

Dealmaker: Meet the 2007 Rainmakers

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ÜBER-BANKERS

Ken Moelis Moelis & Co.

Despite Wall Street's protests to the contrary, Moelis, 49, proves there are still a few select banking heavyweights who transcend industries, sectors, products and even firms. This old-school banking generalist orchestrated four of Wall Street's most high-profile deals in the last year or so — while technically being “on the beach” from March through June following his resignation as president of UBS Investment Bank, where he succeeded in attracting top talent (including Rainmaker honorees Olivier Sarkozy, Kevin Cox and Stephen Trauber) to the sleepy Swiss bank, catapulting its M&A business to No. 4 globally in revenues.

He announced his first Moelis & Co. deal just one day after opening his new firm's doors: advising Hilton Hotels on its \$26 billion sale to the Blackstone Group. “Ken's a superb banker: very creative, knows all the various angles on the table and is so good at putting together concepts,” says Hilton Hotels' retiring CEO, Stephen Bollenbach, who has known the Wharton MBA since he was a young banker at Drexel and Bollenbach was CFO of Holiday Corp., at the time the parent of Holiday Inn.

“He's always the smartest guy in the room, but he never lets anyone know it. It's just not his style.” While still at UBS, Moelis's golden Rolodex helped land the firm prominent roles representing Harrah's, Univision and Sallie Mae in their respective sales. In the case of Harrah's, Moelis was credited with slowing the process enough for Penn National to lob in a credible bid — ultimately forcing the hand of Apollo Management and Texas Pacific Group to raise their bid. Meanwhile, with Hilton, Moelis and his client accelerated the deal because of possible shifting winds in the market.