

The Winner's Circle Showcase Series: LSSO 20th Anniversary Sales and Service Award Honorees



Accepted By

Laura Meherg, Partner & Founder
Wicker Park Group

About the Award: This award is for individual consultants, providers, teams, or companies that directly support highly successful sales and service initiatives and projects. Metrics showing impact are vital, which is exactly what led to the selection of Laura for this honor.

The judges were struck by what Laura has accomplished with the nominating law firm client, Benesch.

Programs developed and instituted by Laura include: 1. Top client assessment program and regular electronic client feedback survey. 2. Lateral attorney and client integration assessment program. 3. Business development workshop for partners 4. Client assessment training for attorneys. 5. Workshops on cross-servicing, trends, and client experience.

The judges were quite impressed by the statements about how someone outside the firm was able to make such a difference, the numerous examples as to how the partners rely on her and her counsel, and how she became embedded within the team. When a consultant serves as an extension of the firm and serves as the eyes, ears, and voice of the client, they add the kind of value and provide the type of experience that is worthy of this recognition.

About the Winner: To guide clients through ever-evolving legal, regulatory, and economic landscapes, Laura (founder and Partner at Wicker Park), and her team help clients understand the motivations, obstacles, threats, opportunities, and sentiments that are unique to its clients, gleaned through powerful client surveys and interviews designed to promote transparency and garner valuable insight.

LSSO sat down with Laura to learn more about her accomplishments and outlook on the industry.

LSSO: How would you use being the recipient of this award to influence others?

Laura: I will take every opportunity possible to convey the value and benefits of client feedback to law firms and individuals. Last summer we conducted a survey with ALM Intelligence to better understand the state of client feedback initiatives in the legal profession in the U.S. Overall, 56% of the respondent firms have a consistent, structured, and organized process to obtain formal client feedback. That was discouraging news considering that in similar research we conducted in 2010 revealed that 48% of respondent firms were obtaining formal client feedback. That's not a lot of progress for more than a decade! The most often indicated reasons for not obtaining feedback are partner resistance to participation (41%), not a priority of firm leadership (38%), and a lack of staff or resources (35%). And yet firms with robust feedback programs in place reap great rewards. One firm we've worked with for more than 12 years has seen 16% average revenue growth the first fiscal year following a client interview and 24% average revenue growth within three years. Seeking and responding to client feedback on a regular basis builds dramatic client loyalty.

LSSO: What is the greatest reward of being in your role?

Laura: There are too many to count! The greatest rewards for me are seeing the power and impact of client feedback and watching the lawyers and BD professionals I've worked with over many years become strong leaders in their law firms. Just recently the chair of a law firm I've worked with for more than 20 years told me the positive feedback he received from an important firm client I interviewed more than 20 years ago greatly bolstered his confidence as a young partner. Knowing that a seasoned professional trusted him and seeing the specific reasons why outlined in black and white in the feedback report gave him courage to grow his practice and take on leadership responsibilities within the firm. I also love watching the BD professionals managing client feedback programs inside law firms become trusted advisors to their attorneys as they use the voice of the client to help their attorneys grow and cultivate stronger and more loyal relationships with their clients.

LSSO: What is the greatest piece of advice you ever received?

Laura: As a junior in college studying accounting my father, then a partner at Ernst & Young, sat me down and said, "I love you and you have many talents. Accounting is not one of them. Change your major to marketing. Play to your strengths!" When advising attorneys and firms I often find myself saying, "Play to your strengths." It's much easier and more effective to build on what you already do well rather than trying to completely reinvent yourself or your firm. Clients will tell you what your strengths are and why and what they value the most. It's easier to do 100 things and do each 1% better than to do one thing 100% better.