



Rosanne T. Matzat

Partner
Hahn & Hessen LLP

What advice would you offer to women just starting out in the industry?

Women starting out in their careers need to learn how to be assertive and creative while maintaining polish and credibility. By being skilled active listeners, women often excel in being responsive to the questions asked, the problems presented and the underlying concerns being expressed by a client or prospect. Women who develop and use the talent for listening to hear what is truly being said and are then assertive in responding to those concerns with creative solutions will position themselves to be recognized and excel. Don't be afraid to speak out and take credit for your ideas. A reputation for considered thought, delivered with confidence which responds creatively to the problem presented, will carry you further faster than the canned bluster often presented by others.

Starting practice with Hahn & Hessen in 1985, Rosanne was able to capitalize on Hahn & Hessen's mid-sized structure to garner experience in all aspects of the insolvency practice, both in and out of court proceedings, in litigation and transactional arenas, representing secured and unsecured creditors, SIPA and indentured trustees, equity stakeholders and an occasional debtor. In 1992, she was the first woman elected to partnership in what was then our firm's 60-year history. As a partner, Rosanne has built a practice and client base focused on delivering personal attention to our clients in a wide range of contested and uncontested matters.

In her 25 years as a partner, Rosanne has held a wide range of leadership positions and, importantly, has stood as an example, resource and mentor for other attorneys, female and male, who value hard work, achievement, teamwork and success tempered with practicality, intelligence and candor. Outside the firm, she has been deeply involved over the years in the Student Mentoring Program at her undergraduate alma mater, Manhattan College, and presently serves on the College's Board of Trustees both as a Member of the Executive Committee and as Chairperson of the Trusteeship Committee.

What do you know now that you wish you knew in the beginning of your career?

If someone can't explain something to you in a way that you can understand it, it usually means that they don't understand it themselves. Don't be afraid to ask questions and follow a point to its logical (or illogical) conclusion. More often than you think, your question or concern is shared by others and by having the confidence to express that which others are only thinking, you can drive a discussion, become a thought leader among your peers and earn the respect of your supervisors, clients and prospects.

What kind of role has mentoring and/or sponsorship played in your career?

I was privileged to have five very different firm mentors (all men) in my early career, each of from whom I learned different lessons and skills. I was able to absorb from each the best of what worked with my personal style into my professional persona. To this day, I smile when I recognize one of them in an approach or attitude I am taking. As I have advanced in my career, I have made a point of mentoring colleagues of both genders within and outside my firm. Most successful mentor-mentee relationships start

with a spark of commonality revealing a shared approach to certain fundamental precepts. Those relationships are the easiest ones to grow and develop and can be the basis for mutually rewarding lifelong friendships.

What do you think the industry could do to attract and retain the best and the brightest today?

The lending industry provides the life blood for entrepreneurship and acts as a catalyst for all forms of creative economic development. As technology and globalization accelerate unprecedented levels of change in the business models of our clients and prospects, younger colleagues are uniquely situated to appreciate and anticipate these changes and to bring value to the businesses facing the challenges brought on by these changes. If the next generation of bankers and attorneys could be made to truly appreciate their role as a creative business partner in the new economy, they could be made to understand the importance of their role in fostering economic development and betterment. The best and the brightest should gravitate to be part of that future.