

NALP 2024

WONDER WOMEN RISE: SUPPORTING WOMEN TO PARTNERSHIP MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

PRESENTERS' TIPS:

SARA:

- **Staircase View**: To make the path from associate to partner less daunting, view progress and business development like a staircase.
 - Rather than focusing on getting clients first, focus on building a real network, becoming an expert in your industry, and building both internal and external credibility.
 - Calendar business development activities and goals to hold yourself accountable. These activities can be small like sending an email to someone in your industry group with an article that you genuinely think will be helpful and relevant. It could also be attending a committee meeting, writing an article, or nominating a client for an award, for example.
 - Adjust business development strategy based on what works best for your life. Now that I have children, happy hours have largely been replaced with breakfasts and lunches, but that still allows me to connect with my network. When getting together in person is difficult, writing articles and earning awards provide more flexibility.
- **Clear Intentions**: Discuss your career ambitions with your partners and mentors. If they know that your goal is to become a partner, they may train you differently and include you on more non-billable learning opportunities like pitches and high-stakes calls.
- **Internal Network**: Work with as many partners as you can outside of your practice area. I work hard to be a go-to real estate attorney for my firm's non-real estate partners. One of the best ways to get partners to vote for you is to do a great job with their clients.
- **Organization**: My husband and I have Sunday night planning meetings. We sit down every Sunday night with our calendars and go through the logistics of the next week (things like who is driving and picking up at daycare, meal planning, swimming lessons) as well as bigger items for the next month or so (planned travel, client dinners, major work demands). That way, when we have work commitments or travel outside of the normal working hours, we both know ahead of time who is handling what and it has made our lives a lot easier.

VALERIE:

- **Structured BD Support**: Firms can better support women attorneys into partnership by providing structured support (minimum number of hours, suggested activities and early goals such as joining a committee) and guidance on business development from much earlier on in their careers, even from year one.
- **BD Opportunities**: Business development staff can support women attorneys by providing business development opportunities and activities that appeal to a broader audience and offer women more authentic means of engagement.
- **Sponsorship**: Sponsorship is broader than internal promotion- backing women attorneys to the client for opportunities such as dispositive arguments, trials, and negotiations is necessary to put women in a position to lead client relationships.

NEHA:

- **Harness Your Superpowers**
 - We all have them. If you don't know yours or believe in yours, you cannot expect others to.
 - Turn to your trusted advisors and strongest supporters. Ask them questions that will help you see in yourself what they see in you.
 - Invest your time accentuating those qualities/skills and looking for work opportunities that will enable them to shine. Once you have the foundation of being a strong associate, don't invest a lot of time and energy trying to develop skills and qualities that may be someone else's superpowers but are not authentically the qualities you inherently possess. Empower yourself by investing in the areas that you are already strong so that this becomes part of your value proposition as a partner candidate.
- **Create Your Business Case for Being Elected to the Partnership**
 - The more senior you get, the more important it will be to identify how you will specifically add value to the firm, your practice and the partnership.
 - Women too often tend to wait for supervising partners and sponsors to determine this business rationale for them.
 - Take the reins. Be curious. Do your research and talk to your practice leaders and other key stakeholders (among others):
 - What industry trends are they seeing?
 - What gaps in expertise or specialized skillsets are there?
 - Who are the firm's key clients and what is keeping those clients up at night?
 - What areas are they looking to hire partners laterally into and why?
 - What skillsets and areas of expertise do departing/retiring partners possess that the firm will need a succession plan for?
 - As you learn about areas of needed focus that are of interest to you, ask yourself and others how you can develop in those key areas in ways that will add value to the firm.

- **Work with Multiple Partners & Identify Those Who Could Be Your Sponsors**
 - To the extent you can, work with several different partners in the firm so that you can develop a broad base of visibility and support.
 - If you are in a smaller practice group or work is assigned by a small group of partners, look for opportunities to work directly with additional partners on panels, practice initiatives, substantive content development, pro bono matters, committees, etc. that highlight your skills and attributes and that are visible and valuable to the partners you are working with.
 - And generally-speaking, women need male and female allies in firms so working with multiple partners will help ensure that you have a diverse group of cheerleaders who will support you in different ways.
 - The more partners in your corner who will sing your praises, the better positioned you will be.

GROVER:

- **Think Win/Win**. Be intentional about seeking out and prioritizing high-value work for partners who will advocate for you and support your career. Try to ensure that every request will result in a win/win.
- **Share Your Story**. Identify ways that you have helped clients, including specific examples, to help you refine and get comfortable with sharing your story.
- **Get Support**. Making requests is a key element of gaining influence. Especially if asking takes you out of your comfort zone, make a habit of asking for what you need in order to advance (e.g., advocacy, more responsibility, introductions to clients).
- **Vanquish Impostor Syndrome**: Impostor syndrome, the phenomenon when high achievers have difficulty recognizing or owning their achievements, is common. And while the phenomenon can promote excellent work, it can also cause associates to shy away from stretch assignments, procrastinate, or engage in self-destructive behavior such as intentionally under-reporting time. Here are some hacks to vanquish impostor syndrome:
 - Proactively seek out actionable feedback.
 - Keep a “Kudos Journal” of successes and achievements.
 - Add “yet” to negative self-talk (i.e., “I am not good at xyz – yet.”)
 - Make a habit of getting out of your comfort zone to pursue beneficial activities that you tend to avoid. “Getting out of your comfort zone” can be a daily “to do” item.
 - Work to channel anxiety (e.g., about networking) into productive action.
- For Talent Teams: **Start a book club using Michelle Travis’ book, *Dads for Daughters***.

ARTICLES AND RESOURCES:

Wall Street Journal: [Returning from Parental Leave Can Be Stressful.](#)

Law Crossing: [The Only 7 Reasons a Law Firm Will Ever Make You a Partner](#)

ABA Grit and Growth Mindset Project: [The Grit Project \(americanbar.org\)](#)

BOOKS:

Andrew N. Elowitz and Marcia Watson Wasserman, *Lawyers as Managers: How to Be a Champion for Your Firm and Employees*

Brendan Burchard, *High Performance Habits: How Extraordinary People Became that Way*

Heather Townsend and Jo Larbie, *How to Make Partner and Still Have a Life: The Smart Way to Get to and Stay at the Top*

Eve Rodsky, *Fair Play: A Game-Changing Solution for When You Have Too Much to Do*

Michelle Travis, *Dads for Daughters: How Fathers Can Give Their Daughters a Better, Brighter, Fairer Future*

Jamie Kern Lima, *Worthy: How to Believe You Are Enough and Transform Your Life*

PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES:

Lauren Symington
Chief Talent Officer, Lewis Roca

Lauren Symington is the Chief Talent Officer at Lewis Roca. She is responsible for leading the development and execution of the Recruiting and Professional Development strategies, which includes the recruitment, retention, professional development, and advancement of lawyers. Lauren is passionate about leadership and enjoys guiding professionals to meet their full potential. She collaborates with Firm leadership to encourage a culture of inclusion and respect and is committed to improving the work-life balance for professionals within the legal industry and beyond. Lauren's background includes more than 15 years of legal talent experience, including recruiting, leadership, and professional development. She loves to mentor and believes in leading with kindness and patience. In her spare time, Lauren enjoys cooking, spending time with her family and dogs, Pilates, and travel. Lauren graduated from San Diego State University and received her J.D. from California Western School of Law.

Valerie A. Moore
Partner, Nutter

Valerie A. Moore is a partner in the Real Estate Department of Nutter McClennen & Fish LLP in Boston. She counsels clients on a wide range of real estate development matters, including land use, affordable housing, construction, zoning, and environmental permitting and litigation. She helps clients navigate compliance issues at the local, state, and federal levels. Valerie maintains an active pro bono practice focusing on assisting asylum seekers with their claims.

Valerie continues her leadership outside the firm by serving on the Board of Directors of the Environmental Business Council of New England, for which she formerly chaired the Ascending Professionals Committee and currently chairs the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee. She is a member of the Boston Bar Association and CREW Boston. Valerie completed the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce's Women's Leadership Program for 2019-2020.

Neha Shah Nissen
Chief Talent Officer, Fenwick & West

Neha Shah Nissen is Fenwick & West's Chief Talent Officer. She is focused on the firm's most valuable resource—its people. Neha is a member of Fenwick's 4-person Senior Leadership Team along with the Firm's Chair, Managing Partner and COO. She sits on the Executive Committee, Compensation Committee, DEI Steering Board, and Associates Committee of the firm and co-leads the firm's senior management team comprised of the heads of each functional department. She also oversees the attorney recruiting, legal personnel and training, practice management, human resources, corporate social responsibility and pro bono, and diversity, equity and inclusion functions at the firm.

Neha brings to the CTO role her prior experience as an attorney with another Am Law 100 law firm. She began her legal career as a summer associate and federal judicial law clerk before becoming an associate and then being elevated to the partnership. As a practicing litigation partner, she served in firm management as the partner co-chair of the committee on associates which planted the seeds of what would ultimately become Neha's vision for creating a full-time career focused holistically on the life cycle of attorneys in law firms. As a diverse, female attorney-turned-senior business professional, Neha is particularly committed to creating an environment of inclusion, belonging and opportunity for lawyers and professionals at every stage of their careers. Neha earned her bachelor's degree and J.D. from U.C. Berkeley. She is the adoring mom of two teenage boys and loves to sing, dance and attend concerts, sporting events, and theater productions.

Sara Neva
Partner, Procopio

Sara Neva is a commercial real estate partner at Procopio. Sara focuses on real estate purchase and sales, leases, joint ventures and financing. She continues to build her own rapidly growing client base by creatively guiding real estate developers, investors, lenders, landlords and tenants through the ever-changing economic environment. Sara became one of the youngest partners at Procopio in 2022. Sara mentors associates on their career growth and is passionate about helping women excel in law. She was honored as a Super Lawyers Rising Star (2020-2023), a San Diego Business Journal Top 50 Women of Influence in the Law (2022), and SD Metro 40 under 40 (2021). Sara graduated magna cum laude from Santa Clara University (B.S.) and magna cum laude from the University of Minnesota Law School (J.D.).

Grover E. Cleveland
Principal, Lessons for Sharks LLC

Grover Cleveland is a former law firm partner and the author of *Swimming Lessons for Baby Sharks: The Essential Guide to Thriving as a New Lawyer*, now in its Third Edition. While in private practice, he represented the late Microsoft co-founder, Paul Allen, and many of his companies, including the Seattle Seahawks

Grover delivers interactive programs that empower summer associates and associates to start strong, tame time, and build business. And he coaches high-performing senior associates who are candidates for partnership. Grover also offers programs for partners on delivering feedback that motivates associates.

Grover has been inducted as a fellow in the *College of Law Practice Management* and has been quoted in leading publications, including the *Ms. JD* blog, *The American Lawyer*, *Law Practice Today* and other ABA publications, *Law 360*, and *The Wall Street Journal*.

He is also the author of *Taming Time*, the time management chapter in *An Associate's First Year: A Guide to Thriving at a Law Firm*, published by PLI. And he is the author of the chapter on delegating in *Stepping It Up*, a book from PLI for mid-level and senior associates.

Grover is passionate about supporting women and minorities in the legal profession. He is the NALP liaison to the National LGBTQ+ Bar Association and was a nominee for Ms. JD's TIM (The Incredible Man) award.

He is not related to the 22nd and 24th President.