



MEET THE DEALMAKERS

The Next Generation

Nathalie Machado

Nathalie Machado is a Senior Associate in Kilpatrick's Corporate Mergers & Acquisitions and Securities (MASC) group. Her practice focuses on domestic and international acquisitions, divestitures, joint ventures, strategic transactions, and general corporate matters. She regularly advises strategic buyers and French private equity-backed companies in connection with their U.S. business operations and M&A activities. Nathalie's clients span a variety of industries, including nursery, landscape and hardscape distribution, building materials manufacturing, technology, telecommunications, and chemical manufacturing.

Nathalie was recognized as one of the "Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch" in 2022 for Mergers and Acquisitions Law and again in 2023, 2024, and 2025 for both Corporate Law and Mergers and Acquisitions Law by *The Best Lawyers in America*®. She is fluent in English, French, and Portuguese, and holds law degrees in the U.S., France, and Brazil.

How do you describe your practice?

The bulk of my work is M&A, both domestic and cross-border. Most of my U.S. clients are strategic buyers, but I also work with private equity-backed companies. On the cross-border

side, I mostly represent French private equity-backed companies. In addition to the M&A work, I've also become the go-to person in our group for merger clearance under the Hart-Scott-Rodino Antitrust Improvements Act (HSR Act).

One of the striking aspects of your biography is that you are qualified to practice in three different countries. How did that come about?

While my family is originally from Brazil, I was born in France and grew up with a strong attachment to both countries. I went to high school in Brazil but attended college and law school in France. After obtaining my master's degree in France, I moved back to Brazil where I fulfilled the requirements for being able to practice there, including going back to law school for the credits that were not transferable from my French law degree and sitting for the Brazilian bar exam.

Now, the twist is that not only did I always want to do M&A work, but I also always wanted to work in the U.S. The U.S. is where you get to work on the largest transactions and practicing law here is very dynamic and exciting. So, eventually, my husband and I decided to move to U.S. When we moved, I chose to go to law school for a JD degree, rather than taking the shorter LLM route to becoming a qualified U.S. lawyer. It wasn't easy to

go to law school for the third time, but I wanted to have the full educational experience of an American lawyer, which I knew would open more doors for me down the road.

I always joke that there have been so many reasons and opportunities to quit the law, but I kept not taking them because I really love my work. To be honest, though, I never want to sit for another bar exam again!

Why did you choose Kilpatrick?

I came to Kilpatrick as a summer associate, and immediately knew it was a good fit. People here were so kind and welcoming while at the same time, the legal work was sophisticated and challenging. In addition, the corporate group already had a few French clients to whom my background was particularly helpful.

I’m very happy with my decision to practice law at Kilpatrick. It has given me a wonderful platform to not only build my skillset but to also develop deep and long-term relationships with colleagues and clients. And I’m very lucky because I have both wonderful colleagues and wonderful clients!

You were an in-house counsel when you worked in Brazil. How does that impact your current practice?

I worked five years as an in-house counsel at a pharmaceutical company in Brazil. Unlike working in a law firm where you can focus on a particular area of expertise, when you’re working in-house, you are pulled in all directions. You juggle so many issues, and the businesspeople seek your advice on a very broad range of topics – it takes a lot of flexibility and a real grasp of the different business needs of the organization. I understand what in-house counsel are dealing with because I was in their shoes once,

which makes it easy to communicate and build relationships.

Let me tell you, for an in-house counsel, there’s nothing more frustrating than asking your outside counsel for input on one concrete point and getting back a three-page memo with no actual guidance. So, I always think about how I can make our clients’ lives easier. My guiding principle is that the law is a service profession. Everyone’s time is valuable, so it’s important to communicate clearly, concisely, and in a timely manner.

How can junior attorneys, who may not yet have direct contact with clients, practice law as a service profession?

I think everyone's job in this industry is to make someone else's life easier, and we all have opportunities to do this. A junior associate can make the lives of mid-levels, seniors, partners, and clients easier by being organized, keeping track of emails and open items as we approach a deal closing, and generally understanding that M&A is fundamentally a team sport. Every person on the team plays a different but complementary role, and if someone doesn’t pull their weight, it becomes an issue on someone else’s plate. The key is to have the right mindset and train yourself to see the opportunities for service. On the other hand, it is important that as attorneys become more senior, they also take the time to guide and train more junior attorneys.

Do you mentor more junior associates, and if so, what advice do you give them?

I make it a priority to mentor more junior attorneys because I think mentorship is a key ingredient to succeeding in this profession. I was very lucky to have great mentors along the way who had explained to me not only the intricacies of corporate

law but the unwritten rules of the industry and the firm, and now I’m paying it forward.

There are two things that I always stress to my mentees. First, be intellectually curious and have a great attitude. This is a job for those who love to learn and to stretch themselves – and who understand that there will be challenges and long nights. Having a positive attitude and remembering that we’re all in this together makes a big difference in how you’re perceived by your colleagues as well as in how you experience difficult situations.

Second, experience takes time and there are no shortcuts. You need to invest time and effort to build your skillset and to be the best lawyer you can be, and there’s no way around that investment. It’s important to truly care about your work and the clients you are serving – caring makes you a better learner and ultimately a better lawyer. You have to focus on the long-term benefits of doing the hard work.

There are also no shortcuts to building trust. It takes time to work with people and show them that you’re reliable and know what you’re doing. Only then will they reward you with more responsibility and more freedom.

Have you found opportunities to use your legal skills in service of the community?

I have. I’m on the advisory committee of the [Pro Bono Partnership of Atlanta](#) (PBPA). It’s a great organization that matches corporate lawyers with nonprofits who need business legal services. The Advisory Committee helps develop strategies to increase PBPA’s volunteer base and revenue and let more transactional lawyers know about the existence of these rewarding pro bono opportunities.

Most of my own pro bono work comes from the PBPA

as well. Right now, for example, I'm helping a nonprofit with the transfer of its assets to another nonprofit. It’s very interesting to use my day-to-day job skills in the nonprofit context. These nonprofits are community-based and have limited resources. It’s very rewarding to be able to help them with their own legal needs, which allows them to remain focused on their core mission.

You still have family in Brazil and you travel there every summer. How do you fit travel with the demands of your work?

Traveling for us is a critical part of life just by virtue of having family abroad – both in Brazil and in France. I worked hard to earn my colleagues’ and clients’ trust, which allowed me to gain more autonomy over time. Now, I go to Brazil (more specifically, the beautiful state of Minas Gerais!) every summer when my kids are on vacation. They have fun with my family, but for me, it’s business as usual. I have an office set up there and I work normally as if I was here in the U.S.

It’s very important to me that my kids travel because I want them to understand their rich, multinational culture, but also that the world is big and there's so much to discover and experience out there. I think that deciding that some commitments outside of work are non-negotiable just like your work commitments are non-negotiable forces you to be creative and achieve the seemingly impossible. Flexibility is key. 

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