

2 Law Firms Dominate M&A In Languid August

By **Chelsea Naso**

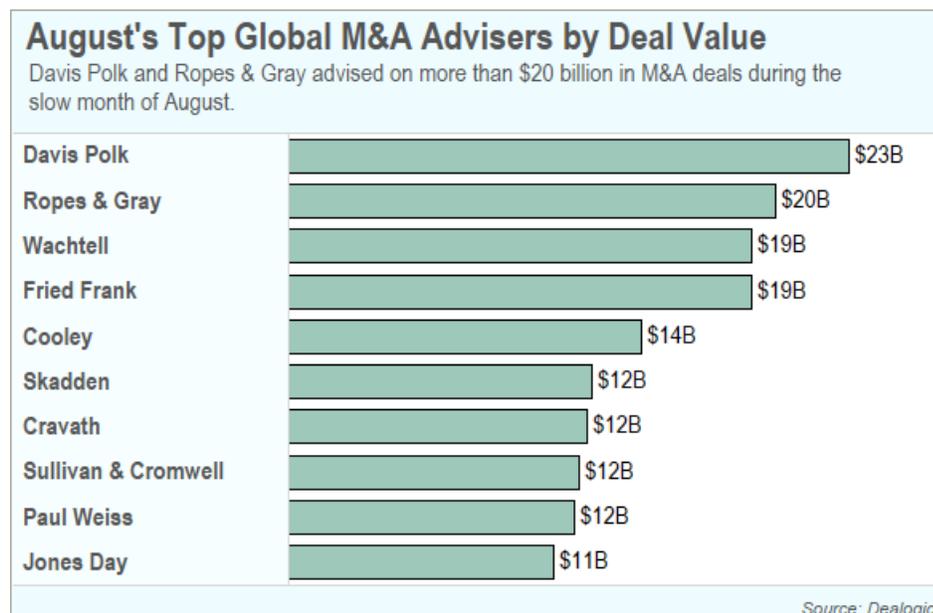
Law360, New York (September 2, 2016, 5:16 PM ET) -- Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP and Kirkland & Ellis LLP climbed to the top of the pack in August, with technology and health care deal making helping to fuel \$215.1 billion worth of M&A activity during a typically slow summer month.

Davis Polk ranked as the most active by deal value, while Kirkland handled more deals than any other firm in August, according to Dealogic, which tracks the enterprise value of announced transactions.

The month saw Davis Polk advise on seven deals together worth \$22.81 billion, followed by Ropes & Gray LLP's nine deals worth \$19.79 billion, making the firm the second most active by deal value, according to Dealogic.

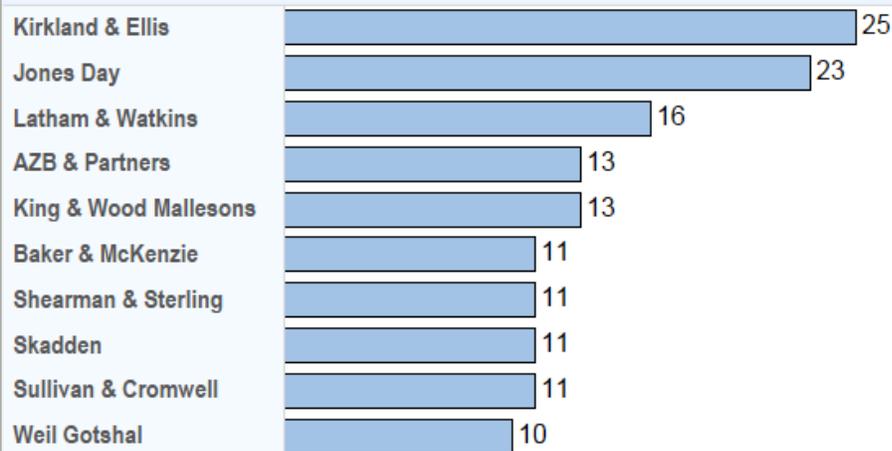
Wachtell Lipton Rosen & Katz LLP ranked as the third most active firm in August by deal value, with five deals together worth \$18.83 billion, Dealogic found. Fried Frank Shriver & Jacobson LLP slid into a close fourth, with seven deals worth a total of \$18.82 billion.

Cooley LLP rounded out the top five by deal value, advising on two deals worth a combined \$14.32 billion, according to Dealogic.



August's Top Global M&A Advisers by Deal Volume

Kirkland & Ellis advised on more M&A deals than any other firm last month.



Source: Dealogic

In terms of deal volume, Kirkland again nudged Jones Day out of the top spot, steering 25 deals together worth \$9.3 billion. Jones Day led 23 deals worth a combined \$10.75 billion, according to Dealogic.

Latham & Watkins LLP's 16 deals worth a total of \$6.76 billion made the firm the third most active by deal volume. Two firms — King & Wood Mallesons and AZB & Partners — each recorded 13 transactions, completing the top five with a tie, Dealogic found.

Overall, August saw 2,714 deals announced worth \$215.1 billion, registering a nearly \$100 billion drop-off from the activity seen in July. Although deal making tends to slow during the second half of August, the month paled in comparison to the activity recorded in 2015 and 2014.

In August 2015, there were 3,201 deals worth \$380.6 billion, according to Dealogic. August 2014 saw 3,222 deals worth \$316.27 billion.

Only one deal last month earned megamerger status: U.S. pharmaceutical giant Pfizer Inc.'s \$14.32 billion acquisition of oncology-focused biotech Medivation Inc.

Pfizer unveiled the deal on Aug. 22, agreeing to pay \$81.50 per share in cash for Medivation. The buyout offer outweighed the \$52.05-a-share bid from French drugmaker Sanofi, which launched a hostile takeover for the biotech in April.

Work on Pfizer's takeover of Medivation helped buoy the five most active firms into their spots at the top of the pack for deal value.

Pfizer is being advised by Ropes & Gray, the second most active firm. Medivation is being advised by Cooley LLP, the fifth most active firm, and Wachtell Lipton, the third most active firm.

Davis Polk and Fried Frank represented the financial advisers on the deal.

The second-largest deal for the month rang in at about half the size of Pfizer's oncology play: Chinese mobile ride-hailing service Didi Chuxing's \$7 billion acquisition of rival Uber China.

The deal, which stands to create a ride-hailing service worth \$35 billion, will include all of Uber China's assets, such as its brand, business operations and data, within mainland China.

Skadden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom LLP advised Didi Chuxing. Counsel information for Uber China was not known.

Although the deal was only half the size of Pfizer's, it did help maintain technology's dominance as the most active industry by deal value. During August, there were 675 technology deals worth a total of \$43.42 billion, according to Dealogic.

Technology deals continued to outpace health care M&A, despite health care's housing the month's only megamerger. There were 200 health care deals unveiled during August with a combined worth of \$30.27 billion, according to Dealogic.

Real estate M&A rounded out the top three most active industries by deal value, with 124 deals worth \$25.56 billion. Deal making in the industry was lifted in August by transactions like the \$4.88 billion merger announced between real estate investment trusts Mid-America Apartment Communities Inc. and Post Properties Inc.

That deal ranked as the fourth-largest for August, according to Dealogic.

While M&A activity slid in August, advisers have hopes for a stronger second half, after headwinds weighed heavily on the first few months of deal making in 2016. Factors like low financing costs, an ongoing push for technology assets — especially by Chinese buyers — and companies' continued need to find inorganic growth are expected to help spur more deals as the year goes on.

--Editing by Bruce Goldman.