

Partner, New York

Mergers and Acquisitions



T: 212.735.2322
paul.schnell@skadden.com

Education

J.D., New York University
School of Law

B.A., Amherst College

Bar Admissions

New York

Paul Schnell has long been recognized as one of the preeminent corporate lawyers in the U.S., having worked on many of the most significant domestic and global M&A and corporate transactions of his time.

Mr. Schnell's many accolades include being named:

- Dealmaker of the Year in 2026 by *The American Lawyer*
- One of the top 10 M&A lawyers in North America in 2025 (by value) (*MergerLinks*)
- One of the top 29 M&A lawyers in the U.S. (*Insider*)
- A U.S. legal "legend" for being included among the top 500 lawyers practicing in the U.S. in each of the last 10 years (*Lawdragon*)
- One of the leading lawyers globally and in the U.S. in a range of areas such as M&A/corporate (top Band 1 ranking in *Chambers* in the U.S., International & Cross-Border, Latin America and Brazil categories), private equity, corporate governance, corporate, finance and health care
- Multiple times as Dealmaker of the Year and Dealmaker of the Week by *The American Lawyer*, among similar recognitions from other publications
- One of the top corporate lawyers in the Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) region in 2025 (*Financial News*)
- A leading lawyer for the *Financial Times*' most innovative M&A transactions
- A *Thomson Reuters* Stand-out Lawyer

Surveys that recognize Mr. Schnell include *Chambers Global*, *Chambers USA*, *Chambers Latin America*, *U.S. News and World Report*, *The Best Lawyers in America*, *Lexology Index*, *IFLR1000*, *LMG Life Sciences*, *Lawdragon* (500 Leading Dealmakers in America, 500 Global Leaders in Crisis Management, 100 Lawyers You Need to Know in South America) and *Latinvex*.

Practice

Mr. Schnell represents clients in numerous practice areas, including M&A, finance, private equity, securities law and disclosure, and crisis management.

For several decades, he has been a leading adviser to a wide range of companies and boards of directors on shareholder activism and engagement, corporate governance and board responsibilities, and hostile takeover preparedness.

Transactions

In 2025, Mr. Schnell advised on deals valued at over \$150 billion and, over the last couple of decades, he has counseled on deals with an aggregate value of well over \$1.5 trillion. In addition to the U.S., he has worked extensively in Latin America, Europe, Asia and the Middle East.

In the last year, Mr. Schnell has advised *Union Pacific Corporation* in its \$85 billion proposed acquisition of Norfolk Southern Corporation (\$250+ billion combined enterprise), the largest U.S. deal announced in 2025, *FedEx Corporation* in its proposed spin-off of its freight business — which is expected to be one of the largest such transactions of the year — and *Berry Global Group* in its \$37 billion merger with Amcor plc, among numerous other transactions.

Industry Experience

Mr. Schnell has been active in virtually every industry, including, for example:

- *Health Care*: Becton Dickinson, Caris, Catalent, Centene, Grupo Ferrer, Humana, MC-21, National Veterinary Associates, OrthoNet, Pfizer, Rede D'Or, RIMSA, Well-Dyne and Win Healthcare
- *Transportation*: Avianca, Embraer, FedEx Corp., Marcopolo, Renault, Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines, Triton International and Union Pacific
- *Consumer*: AmBev, Anheuser-Busch, Caribou Coffee, Compañía Cervecerías Unidas, Coty, Empresas Polar, Jacobs, Douwe Egberts, Jos. A Bank, Keurig Dr. Pepper, Krispy Kreme, NVA Compassion First, Panera Brands, Peet's Coffee, Pret a Manger, Quinenco and WhistlePig
- *Industrial/Chemicals/Mining/Infrastructure/Energy*: Air Products and Chemicals, Ash Grove Cement, Braskem, BRF, CBMM (Companhia Brasileira de Metalurgia e Mineração), Cimento Tupi, Gerdau, Grupo Gondi, Grupo Mexico, Odebrecht, Pacific Oil & Gas Limited, RGE Pte., A. Schulman, Southern Copper, Ultrapar and Vale
- *Financial Institutions and Insurance*: Allstate, Banco BBM, Bank of America, BlackRock, Centerview, Citigroup, Deutsche Bank, Evercore, Goldman Sachs, Grupo Sul America, Jefferies, JP Morgan, Morgan Stanley and Neuberger Berman
- *Private Equity/Family Office*: Apax, Carlyle, GP Investimentos, JAB Holding and Tarpon
- *Technology, Media and Telecom*: Al Jazeera, America Movil, Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF), Hasbro, TuSimple and XP Investimentos
- *Services*: Adtalem and Heidrick & Struggles
- *Sovereigns and Government-Affiliated*: Republic of Chile, BNDES (the Brazilian government's social-economic arm) and Private Export Funding Corporation (PEFCO)
- *SPACs*: A dozen SPACs and targets in de-SPAC transactions, including GP Investimentos, Neuberger Berman, Panera Brands and Waldencast

Mr. Schnell is active in all sectors of health care, including pharmaceuticals, services, medical devices and life sciences. He also co-founded and for many years co-chaired the firm's Latin America practice.

Editorial/Lectures/Teaching/Public Service

Mr. Schnell has chaired the editorial board of *The M&A Lawyer*, a leading M&A publication, since its founding in 1997. The editorial board is comprised of leading M&A lawyers from around the world. He also writes and lectures frequently on M&A, corporate governance, private equity and international finance. Mr. Schnell also co-chairs the annual M&A *Latin Lawyer* Conference in Latin America.

Mr. Schnell has been a guest teacher at a number of law schools, including Columbia Law School, Harvard Law School, University of Pennsylvania Law School and Vanderbilt University Law School, where he is an adjunct professor.

He has served in leadership positions at numerous educational, arts, social justice and other not-for-profit organizations, including chair of the Amherst College Mead Art Museum Advisory Board; honorary trustee and former co-chair of the Board of Trustees of the Ethical Culture Fieldston School; trustee of the Manhattan School of Music; director of Friends of MASP Inc., the U.S. support group for the São Paulo Museum of Art (MASP); vice chair of the Board of Trustees of The New Museum of Contemporary Art; trustee of The Opportunity Network; member of the leadership Committee of the Cyrus R. Vance Center for International Justice; board member of ArtsConnection; and member of the Board of Directors of the Brazilian-American Chamber of Commerce.

Firm Management

Mr. Schnell has been active in firm management, including having served on Skadden's governing body, the Policy Committee, and co-founding and co-chairing the Client Engagement Committee.

"He is the best lawyer in the M&A space."

"Paul Schnell ranks in the pantheon of the top five wisest and most highly respected lawyers in the US advisory world."

"Paul Schnell is an undisputed leader in global legal practice and is renowned for his mastery in executing complex transactions."

"Paul Schnell's ... level of sophistication is 10/10. His commercial vision is 10/10 ... The best I have experienced."

"Paul Schnell and his entire team at Skadden operated at the highest level throughout our transaction. Their expertise in cross-border deal structuring ... was exceptional. I am struggling to find how they could have added more value."

"Paul Schnell's client service and general level of service is exceptional ... His commercial vision is exceptional."

"Paul Schnell and [his team] are at the top of their game. They're very commercially focused on the issues that matter. They're extremely confident in their advice, and it's the best I've seen. We feel the safest we can."

— Clients, *Chambers USA*