

## Michael Beckman QC

Call: 1954  
 Silk: 1976  
 Education: LLB (London); Accredited Mediator - ADR Group, CEDR  
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Michael Beckman combines his knowledge of commercial and other matters with extensive trial experience, especially of commercial fraud cases both in the civil and criminal courts. He is known as a robust advocate who has a flair for creating openings in complex and difficult cases and is particularly strong on cross-examination. He is good with juries and a great believer in pre-trial team preparation particularly in relation to forensic experts. The sense of humour with which he enlivens a tough down to earth approach is very reassuring to the lay client.

In a career spanning over five decades at the bar, Michael has handled a wide range of matters before virtually every tribunal. He is known for getting to the heart of the issues often before others have had the chance to formulate them. His experience of people, commercial organizations and government bodies, including the security services, and how they interrelate provides a formidable platform to unlocking cases.

After fifty years in practice and over thirty years as a silk, Michael has used dispute resolution technique to good effect. Michael is now an accredited mediator with both the ADR Group and CEDR.

“Michael brings a lifetime of wit and wisdom to the resolution of disputes. He has exceptional experience over a wide spectrum of activities. His ability to help clients reach an appropriate result notwithstanding ostensibly insurmountable difficulties is legend.”

*Neil Sampson, Rosenblatt Solicitors*

“His success stems from a unique and highly independent approach to his work and clients. It is this approach which will ensure a positive mindset for those participating in his mediation.”

*Peter Johnson, Alexanders*

His interests are varied and include tennis, travel, food, wine, malt whiskey, reading and people (not necessarily all at the same time).

## Serious fraud & Crime

Michael Beckman's experience in this area includes international fraud trials, stock market fraud, fraudulent trading, VAT fraud, mortgage fraud including solicitors and professional advisers, telecoms fraud and various forms of conspiracy to defraud.

He has been involved in numerous cases of fraud or wrongful conduct by or against companies, including fraudulent/wrongful trading, misconduct by directors with some fascinating angles including dishonest witnesses, such as liquidators with oblique motives, informants and international security agents.

In many cases, he has represented solicitors and other professionals in serious disputes including allegations of dishonesty, misappropriation and fraud, in particular in the obtaining of mortgages.

Cases include major fraud trials in Hong Kong and Singapore, advisory work in Hong Kong, Malaysia, the West Indies and other jurisdictions and international arbitration.

He has been involved in numerous important criminal cases mainly concerning drugs, money laundering and crimes of violence such as rape and murder.

## Commercial & Civil fraud

His experience includes contract disputes, land and property fraud, fraud in relation to partnership and commercial fraud generally. Cases involving serious conflicts of fact and / or dishonest activity are particularly appropriate to his skill.

## Arbitration

Michael successfully represented an international bank in a London-based arbitration concerning failed contracts for the shipment of grain. The case involved issues of performance, variation and assignment. The exceptionally demanding arbitration involved hotly-disputed factual evidence and required sensitive handling.

Michael advised an African Republic in the conduct of an arbitral claim involving one of its statutory agencies and its subcontractors. The case involved difficult questions of statutory and contractual construction as well as fundamental disputes as to the factual background.

He also advised the same client in relation to a huge asset dispute with a neighbouring state.

## Mediation

As an accredited mediator with both ADRg and CEDR, he has the ability to conduct a wide range of mediations, using to good effect the characteristics that made him both a formidable and likeable character at the bar. His experience and practice in virtually all areas of the law provide a good grounding and knowledge of the fundamentals relating to any conflict. His impartiality and ability to instill confidence in both parties produces a good environment to facilitate a successful resolution of any dispute.

## Cases of interest

**Carrion** - (Hong Kong) - This was a massive case which went some eighteen months before being thrown out at half time. At the time the company was the stock market flagship. He was largely involved in the main count (Gammon House). This involved much documentation and cross-examination (particularly of banks). The core of the alleged fraud was simply over-valuation.

**Pan-Electric** (Singapore) - Again the flagship of the Singapore stock exchange. Its failure caused (he believes) Singaporean and Malaysian markets to close for a week and many others to hiccough. The core issue was the dishonest creation of shares and particularly forgery.

**Shepherd** – a high profile and novel market manipulation prosecuted by the DTI of financial journalists and a day trader for conspiring to create a misleading impression as to value of shares in business columns and internet bulletin boards.

He has been involved in many bank frauds (some against the SFO and earlier FIG):

**Industrial Bank of Japan** - The case: the theft and misuse of certificates.

**The Hungarian Industrial Bank** - A long case with much documentation and issues of admissibility and privilege. The core allegation was theft from the Bank. The issue in the event, was, were the directors (during the liquidation) telling the truth or were they being dishonest/disingenuous because they had 'plundered' the bank of its assets both before and in anticipation of and during voluntary liquidation.

**Baker** - (Midlands) - A long case, but the major issue was dishonest intent or naïve belief. The case involved an accountancy expert and much cross-examination of a financial advisor as to his advice and integrity.

**Phoenix fraud** – The case involved the use of companies for a Phoenix fraud on Inland Revenue and Customs and Excise.

He has dealt with several VAT frauds of different natures, for example falsified transactions, or non-existent transactions, usually involving experts. Many cases usually involve a corporate context going back to long firm fraud, fraudulent trading, commodity fraud and fraudulent or contentious issues in shipping cases.

**Murphy and Smith** – A major revenue deception involving a partnership dispute.

**Eggleton** (Chancery) - A land fraud involving undue influence, but mainly forgery.

**Wade v Denman** – A serious partnership dispute.

His practice is extensive and so widely based having started with company work and insolvency (Vaisey and Roxburgh JJ), moving to land law and tenant and property work, family work (then the PDA), personal injury, boundary disputes and prescriptive rights (Wimpey v Sohn H.L.) and even the odd visit to the Admiralty Court before largely being employed in fraud cases touching upon all aspects of life, people and business.