

How I Made Office Managing Partner: 'I Made It a Priority to Maintain Our Collegial and Service-Oriented Culture,' Says Nicky Jatana of Jackson Lewis

'Be responsive to business and workplace-related needs is even more crucial now than it used to be. Issues arise quickly, and your team needs to know that they can rely on you.'

By Tasha Norman

Nicky Jatana, 53, Jackson Lewis P.C., Los Angeles.

Job title: Los Angeles office managing principal.

Practice area: Employment litigation, including multiplaintiff, class and complex litigation. Wage and hour, management training, advice and counsel.

Law school and year of graduation: University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law, 1998.

How long have you been at the firm? 19 years (1999-2005 and 2007 to the present).

How long were you a partner at the firm? 15 years.

Were you a partner at another firm before joining your present firm? Yes, McGuire Woods. I was there for approximately a year and a half from 2005 to 2007.

What year did you make office managing partner at your current firm? December 2020.

What do you think was the deciding point for the firm in making you office managing partner? I have always been 100% invested in our firm. I strongly believe that our culture is second to none, and I have yet to find another firm that emphasizes the importance of client service the way that we do here.

Los Angeles is the firm's largest office, and there's a lot of opportunity for our location to be an industry model for other offices that may be newer or growing. The past two years have been uncharted territory for everyone. I made it a priority to maintain our collegial and service-oriented culture and worked with colleagues in the office to develop remote mentorship opportunities, and I think that played a hand in me being selected by firm leadership to lead the office's next chapter.

As office managing partner, what are your key responsibilities,



Nicky Jatana

Courtesy Photo

and what challenges do you face in your role? As the Los Angeles managing principal, it is a top priority to ensure the office is consistently providing premier service to its clients. I am responsible for overseeing the day-to-day office management and all other aspects of operations. I work with attorneys of all levels and the firm's Business Services departments, including our Diversity, Equity

and Inclusion team, on developing and advancing initiatives that continue to position Jackson Lewis as the best-in-class labor and employment law firm in the Los Angeles area and beyond.

Like other managing principals at this time, I have been working on navigating the impact of the pandemic and focused on our return to the office. I enjoy our Los Angeles team so much, and my biggest challenge is not being able to connect with everyone individually as often as I would like, given the size of our office.

What's the best piece of advice you give to someone who wants to rise up the ranks to firm leadership? Taking ownership of everything you do, whether it's client-facing or something internally for your team, is essential. I also think it is paramount to be authentic, flexible and firm-minded. Finally, being responsive to business and workplace-related needs is even more crucial now than it used to be. Issues arise quickly, and your team needs to know that they can rely on you.

Who had the greatest influence in your career that helped propel you to managing partner? I

have been lucky; throughout my career, I've benefitted from wonderful mentorship and advice from colleagues all over the country. I truly believe it does take a village. To name a few people who have been instrumental in my career: Vincent Cino our former firm chair; Kevin Lauri, our current firm chair; Samantha Hoffman, our firm managing principal; Larry Stone, principal and former Los Angeles managing principal; Mia Farber, principal and former Los Angeles managing principal; Peter Moskowitz, principal and board member; and Mark Attwood, former principal. All these people, and many others who I have crossed paths with, have taught me to be the best manager that I can and to never stop raising the bar.

What would you tell your younger self? Try to gain as much experience as possible by trying new and different cases that may be outside of your comfort zone. Varied experience helps not only you but those who you are managing.

As a law firm leader, what impact would you like to have on your firm and/or the legal industry as a



(Credit: Shutterstock.com)

whole? That our Los Angeles office and the firm continue to provide best in class client service. While we work hard as attorneys, it is important to me that everyone who walks through our doors has a good working experience in our office and firm.

What lessons, if any, did you learn in 2020/2021 (the core-COVID-19 years). Like many, I am sure, I learned to have more patience and recognized that everyone has been affected by this in their own way. I also saw our firm and office come together without missing a beat to provide our clients with whatever they needed during this unimaginable time. It's truly been a team effort and it showed me that we can get through pretty much anything!

What three key elements would you like to focus on for 2022? Continued excellence in client service; better together; continued growth.