



Next Gen



This week's Q&A with

Michael Wilson

Chicago Partner [Michael Wilson](#) is a member of Locke Lord's Private Equity and Venture Capital Practice Group. Mike has experience handling virtually every type of business transaction but focuses his practice in four primary areas: M&A, debt finance, venture capital and fund formation. He represents private equity funds, banks, startups, entrepreneurs and other public and private businesses. Mike leverages his broad-based experience to identify varying angles and motivations at play to provide creative and practical guidance to close deals.



More About Mike

Tell us about the most interesting or significant matter you've worked on in your career.

The most rewarding transaction I worked on exercised everything I had learned to date in the practice of law. It involved a group of individuals forming a search fund in order to raise capital, which would combine with financing from a bank, to acquire a company — covering each of my four primary areas of practice. My clients had never participated in an M&A, debt finance or fund formation process before, so in addition to running the deal, I needed to ensure they understood everything we did and why. We ultimately closed the transaction and my clients were thrilled.

What has helped you to become successful in your field?

First, always being critical — I think about what I'm doing and why and have never been afraid to ask questions or make suggestions. Second, being well-rounded — honing my skills in a variety of areas, I've gained necessary perspective to tackle a wide variety of problems. Third, working really hard — clients and colleagues know they can count on me to be in the trenches fighting for them at all times. Finally, being a connector — I am always looking to connect people in my network with others who may provide value to them — buyers with sellers, borrowers with lenders, companies with investors, etc.

What drives or motivates you on your hardest days/during your most difficult matters?

Knowing a deal is going to close is my light at the end of the tunnel. There's a legitimate feeling of euphoria that comes with closing a transaction that makes all the hard work worthwhile. On particularly challenging transactions, the wires going out feels like Christmas morning.

What do you do to give back to the community?

I mentor young business professionals through the Executives' Club of Chicago's EC Associates program. I've enjoyed helping mentees troubleshoot issues, strategize for career development and find their place within an organization. They are exceptionally impressive people, especially for being so early in their careers, and they motivate me to work even harder through their infectious energy and positive attitude, as well as the fear they instill in me of being lapped by the next generation.

Tell us your favorite book, movie or TV show and why you like it.

Jurassic Park — both the book and the movie. I've always found it incredible that creatures so different from those on earth today actually walked the earth, and the movie allows me to visualize their presence in a nearly tangible way. The book inspired me to learn more about paleontology and the earth's history. This topic is a palate cleanser for me — being so far askew from my day-to-day, it allows me to truly decompress.

What would be your fantasy career if you weren't a lawyer?

Owning and managing a craft beer and cheese café. My wife and I love craft beer and I would live on cheese if it was medically possible. The dream would be to replicate (a) one of our favorite breweries, Fortune Favours, in Wellington, New Zealand, which has a small cheese cave on site and offers beer and cheese pairings, and/or (b) our favorite craft beer spot in Chicago, Beermiscuous, which offers beer on draft and to go but lacks the indispensable cheese cave.



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