

Adam Kool



Adam Kool, a tax partner at Kirkland & Ellis LLP, spent the past year advising on high-profile, industry-transforming transactions. Kool's work on AbbVie's \$63 billion acquisition of the pharmaceutical giant Allergan, GTCR's pending \$24.25 billion sale of global payment processing company Worldpay and other billion-dollar transactions has earned him a spot as one of the 2025 Law360 Tax MVPs.

His biggest accomplishment of the past year:

At Kirkland, Kool has played a leading role in some of the firm's mergers and acquisitions transactions. In advising domestic clients or multinationals, Kool designed tax structures needed to handle different regulatory environments and multijurisdictional issues.

Kool was a lead tax partner in the \$35.9 billion acquisition of the candy company Mars by Kellanova, formerly the Kellogg Co., and Thoma Bravo's \$10.55 billion purchase of Boeing's digital aviation assets. While those

transactions are headline grabbing, he said the real accomplishment was the team that the firm has built to handle multibillion-dollar deals.

"I think, overall, in terms of the biggest accomplishment is the teams that we built for these deals from junior folks to senior folks who are specialists in particular areas. I think the biggest accomplishment is putting together a team of really effective, thoughtful and good communicators who are able to do deals like this," Kool said.

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His proudest moment of the year:

Kool is the lead tax partner advising GTCR, a private equity firm, in its pending sale of the global payment processing company Worldpay to Global Payments. Under the terms of the deal, Fidelity National Information Services, which also agreed to sell its minority stake in Worldpay, will acquire Global Payments' issuer solutions business, which is valued at \$13.5 billion.

"Every deal has its own complexity and challenges. The GTCR/FIS global payment transaction was massively complicated. It was a massively complicated transaction and certainly complicated in its own right," Kool said.

Kool added that the deal, which is expected to close in 2026 pending regulatory approvals, was the high point of the year, considering the moving parts involved.

“Getting the Worldpay transaction signed was probably the apex,” Kool said. “That was something where it was a very complicated transaction done in as short of a period of time that we could that was practical. Managing all the complexity and the various advisers was a very serious feat and getting it down was a major accomplishment.”

Why he chose to focus on tax law:

Kool earned a law degree from the University of California, Berkeley, School of Law and a doctor of laws degree from Stanford Law School.

While in school, a professor recommended that he consider specializing in tax law.

“It chose me. During law school, I had a mentor who was interested in tax. I didn’t appreciate that that was an area of the law where people might practice, and he suggested I give it a go,” Kool said.

After spending his first summer in the tax division of the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Northern District of California, he realized he had an affinity for tax law.

“I worked there, and it was clear to me that I really loved tax. The next summer

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I was at Kirkland & Ellis, and I have been there ever since,” Kool added.

What motivates him:

When asked why he loves tax law, Kool gave two reasons: the ever-evolving challenge it gives to practitioners and the people.

“The first is that it is a really interesting, very technical, but constantly evolving area of the law. The challenges never end,” he said, adding that the issues he focused on in 2025 have been different from those he dealt with in 2020 and 2015.

“The law is constantly shifting with different administrations and different priorities. It’s a puzzle that is there to be worked on and solved,” he added.

The other reason, he said, is his colleagues, not only at Kirkland, but also as a member of the executive committee of the New York State Bar Association’s Tax Section and co-chair of its Cross-Border M&A Committee.

“I have a tremendous amount of respect for my partners. They are, without exception, my friends, and we are constantly learning from each other,” Kool said. “The tax bar writ large is made up of some really fantastic people. It’s a combination of the people within Kirkland and outside of Kirkland which has made it a fantastic area of the law to practice.”

His advice to junior attorneys:

Tax law has a steep learning curve, according to Kool, “but you can climb it.” Junior attorneys should seek to learn all they can from those with more experience, but it’s not just the technical skills they should be looking to pick up.

“Observing other people who have done things for a long time and getting experience is critical. But at the end of the day, being an effective lawyer is about being an effective communicator,” Kool said.

While technical skills are critical, Kool said, those skills don’t mean very much if you can’t translate that into practical, thoughtful, actionable advice.

“See how other seasoned tax attorneys are communicating, considering issues, guiding clients. Studying their technical and personal skills is the best way you can build yourself into a very strong tax attorney,” he added.

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