

Press Release

Akerman Grows Corporate Practice With Arrival of Two Partners

June 2, 2025

Firm Expands Capabilities in Complex Domestic and Cross-Border Private Equity Transactions, Mergers & Acquisitions, Venture Capital

Akerman today announced the continued growth of its Corporate Practice Group with partners Jeffrey A. Fickes and Christopher J. DePizzo. Their arrival further strengthens Akerman's bench in complex domestic and cross-border private equity transactions, mergers and acquisitions, and venture capital, enhancing the firm's ability to serve clients operating and investing across industries and geographies. The team joins from Blank Rome.

"Jeff and Chris bring exceptional experience advising private equity sponsors, portfolio companies, and corporate clients on strategic and sophisticated transactional matters," said David Birke, co-chair of Akerman's Corporate Practice Group. "Their combined deal experience and global perspective are a tremendous asset to our clients and will further elevate our national and international capabilities."

Jeff specializes in private equity transactions, mergers and acquisitions, and corporate matters for businesses and investors both in the United States and internationally. With decades of experience, Jeff serves as a trusted adviser to company owners,

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David F. Birke
Christopher J. DePizzo
Jeffrey A. Fickes

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boards, and senior executives. He has acted as lead counsel on a wide range of strategic transactions, including domestic and international mergers, acquisitions, dispositions, joint ventures, private equity, venture capital, recapitalizations, and debt and equity financings. Additionally, he handles corporate governance and organizational matters across virtually every industry and sector.

Drawing on decades of experience in both law and business — including previous financial management roles in public and private companies — Jeff brings a practical, results-driven approach to legal counsel. He holds an MBA in corporate finance from The Ohio State University Fisher College of Business, where he was the Banc One Capital Fellow.

Christopher is a seasoned transactional attorney specializing in advising private equity firms and their portfolio companies, as well as other public and private entities, on a wide array of complex transactions. His expertise encompasses platform and add-on acquisitions, leveraged buyouts, carve-outs, strategic mergers, minority and emerging company investments, dispositions, special situations transactions, and joint ventures. In addition to his transactional work, Chris provides counsel on various general commercial, corporate, and governance matters.

Throughout his career, Chris has represented principal parties in mergers and acquisitions across diverse industries, including manufacturing, consumer goods, biotechnology, energy, software, retail, and sports. His experience spans the corporate life cycle, representing companies from innovative startups to international market leaders.

About Akerman

Founded in 1920, Akerman is recognized as one of the country's premier law firms, with more than 700 lawyers in 25 offices throughout the United States.

The Akerman Corporate Practice Group advises public and private companies, including private equity funds, on M&A, capital markets transactions, financings, and other transactional matters.

Akerman's M&A and Private Equity team is top-ranked nationally by *The Legal 500* and is recognized as a leading U.S. law firm by *Best Lawyers* for corporate, M&A, private equity, securities/capital markets, securities regulation, and banking and finance law.