

Professional Development

Associate Voices

Elizabeth Shofner on training and respect

We have a lot of experts that come in and provide training on legal writing, deposition writing, even public speaking. They will help with any numerous amounts of details for lawyers, but there is also formal training.

I mentioned the deposition program down at Corporation Counsel. There are other deposition programs that you can take if you want to. NITA is a series of programs you can sign up for on your own if you want to and the firm will pay. We are constantly being given CLE programs that you can take that run a range of subjects both in-house and there's the city bar right around the corner, and they have any number of programs you can take. So there is a good range of formal training, both substantive and skills training, that the firm provides.

But then, organically, it's really your relationship with the partners and I was on one of the bet-the-company cases in which the multinational company literally hired three law firms to represent it in this case. The entire litigation probably lasted about 23 years overall and they are still actually litigating against this same adversary. Its just been going on and on and on. This particular part of the litigation was the biggest part of the litigation — it was the best — the company part. And even as a second year and third year associate, I was given a tremendous amount of responsibility. I was flying out to Chicago to meet with experts to develop a damages theory and to develop a defense theory in the case.

But I've always found that working with the partners in this firm; they give you an enormous amount of respect. They respect your ideas. They want you to contribute to the case. They want your thoughts. You're not just work-horses to them. They really want you to be thinking about the case and to be involved because they will pickup your ideas and take them through to trial.

