

Latham & Watkins

With more than 450 US public companies on its client roster, including longstanding relationships with American Airlines and Broadcom, Latham & Watkins is a true giant when it comes to strategic M&A. A longstanding Latham lawyer since the 1990s, Orange County- and New York-based Charles Ruck started out advising on California tech deals, but his role has expanded in tandem with Latham’s meteoric rise. Ruck, now the firm’s corporate chair, represents global giants in all sectors. His deals of the past year include roles for CyberArk in its \$25bn sale to Palo Alto Networks and FIS’s \$24bn sale of WorldPay, and for Anglo American on its \$70bn merger with Teck Resources.

The latter, which Ruck co-led with London-based Sam Newhouse and Ed Barnett, showcases the

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transatlantic force of Latham’s presence in both the US and London. Commentators widely hail Latham as having the most successful strategic M&A practice in London of any US firm, the hiring of Barnett and Newhouse from legacy Allen & Overy and Freshfields respectively being seen as key to that. Newhouse especially has been seen as a big loss to Freshfields’ mid-level M&A partnership.

The mandate for Anglo American was seen as a big win for Latham, given the FTSE giant’s longstanding and ongoing relationship with Linklaters.

“We’re super joined up between the US and Europe, and nowhere more so than between our New York and London offices on market-leading transactions,” says Barnett. “The Anglo American-Teck merger was one of the largest deals in the UK market, and the fact that it was led by Latham for Anglo is reflective of where we are.”

Another big driver of work is Latham’s capital markets practice; the firm acts on more of the largest New York IPOs than any other firm. Taking a company to market does not guarantee representation, but it does put Latham in prime position. “Capital markets are about as busy as we’ve seen them,” Ruck says. “There is pent-up demand, and one of the most encouraging things is that we’ve seen a real uptick. We view that as one of the real primers of the pump, the primers of the engine. As we’re capturing new clients, we wrap our arms around them and become go-to counsellors on go-to issues.”

Failing the IPO route, strategic M&A is a relationship game. Latham’s big-name M&A matter at present is a role for Paramount on its

potential acquisition of Warner Bros Discovery for \$110bn. Led by New York partner Ian Nussbaum (a Cooley joiner from 2023), longstanding partners Max Schleusener in Chicago, and LA duo Rick Offsay and Liliana Ranger, the team benefits from ties in-house to Paramount’s chief legal officer Makan Delrahim. He left Latham after just three years in 2025 for the entertainment giant, but his move has proven to be bountiful for his former firm’s M&A group.

Latham has also found that its deep expertise globally, particularly in the US, means European in-housers are more likely to approach the firm to gain insight on developments across the pond.

“It’s fascinating for a European listed company general counsel to predict the future in Europe via US trends,” Newhouse says. “It’s great for them to be speaking to the US side of our firm about technology, venture capital trends, financing structures, class actions and other developments because they’ll be over in Europe before long. In that way, listed clients get access to the future before it lands.”

The strategy is certainly working for Latham. Over the past three years, it has ranked second in the London Stock Exchange Group’s M&A tables, based on roles for the principal advisers leading on global deals. Notably, each time Latham has trailed Kirkland, now its core rival on the Global Elite stage.

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Global Elite 2026 score

84.9



London corporate team size

123



Average M&A deal value since 2021 (\$m)

620.94



US corporate team size

335



M&A deals since 2021

3,612



Partner promotions since 2023

27