

## How I Made Partner: 'Become the Client's Go-To Adviser,' Says Cravath's Sharon Goswami

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By Tasha Norman

**Sharonmoyee Goswami, Cravath, Swaine & Moore.**

**Office:** New York.

**Practice area:** Litigation.

**Law school and year of graduation:** New York University School of Law, 2012.

**How long have you been at the firm?** As of October 2020, I will have spent seven years working at Cravath.



Sharonmoyee Goswami, a partner

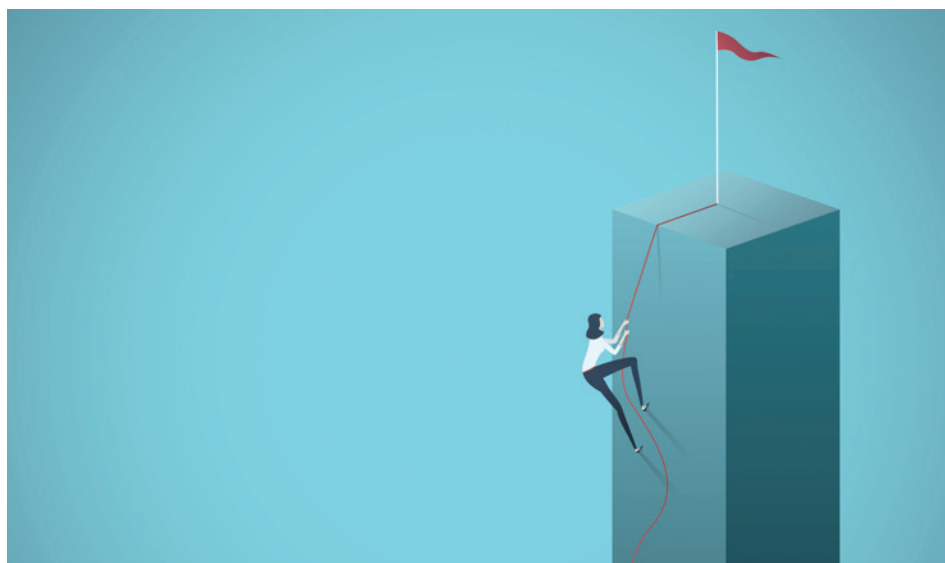


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**How long were you an associate at the firm?** I spent a total of six years as an associate at the firm, which I joined in 2012; in 2013 I clerked for the Hon. Timothy B. Dyk of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit before returning to Cravath in 2014.

**What's the biggest surprise you experienced in becoming a partner?** I was surprised at how quickly I felt treated as a peer by our other partners; even in the

months before I was listed on the firm's letterhead, the other partners on my cases were already starting to defer to my judgment. This immediate shift in responsibilities made me appreciate Cravath's focus on ensuring that senior associates are able to take full ownership of client relationships and matters. My training over my six years as an associate laid the groundwork for me to feel both prepared to be a partner and empowered to work

collaboratively with my partners across the firm.

**Describe how you feel about your career now that you've made partner.** I feel good—it's been really rewarding! As an associate, I viewed being elected a partner as an end goal to work towards, much as I had worked towards graduating from law school or completing my senior thesis as an undergraduate. But after becoming a partner, I realized that while being an associate and attending law school was a small portion of my career, I now have the opportunity to think carefully about what the arc of my whole career as a partner should look like—what kinds of cases and clients will help develop my intellectual property practice, and how I want to build my expertise going forward. It's no longer just a question, if it ever was, of staying busy or doing the best possible job on a single case.

**What's the key to successful business development in your opinion?** In my view, the best thing I have done as an attorney to build business is doing the best possible job for my current clients. Doing a

good job for my current clients has led to repeat business from the same clients, and new business from client contacts who have moved to new organizations, or from client referrals.

**Who had the greatest influence in your career that helped propel you to partner?** Under Cravath's rotation system, associates have the opportunity to work in various practice specialties and under different partners, who take mentorship very seriously. Because Cravath does not generally make lateral hires, partners are incentivized to make sure that their associates are developing the skills.

With my background in biology and materials science and engineering, and my clerkship at the Federal Circuit, I knew that I wanted to focus on pharmaceutical and biotech patent litigation. My final rotation before making partner was a particularly long rotation with Cravath partner Keith Hummel, a renowned IP lawyer with broad and extensive experience litigating complex IP disputes. Keith did a great deal to help me develop the skills I needed to build an IP practice, including putting me in a

position with major clients to become their go-to adviser. He also helped me develop more nuanced skills in interacting with clients, witnesses, and judges—for example, the right tone to take on certain court submissions and important phone calls—all of which has been invaluable now that I am a partner.

**What's the best piece of advice you could give an associate who wants to make partner?** There is no one way to make partner, particularly at Cravath. Over the years friends at other firms have told me that a large part of their becoming partner—or not—hinges on building a book of business. That's not something our associates have to do at Cravath. Instead, I would recommend young lawyers ensure that they are doing the best possible job on their current cases. They should be up to date on the public information about their clients and develop a keen understanding of each client's business, and always be intimately familiar with the cases themselves. The client and your colleagues will always appreciate that depth of knowledge.

CRAVATH, SWAINE & MOORE LLP