

How I Made Partner: Becker & Poliakoff's Jie Chengying Xiu

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By Tasha Norman

Jie Chengying Xiu, 43, Becker & Poliakoff

Office: New York.

Practice area: Capital markets, mergers and acquisitions, corporate.

Law school and year of graduation: Seton Hall Law School, 2004.

How long have you been at the firm? Four years.

Were you an associate at another firm before joining your present firm? I was counsel at Locke Lord for three years and before that, an associate at Troutman Sanders for seven years.

What year did you make partner at your current firm? 2016.

What's the biggest surprise you experienced in becoming partner? I had been a senior associate and counsel for years and was trained to take on management responsibilities. However, as partner I gained a deeper understanding regarding the management and

business side of the legal practice as well as a deeper communication with my colleagues.

What do you think was the deciding point for the firm in making you partner? My expertise in capital markets and cross-border mergers and acquisitions, my reputation in the legal and financial community and the business portfolio I brought into the firm were among the deciding factors.

Describe how you feel now about your career now that you've made partner. I am at a quickly expanding period of my career with the support from my firm, co-workers, clients and others. I am glad that I passed the initial trial period of a young, fledgling partner, feeling the vulnerability and anxiety of an unpredictable future. I remember how it felt to be on the outside as a young Asian woman who was not born and raised in this country and



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had to fight many obstacles along the way.

Along with other Asian American lawyers, I fought against stereotypes in a field where we have the highest attrition rate and rank at the bottom in the ratio of partners to associates. I also had to overcome cultural and language barriers as a new immigrant in a profession where flawless communication with clients and co-workers is extremely important.

However, this makes me more empathetic as a leader and also helps me to be a better champion fighting for the rights of others. I believe anyone who has dreams can excel if they work hard, believe in themselves and do not give up easily.

What's the key to successful business development in your opinion? Everyone knows what to do with business development: networking, getting involved with different industry organizations, speaking, writing, publishing. However, not everyone can win the client by doing the same thing. The result is often uncontrollable.

For me, the key is to keep trying and not lose confidence. The ability to have a good attitude, always be confident, optimistic and to look ahead is very important. Eventually, the doors will open. People will notice you and give you opportunities.

What's been the biggest change, day-to-day, in your routine since becoming partner? Since I become a partner, client and team management has demanded more time from me. This is especially important when one is leading large-scale transactions such as an IPO or

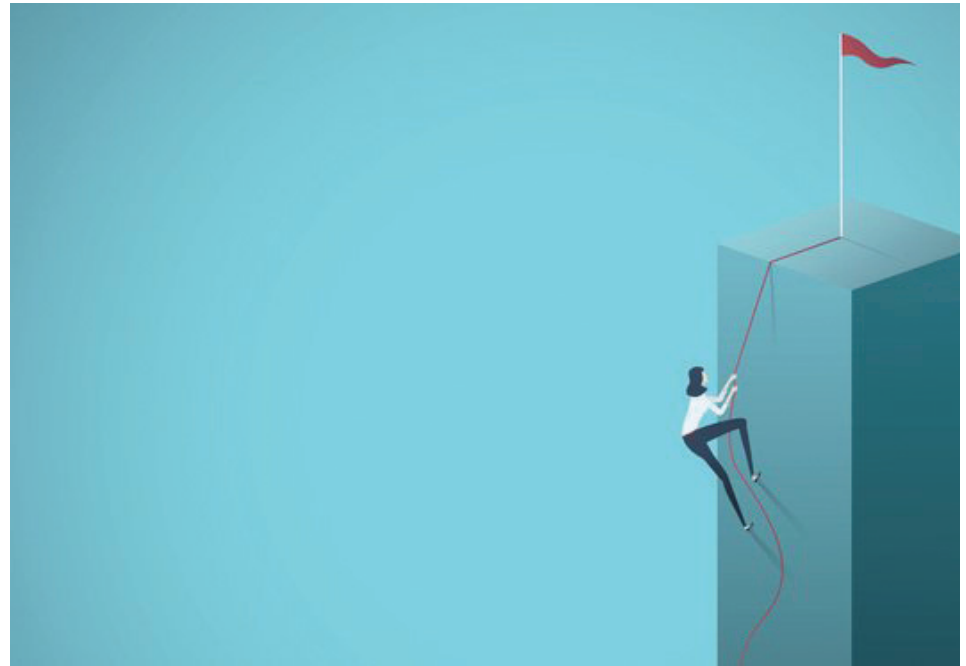


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M&A where many moving pieces and deadlines are involved. It takes maturity and experience to quickly spot issues, judge the situation and respond correctly. It requires me to observe and understand people better.

Who had the greatest influence in your career that helped propel you to partner? I admire all hard-working, self-driven, kind and righteous people who I have had the fortune to work with. They are my law school professors, judges, co-workers and other professionals. They teach by example and instill strength, hope and confidence. To them, I owe my eternal thanks. They

helped a foreign young student find her goals and achieve them.

What's the best piece of advice you could give an associate who wants to make partner? Work hard to perfect your legal expertise while gradually learning to collect networking resources. Do not wait until the last minute to do either. Do not let anyone define who you are, or tell you how to gain popularity at your firm. Everyone has his or her strong and weak points, and it's only when one's personality aligns with what he or she is inspired to do in life that one has true, unstoppable power. Follow your passion, love what you do, and the way will unfold.