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DEALMAKERS OF THE YEAR



From overcoming press leaks to making sure ink on a paint deal dried, these dealmakers of the year showed creativity, client commitment and a business savvy that delivered on their clients' objectives.

*By Scott Flaherty, Meghan Tribe
and Gina Passarella*

IT WASN'T THE TYPICAL FUND FORMATION work for Erica Berthou, a Debevoise & Plimpton partner. She led a team that raised \$6.5 billion for Blackstone's GSO Capital Opportunities Fund III from roughly 200 investors—and did it in just about five months.

The condensed time frame for the fundraising effort meant that Berthou and her team had to fully devote themselves to the work of negotiating with investors. "We went all out," she says.

The size and nature of the fundraising also presented challenges. Because GSO was raising capital for a closed-end fund, it required a long-term commitment from investors. And with about 200 investors eventually signing on, there were myriad viewpoints to consider and a high level of scrutiny.

Erica Berthou
Debevoise & Plimpton

Keeping her team focused and leading the way, Berthou helped GSO attract investors of different stripes, ranging from foreign sovereigns to U.S. public pension plans to family offices.

"When you have a fund of this size, there are a lot of investors—you want to make sure everyone is heard," she says. "As a counselor, it's not like an M&A deal where you can have very contentious negotiations. Here, we're really building a partnership for the future and good ongoing relations are key. We are the face of our client."

**Debevoise
& Plimpton**