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



Accepted By
Raya Blakeley-Glover
Global Head of BD - Markets & Business Relationships

About the Award: This award recognizes emerging sales and service professionals with 15 years of experience or less in the legal industry who have made a measurable impact on sales and/or service activities in their organization.

The judges were struck by what Raya has accomplished at Bird & Bird, saying the honor is well earned and certainly deserved for her work. This includes creating a new role at the firm by developing and leading its first client-facing sales team—in spite of capacity and buy-in challenges—as well as a new reward system.

Raya leads the firm's first client-facing sales team within the MBD team. In just 2 years Raya has grown her team to include 14 team members based in the US, UK, and Hong Kong. Raya and her team bring in new leads, opportunities & client relationships, proactively manage lucrative multiplier relationships, provide BD & sales training and coaching to the firm's lawyers, track opportunities & referrals and develop win themes for significant opportunities. Everyone in the firm has access to the team's BD Toolkit of inspirational resources. Using enthusiasm, passion, and optimism to get buy-in for her program from management is particularly notable because in the markets in which the firm practices, legal sales is still a very novel concept compared to US headquartered firms.

About the Winner: Raya leads Bird & Bird's sales team of client facing BD professionals, focusing on winning work in strategic markets and through key multiplier relationships. She also leads on BD training and coaching, and she is passionate about championing the value that legal sales and BD professionals can bring to their firms. Before moving into BD, she was a litigator in NY. When not doing BD, she spends lots of time trying to keep up with her two boys!

LSSO sat down with Raya to learn more about her background and thoughts about the industry.

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

Raya: I am so honored and grateful to have been the recipient of the 2023 LSSO Rising Star Award. I hope to use this recognition to positively influence the way law firms view sales and business development professionals. There have been amazing trail blazers doing legal sales for over 20 years, and there are even more talented professionals working in this space today, yet most law firms see business development as a support function, and many do not have a sales function at all. It's funny that something that other industries view as business as usual is still relatively rare (and even a tiny bit controversial) in professional services, especially in legal. I love that we are doing things a little differently at my firm, building out a client-facing BD function who help win work alongside our lawyers. I hope that what we are doing not only results in great opportunities for the firm and rewarding careers for my team, but also starts to influence the wider legal market—even just a little bit! I think the industry as a whole will benefit when we dismantle the hierarchical nature of law firms, creating more exciting and fulfilling roles for those with professional expertise in the business of law, rather than just those practicing it. I hope my award helps to raise awareness of how this can all work really well and creates some positive change!

LSSO: What difference has LSSO made in your career?

Raya: LSSO has had a big impact on my career. Switching careers from practicing law to BD, and then moving from the US to the UK into a more client-facing role, my network didn't really cover what I was doing. I was building the function mostly on instinct and trial and error! When I first got involved with LSSO it was like I had found my people! It was so inspiring to learn from others who were doing legal sales. I came back buzzing from my first Raindance—I made great connections and learned a ton! I remember being really inspired and excited about things like sales coaching, event ROI, scenario based training and legal sales tech. As I've become more involved, I have found support, mentorship, and have reinforced my own passion for legal sales. On top of all of that, LSSO has given me an incredible opportunity this year to start to tell my story and hopefully share some of what I have learned with others!

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

Raya: The greatest piece of advice I ever received was that you can't have it all! I know that sounds cynical, but it's not! There are times when work is going to require more focus, time and effort, and time when family does. This dynamic changes constantly. I think it helps to be kind to yourself that you can't do it all at 100%, you have to be flexible and have a great team, at home and at work. I am very lucky to have both. When I'm at work, I know the kids are ok, and when I'm with my family, I try to be present and put down my phone. If I get that right more than I get it wrong, I'm happy with that!