

## How I Made Partner: 'Be Consistent. It Will Build Trust and Your Reputation,' Advises Davis Polk & Wardwell's Natasha Tsiouris

"There are so many factors that play into your case for partnership, and the full picture is what matters."

By Tasha Norman

**Natasha Tsiouris**, 37, Davis Polk & Wardwell

**Office:** New York.

**Practice area:** Restructuring.

**Law school and year of graduation:** Columbia Law School (2010).

**How long have you been at the firm?** Ten years.

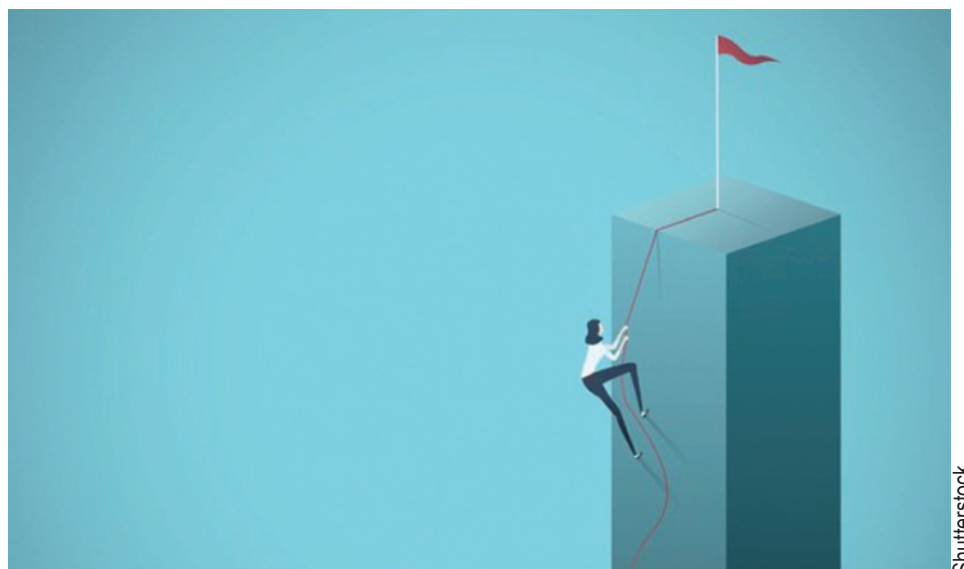
**How long were you an associate at the firm?** I was an associate for about eight years and counsel for a year and a half.



Natasha Tsiouris

courtesy photo

**Were you an associate at another firm before joining your present firm?** I began my legal career as an associate at Davis Polk in 2010.



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**What year did you make partner at your current firm?** I became a partner in 2020.

**What's the biggest surprise you experienced in becoming partner?** The genuinely strong spirit of collegiality among partners across the firm. Of course, you feel that collegiality as an associate, and at Davis Polk, that has always been a core tenet of how we approach our work. But there is a lot of management and strategic planning that the partners do as a team that I just didn't fully appreciate.

Collaborating across practices and anticipating legal trends is key to making sure our clients receive the highest level of legal services. The success of our lawyers is intertwined, and I am beyond grateful for the support from my partners and the collaborative nature of our partnership.

**What do you think was the deciding point for the firm in making you a partner?** I don't think there was any one deciding point or performance or even trait. I think your professional reputation starts on day one, and it's

a steady build from there. There are so many factors that play into your case for partnership, and the full picture is what matters. If you really want to focus on one thing though, I would say consistency is really important in the legal profession. Consistency is also what gives you opportunities. An associate who has invariably delivered an excellent work product even on simpler assignments is the associate that you will trust with that higher-profile work. Consistency builds trust and your reputation and, in turn, your opportunities.

**Describe how you feel about your career now that you've made partner.** It really feels like a new start in my career. Of course, I feel so much support from my firm and partners, but it is up to me now to shape and push my career forward in a way that I envision. It's exciting to feel like there is a new challenge ahead of me to build my practice. There are also so few women generally in the restructuring field. I can't tell you how many conference rooms and courtrooms I've walked into over the years with only one other woman present. I want to make sure that as I set forth in this new stage in my career, I also work to create space for other women in this practice area.

**What's the key to successful business development in your opinion?** I tell associates that what works best

for developing your business is what works for you as a person. If you are the kind of person who builds focused, strong relationships, then play to those strengths. Business development has to work for your personality and be genuine. I've found that smaller, focused meetings with my clients help them to get to know me more and really provide a window into my thinking. Others prefer large group settings and have more success that way. Do what makes you comfortable.

**What's been the biggest change, day-to-day, in your routine since becoming a partner?** For me, the biggest day-to-day change is the additional time spent managing business responsibilities. As a partner, I have to give thought to everything, from staffing to associate development to developing our client base. I love to do it, but it does take an extraordinary amount of time.

**Who had the greatest influence in your career that helped propel you to partner?** I have to thank Donald Bernstein, Marshall Huebner and Damian Schaible, who built our restructuring practice at Davis Polk into the powerhouse that it is today. They really exemplify what it means to operate at the highest possible professional level and have been amazingly supportive throughout my career. I also

started my career working in our derivatives and structured products group, and Yan Zhang was the best teacher I could have asked for. She taught me how to review corporate documents and draft with precision. I also received so much support from our finance group, including Joseph Hadley, Jason Kyrwood and Meyer Dworkin.

**What's the best piece of advice you could give an associate who wants to make partner?** For junior associates, find a practice area that excites you and build your substantive skill set first. As a midlevel, your reputation is really starting to build, so focus on being known for providing high-quality advice, both internally and externally. Both colleagues and clients need to know that they can rely on your counsel and depend on you. As you become more senior, focus on fine-tuning your skill set, developing your business, and working to become the go-to person for your firm and your clients. And, at every step of the way, never forget to thank those who have supported you.



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