

People

Michael Adler

Partner, Corporate
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vCard

Michael Adler's practice centers on the question boards and executive teams are now asking: how to deploy enterprise AI safely and at scale across regulated industries. He advises technology companies, private equity and venture investors, and multinational enterprises on AI governance, data protection, and technology transactions, and helps clients design the governance systems that make responsible AI deployment possible, including accountability structures, meaningful human oversight, policies governing autonomous (agentic) AI, and risk frameworks aligned with the EU AI Act, GDPR, and emerging U.S. federal and state AI regulation.

What distinguishes Michael's counsel is that he has built these systems himself. Before joining Akerman, he spent more than a decade in-house at global technology companies, serving in senior legal leadership roles where he governed AI-enabled products from the inside. As Head of Global Data Privacy and AI at Highspot, he led the company's worldwide AI governance and data protection strategy, guiding generative AI products through EU AI Act compliance and advising on the full lifecycle of AI development — from product design and intellectual property to ethics and market access. Earlier, he architected Autodesk's global GDPR compliance framework and counseled on its AI-enabled generative design products. He also served as lead counsel for a multibillion-dollar global payments business at Amazon, managing more than 1,000 commercial agreements each year. He advises clients the same way he built programs in-house, with a pragmatic approach grounded in business priorities and a clear understanding of how AI governance works in practice.

As Director of AI Governance & Data Protection within Akerman Intelligence, Michael also works with the firm's CEO, General Counsel, and technology and innovation leaders to further the development of Akerman's AI governance framework — the policies and oversight structures under which AI, including agentic systems, is deployed across the firm.

Areas of Experience

Akerman Intelligence
Corporate
Data Privacy and Security
Technology Transactions
Corporate Governance
Venture Capital and Emerging Growth Companies

Education

M.St., University of Cambridge, Judge Business School, Entrepreneurship
J.D., Vanderbilt University Law School
Master of Public Administration, George Washington University
B.A., Michigan State University James Madison College

Admissions

Bars

District of Columbia
New York

Michael began his legal career as a corporate lawyer at Kirkland & Ellis and Dechert, representing private equity funds, issuers, and financial institutions in complex transactions. Earlier, he served as an intelligence officer with the Defense Intelligence Agency, where he focused on counterterrorism, an experience that grounds his approach to security, risk assessment, and operational decision-making.

Michael earned a master's degree from the University of Cambridge Judge Business School (King's College), where his dissertation on GDPR as a source of competitive advantage was awarded a Distinction. He remains active in Cambridge's entrepreneurship and innovation community, most recently returning in 2026 as a guest lecturer to present "Sense and Scalability: Investor-Ready Security, Privacy & AI for Founders."

Affiliations

- Certified Information Privacy Professional/Europe (CIPP/E), IAPP

Related Professional Experience

- Highspot, Senior Director & Associate General Counsel; Head of Global Data Privacy and AI, 2019–2026
- Cambridge Judge Business School, Guest Lecturer, 2026
- Autodesk, Senior Corporate Counsel, Global eCommerce & Marketing, 2018–2019
- Autodesk, Corporate Counsel, Global eCommerce & Marketing, 2015–2018
- Amazon, Corporate Counsel, 2014–2015
- U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Tennessee, Judicial Law Clerk, 2009–2010
- Defense Intelligence Agency, Intelligence Officer, 2002–2006

Published Work and Lectures

- University of Cambridge, Judge Business School, Speaker, "Sense and Scalability: Investor-Ready Security, Privacy & AI for Founders," March 2026
- Global Privacy Summit, Speaker, "California Privacy Law Compliance," 2025
- Privacy. Security. Risk. Conference, Speaker, "California Privacy Law Compliance," 2024
- University of Cambridge, Judge Business School, Master's Dissertation, Author, "Juris Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Law – A Pathway for Competitive Advantage Through GDPR Compliance," 2023
- 16th Annual Stanford E-Commerce Best Practices Conference, Speaker, "The Balkanization of the Internet," 2019
- 15th Annual Stanford E-Commerce Best Practices Conference, Speaker, "Global Privacy Law & Marketing Technology," 2018