

How I Made Partner: 'Be Proactive in Finding Solutions Rather Than Creating New Challenges,' Says John Vielandi of Labaton Keller Sucharow

By ALM Staff

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John Vielandi, 36, Partner at Labaton Keller Sucharow, New York, NY

Practice area(s): Corporate governance and shareholder rights litigation

Law school and year of graduation: Brooklyn Law School, 2013

The following has been edited for style.

How long have you been at the firm?

Since February 2019

What was your criteria in selecting your current firm?

I began my career at a prestigious firm representing investors in important shareholder matters and knew I wanted to continue working at one of the top shareholder rights firms in the country. When considering my next step, Labaton Keller Sucharow quickly rose to the top of the list. The firm's reputation for excellence, its track record in advocating for investors, and its deep bench of talented professionals made the decision to join an easy one.

Were you an associate at another firm before joining your present firm? If so, which one and how long were you there?

Yes, before joining Labaton Keller Sucharow, I was an attorney at Bernstein Litowitz Berger & Grossmann for five years. My time there provided me with valuable experience in shareholder rights and securities litigation, which I have continued to build upon at Labaton.



John Vielandi of Labaton Keller Sucharow.

Courtesy photo

What do you think was the deciding point for the firm in making you partner? Was it your performance on a specific case? A personality trait? Making connections with the right people?

I don't think there was any one specific case that led to my promotion to partner. Instead, I believe it was a combination of factors over time. I focused on building strong relationships across the firm, not just with those I worked with daily but also with colleagues in different areas. I've always tried to be a team player—whether that means lending a helping hand, offering advice, or supporting others in their work.

Of course, consistently delivering strong results on our cases was also essential. I made it a priority to be someone my colleagues could rely on, ensuring that I met expectations, upheld the firm's standards, and contributed to our collective success. I think that combination of reliability, collaboration, and a commitment to excellence played a key role in my path to partnership.

Who had or has the greatest influence in your career and why?

Two people who have had the greatest influence on my career are Ned Weinberger and Eric Belfi.

Ned is the chair of Labaton's corporate governance and shareholder rights litigation practice, and from the moment I joined the firm, I've worked directly with him to develop new matters for our department. He's always been extremely supportive of me, trusting me with a significant amount of responsibility early on. No one works harder than Ned, and he's always available to help out with whatever's needed. Both personally and professionally, he's been an incredible mentor—someone I can always count on to be level-headed and provide thoughtful, sound advice.

Eric heads our client development department, and since much of my role involves developing new matters, I've worked closely with him and our clients. Eric has always supported my ideas and given me the freedom to explore and develop them. He's a calming presence and has a way of giving you as much responsibility as you can handle, which has been invaluable in my growth. Without Eric's support and trust, I'm not sure I would have made partner.

What advice would you give an associate who wants to make partner?

My advice to an associate who wants to make partner is to focus on both the quality of their work

and the relationships they build along the way. First and foremost, work hard and pay close attention to detail—small mistakes can have big consequences, and being meticulous sets you apart.

Beyond that, try to anticipate problems before they arise and be proactive in finding solutions rather than creating new challenges. Always keep the big picture in mind—understanding where your work fits within a case or a client's broader goals will make you a more valuable team member.

Finally, treat people well. This profession is demanding, and being someone that others enjoy working with—both inside and outside the firm—can make a huge difference in your career. Strong relationships, combined with consistently excellent work, will put you on the right path to partnership.

When it comes to career planning and navigating inside a law firm, in your opinion, what's the most common mistake you see other attorneys making?

One of the most common mistakes I see attorneys make when navigating their careers inside a law firm is not considering how their work fits into the bigger picture—both within a case and the firm as a whole. It's easy to get caught up in the specific task at hand and assume that what you're working on is the most important thing at that moment. But in reality, a law firm is like a big machine, and it only functions well when everyone is supporting each other and working toward a common goal.

Successful attorneys take the time to understand how their contributions impact the larger strategy of a case and how their interactions with colleagues shape the firm's culture. Keeping that perspective not only makes you a more effective lawyer but also a better teammate, which is critical for long-term success.

What challenges, if any, did you face or have to overcome in your career path and what was the lesson learned? How did it affect or influence your career?

One of the biggest challenges in my career has been keeping up with the constantly evolving law in our field. Securities and corporate governance litigation is always shifting, with new judicial decisions and statutory changes shaping the landscape. Staying current on important rulings—especially in cases I’m not directly involved in—has been critical.

The key lesson I’ve learned is the importance of being adaptable. It’s not enough to just react to legal changes; you have to anticipate how they might impact future cases and find ways to turn those changes into opportunities for our clients. This mindset has not only helped me navigate challenges but has also allowed me to develop stronger strategies that position our firm and our clients for success.

Knowing what you know now about your career path, what advice would you give to your younger self?

If I could give my younger self advice, it would be to stay focused, keep my head down, and concentrate on doing good work. It’s easy to get caught up in worrying about career progression or comparing yourself to others, but at the end of the day, the best way to advance is to consistently deliver high-quality work. When you do that, good results will follow—opportunities will come, trust will be built, and success will take care of itself.

How do you utilize technology to benefit the firm/practice and/or business development?

I don’t think I use technology in any particularly unique way, but I do recognize how essential it is to our practice. We’re always connected and have access to an incredible amount of information at our fingertips. The key is making the most of that access—using technology to stay informed, collaborate efficiently, and ensure that our work product is as strong as possible. Whether it’s quickly analyzing legal developments, staying in close communication with colleagues and clients, or leveraging research tools to strengthen our cases, technology plays a critical role in everything we do.

How would you describe your work mindset?

My work mindset is built on collaboration, continuous improvement, and problem-solving. I firmly believe that no one has a monopoly on good ideas—testing and refining thoughts with others always leads to better results. I also try to approach every task with the goal of making it better, rather than just going through the motions.

Another key principle for me is solving more problems than I create. Law is a complex field, and while challenges are inevitable, the focus should always be on finding solutions. I strive for excellence in everything I do, but I also recognize that perfection shouldn’t stand in the way of progress. And through it all, I try to maintain a positive and upbeat attitude—because no matter how demanding the work gets, mindset makes a difference.