capabilities — the three pillars of the stool,” he said. “These deals don’t necessarily make the cover of the Wall Street Journal, but they do

transform talent into enterprises. They’re investments. Brad was the CEO of New Regency, a company with a track record including ‘The Revenant’ and many others. Now he pops out and starts new developments from scratch.”

And he represents MGM in its acquisition of a 100 percent interest in Epix Entertainment LLC, a premium pay television network, from Lions Gate Entertainment Inc., Viacom Inc. and Paramount Pictures Corp. for \$1.27 billion, announced in April. Epix offers a large selection of movies, with about \$4 billion in box office hits, and its content also features original programming including the television series “Berlin Station” and “Graves” along with original documentaries, music and comedy specials.

Brearton also represented AMC Networks Inc. in its investment in Funny Or Die, the comedy website and production company founded in 2007 by Will Ferrell and Adam McKay, announced in November 2016. The deal, Brearton said, showcased a common industry goal of generating wide-ranging collaborations between digital services and networks to create content across platforms.

“There’s a common theme to these



ventures,” Brearton said. “AMC believed that the creative talent behind ‘Funny Or Die’ could bring in capital and distribution capabilities. I flip-flop on different sides of these deals because I have a 360-degree practice.”

— Eli Wolfe