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TOP 100 LAWYERS IN CALIFORNIA 2018

PRIVATE EQUITY

Ari B. Lanin

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SPECIALTY: MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS, PRIVATE EQUITY, MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT

Hollywood mogul Jeffrey Katzenberg made headlines this summer when he announced that his media and technology holding company, WndrCo, was poised to launch a premium video streaming service called NewTV.

Behind the scenes, Lanin was the lead partner at Gibson Dunn advising WndrCo on its initial capital raise for the project. The holding company closed on \$1 billion, including investments from all the major Hollywood studios.

“You’d be hard-pressed to find another company in the history of California that, as a startup, raised a billion dollars in the first round,” said Lanin, who co-chairs Gibson Dunn’s private equity practice group.

Lanin said the video-on-demand startup will focus on short-form content tailored for mobile viewing. While WndrCo has been tight-lipped about its plans, Lanin said the content will be “super-premium,” as opposed to “YouTube nonsense with people showing cat videos.”

Unlike a conventional acquisition, Lanin said, the NewTV deal involved negotiations with scores of investors who brought myriad terms to the table.

“A complex, multi-party joint venture

can be among the most complicated transactions because you’re dealing with many people with different interests, different goals, different desires, and trying to reconcile them all at the same time,” Lanin said.

When he’s not leading the formation of groundbreaking media ventures, Lanin advises companies, private-equity firms and investment banks across a range of industries, focusing on public and private merger transactions, stock and asset sales, and strategic partnerships. He also advises public companies on securities regulation and corporate governance matters.

Lanin has worked on a range of transactions and dispositions for Aurora Capital Partners over the past decade. In the past year, he has led Aurora in the acquisition of a railcar cleaning service provider and Inhance Products, which provides the fluorine-based coating found on plastic containers such as gas cans.

“They do post-mold fluorination, [which is] that glossy stuff on the container that’s preventing the gasoline from leaking through,” he said. “It’s a little less exciting [than NewTV] for the purposes of the consumer world, but no less important.”



Lanin said it’s that variety that makes him excited to come to work every day.

“You bring all of your skills — all of your years of experience and training to every deal, but they’re all their own special puzzle,” he said. “And you have to figure out how to unlock them.”

— Mark Armao