

## Rising Star: Weil's Michelle Sargent

By **Andrea Keckley**

*Law360 (July 21, 2025, 4:00 PM EDT)* -- Michelle Sargent of Weil Gotshal & Manges LLP has advised on a range of multimillion- and billion-dollar deals across multiple continents and industries, including a \$5 billion purchase by Canada's largest communications company of the U.S. Pacific Northwest's leading fiber internet provider, earning her a spot among the mergers and acquisitions law practitioners under age 40 honored by Law360 as Rising Stars.

### The biggest deal of her career:

Sargent was one of the lead attorneys advising Canadian communications company BCE and subsidiary Bell Canada in Bell's approximately \$3.65 billion acquisition of Washington-based telecommunications provider Zply Fiber.

"For the client, it was really a transformational transaction," she recalled. "And at the same time, it was a cross-border transaction. And so I got the opportunity to advise a very sophisticated client from the perspective of being a U.S. lawyer. So advising on the U.S. aspects of M&A on a deal with significant regulatory complexity was really exciting."

The value of Bell Canada's acquisition amounts to approximately CA\$5 billion (\$3.65 billion) before assuming debt totaling CA\$2 billion. The company planned to fund the transaction with an estimated CA\$4.2 billion in net proceeds from the sale of its ownership stake in Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment. The transaction closed in July.

"We had a Canadian public company that was coming into the telecom market in the U.S., which is a highly regulated industry," Sargent said. "Also, there are tax considerations, which always make cross-border deals interesting, and figuring out how to structure things in a tax-efficient manner and ensure that we have a transaction that works over the long term, too."

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**RISING  
STAR**



**Michelle Sargent**

Weil Gotshal & Manges

**Age:** 37

**Home base:** New York

**Position:** Partner

**Law school:** University of Michigan Law School

**First job after law school:** Associate at Weil

**Her proudest moment as an attorney:**

For Sargent, the highlight was making partner at Weil, where she has spent the entirety of her legal career.

"I didn't quite realize how important and how significant it was to me, personally, until maybe I looked back a year later," she said. "Everyone kind of tells you what being a partner looks and feels like, and then it took a little bit to really sink in."

Sargent began her role as a partner in 2022, nine years after she arrived at Weil as a summer associate in 2013. Now, she said, she enjoys lending her support to the firm's early-career lawyers.

"I've always been very, very focused on mentorship and development of our associates," Sargent said, "and [making partner] really puts me in a position that I get to continue to focus on that for the long term, too."

**Why she's an M&A attorney:**

Sargent was drawn to the ever-changing, intellectually challenging nature of her work.

"No day is the same," she said. "No deal is the same. So you're always kind of having to like, grow and evolve and stay at the forefront of the practice area."

Sargent's practice has never been confined to a certain set of industries, either. She's done significant work in the telecommunications sector, such as the Bell Canada deal, and the media sector, including publishing giant John Wiley & Sons' divestitures of multiple subsidiaries as it exited what it called "non-core education businesses" to focus on research and learning. But her work has spanned a broad range of fields.

Sargent is now spending time in the financial technology space as lead adviser to MarketAxess Holdings, which operates an electronic trading platform for fixed income securities, in its \$180 million acquisition of quantitative trading technology provider Pragma.

"You're always having to grow and evolve and stay at the forefront of the practice area," she said. "And then, for our clients, a lot of the work we do is really strategically transformational for them."

**Other notable deals she's worked on:**

Toward the end of 2021, Sargent helped advise animal and food safety product developer Neogen Corp. in a reverse Morris trust transaction to combine with 3M's food safety business. The companies agreed that Neogen would own 49.9% of the company, while 3M shareholders would own 50.1%.

It's "a fancy way of saying we took one business, which involved a complicated carveout and separation from the 3M Co., a very well-known, large company," Sargent explained. "We had to separate that business, spin it out, and then combine it with our client."

The result doubled the size of Neogen's business, Sargent said. It also expanded its international presence significantly.

"It was really, really complicated from a structuring perspective, in terms of what it meant for our client

going forward, and in terms of the fact that there were going to be long-term transition arrangements and contracts in place between Neogen and 3M," she said. "And so there was a lot to think about in terms of the structure of the transaction. There's a lot to think about for our client in terms of what their business would look like going forward."

Sargent said that meant "getting to work really, really closely and in the weeds with them in terms of figuring out what their go-forward organization looked like and how we best achieved that through what was a very tax-efficient structure for their shareholders."

*--As told to Andrea Keckley. Editing by Linda Voorhis.*

*Law360's Rising Stars are attorneys under 40 whose legal accomplishments belie their age. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2025 Rising Stars winners after reviewing more than 1,100 submissions. Attorneys had to be under 40 as of April 30, 2025, to be eligible for this year's award.*