

4 Essential Reads For Private Equity Attorneys

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Howard M. Berkower

A large portion of legal learning comes through law school and subsequent real-world experience, but private equity attorneys say there is plenty to be gleaned from reading done outside of work.

The captivation that comes with reading for pleasure can help you better comprehend complicated concepts and historical trends, and the right book read outside of office hours can make you a better private equity lawyer by providing an entertaining way to learn about parts of the sector that might otherwise seem overcomplicated, attorneys say.

Here are the books that should be on every private equity attorney's nightstand.

'Gods at War: Shotgun Takeovers, Government by Deal, and the Private Equity Implosion'

Penned by ex-Shearman & Sterling LLP attorney Steven Davidoff Solomon and initially published in 2009, "Gods at War" looks at a variety of big-money deals that took place in the not-so-distant past, including 2007's \$4 billion buyout deal gone bad between United Rentals Inc. and Cerberus Capital Management LP, and the federal government's bailouts of American International Group Inc., Bank of America Corp, and Citigroup Inc.

Howard Berkower, a partner with the corporate practice at McCarter & English LLP, said "Gods at War" gives private equity attorneys an "easy to understand" rundown on the key concepts of deal-making. He noted that the book uses language that isn't too difficult to grasp, which can make a huge difference if you're sitting down with a book after a late night in the office that was spent combing through complicated legal documents.

"The book delves into an analysis of real deals and focuses on how the principal legal and economic issues are dealt with," Berkower added.

'Emotional Intelligence'

This 1995 book was written by Daniel Goleman, who in addition to being a writer was also a psychologist who wrote about the brain and behavioral sciences for The New York Times. "Emotional Intelligence" discusses Goleman's theory that an individual's emotional intelligence is equally as important as his or her intelligence quotient, or IQ, and that someone's emotional intelligence can be developed.

Berkower said this one is a little outside the box as far as lawyers are concerned, but important for those in and out of the legal world. He noted that many lawyers tend to focus on intellectual issues instead of emotional issues, despite the fact that successful deal-making involves both.

"Boiled to its essence, deal-making involves professionals of many disciplines coming together to address the interests of different constituencies," he said. "This book helped shine a light on the emotional aspect of deal-making, which often is key to the successful negotiation and consummation of deals."