

ENTERTAINMENT BUSINESS VISIONARIES

Who Keeps the Lights On and the Cameras Rolling?

In an industry fueled by creativity and star power, it can be easy to overlook the accomplished professionals working tirelessly behind the curtain to keep entertainment moving forward. Yet the lawyers, accountants, financial experts, lenders, bankers, strategists, consultants, business managers/advisors and industry executives featured in this section are among the entertainment world's most valuable architects – the individuals whose guidance helps productions launch, companies expand, deals close and careers flourish.

As the entertainment sector continues to navigate rapid change in 2026, these behind-the-scenes leaders have become more indispensable than ever. From evolving global markets and economic uncertainty to shifting labor dynamics, artificial intelligence integration, cybersecurity concerns and new business models across streaming and live media, the challenges facing the industry are increasingly complex. The professionals highlighted here help studios, networks, production companies, agencies, music labels, gaming firms and digital platforms adapt to these changes while remaining competitive and resilient.

Their work often happens outside the spotlight, but its impact is felt throughout every corner of the business. They negotiate transformative agreements, structure major investments, protect intellectual property, guide mergers

and acquisitions, navigate legal and regulatory hurdles, and develop the financial and operational strategies that allow creative enterprises to grow. In many cases, they are the steady hands helping entertainment companies manage uncertainty while positioning themselves for future opportunity.

This year's edition recognizes a distinguished group of advisors and executives whose expertise continues to shape the direction of the entertainment industry. Representing a wide range of disciplines and specialties, these professionals exemplify innovation, leadership and a deep commitment to the success of their clients and organizations.

Arranged alphabetically, the individuals profiled in the following pages have earned the respect of peers throughout the Southern California entertainment community and beyond. Their contributions may not always play out on screen or on stage, but their influence is woven into the business decisions and strategic thinking that power the industry every day.

Simply put, while audiences see the finished product, these visionaries help make it all possible.

Mickey SEGAL

Founding &
Managing Partner
NKSFB, LLC



As founding managing partner at NKSFB, LLC Mickey Segal leads the financial management sector by constructing the largest business management firm in the U.S. He leverages 46 years of elite financial experience to direct specialized wealth advisory services for Hollywood's most prominent entertainment executives and high-net-worth clients. This expertise extends to nationwide institutional capitalization, having successfully chaired and completed a massive \$40-million capital campaign for the Rose Bowl Legacy Foundation. Leveraging this record of success, Segal has continuously secured top-tier industry recognition as a permanent fixture on Variety's business management list since its inception. He sustains this momentum by driving localized healthcare infrastructure growth, headlined by finalizing a monumental \$25-million capital campaign for the final building at USC Arcadia Hospital.

Michael David KARLIN

Founding Partner
NKSFB, LLC



Michael David Karlin, founding partner at NKSFB, LLC, has spent 50 years in the business management industry, including 45 years with the firm. He manages the financial and business affairs of high-net-worth clients spanning entertainment, real estate and executive leadership, with expertise in financial planning, cash flow management, tax planning, contract review and generational planning. Karlin graduated from the University of Southern California and was chosen as the Commencement speaker for USC Leventhal's School of Accounting in both 2010 and 2025. He also serves as a member of the Board of Directors of the Motion Picture and Television Fund, as well as Westcoast Sports Associates, SYDA Foundation and Matthew Silverman Memorial Foundation, and the Board of Advisors of the University of Southern California Leventhal School of Accounting.

David WEISE

Founding Partner
David Weise
& Associates, a
division of NKSFB



Founding partner of David Weise & Associates, a division of NKSFB David Weise directs comprehensive wealth management, sophisticated financial planning and tactical business advisory services for elite entertainment professionals. He leverages 36 years of business management experience to structure high-value transactional deals across the global music, television and professional sports. This extends to cross-industry client preservation, cultivating long-term institutional relationships to build platforms that secure multi-platform revenue streams for Hollywood talent. Weise orchestrates bespoke financial architectures that insulate high-net-worth creative families from market volatility while optimizing long-term wealth transfer. He also participates as a dedicated member of the California Society of Certified Public Accountants.