

# How I Made Partner: 'Take Ownership of the Cases You Are Staffed on,' Says Daniel M. Horowitz of Holwell Shuster & Goldberg

By ALM Staff

April 15, 2024

**Daniel M. Horowitz, 36, Partner at Holwell Shuster & Goldberg, New York, New York**

**Practice area:** Complex commercial litigation

**Law school and year of graduation:** Cornell Law School, 2014

*The following has been edited for style.*

## **How long have you been at the firm?**

About seven and a half years. I joined the firm as an associate in September 2016 and started my new role as a partner at the beginning of 2024.

## **What was your criteria in selecting your current firm?**

I was attracted to the idea of being a litigator at a smaller firm in a close-knit setting. I liked how Holwell Shuster was (and is) a litigation-only firm and that the lawyers' practices are not limited to any specific subject matter. Ultimately, the deciding factor for me was that I was super impressed with the Holwell Shuster lawyers I met during my interviews, and it seemed like a group that I would be honored to join.

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

After law school I clerked for two years in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit and the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York. I joined Holwell Shuster directly thereafter.

## **What do you think was the deciding point for the firm in making you partner? Was it your performance**



Courtesy photo

Daniel Horowitz of Holwell Shuster & Goldberg.

## **on a specific case? A personality trait? Making connections with the right people?**

I think it would be difficult to pinpoint a specific tipping point. I think it relates to years of doing what I could to demonstrate my skills and potential to learn and grow. Having worked at a firm the size of Holwell Shuster for over seven years as an associate, I have had the opportunity to work with almost every partner in the firm. And when working with someone for the first time (or the first time in a while), I assumed that my reputation was on the line (again) and did my best to maintain it.

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

There have been so many, but I'll identify two. First, my dad demonstrated to me what it takes to work in

client-service professions, to provide for a family, and to do it like your life depends on it—while still having fun and maintaining a sense of humor. He would tell my brothers and me to approach each day “ready to bite the a\*\* off a bear.”

Second, during my time at Holwell Shuster, I have had the very good fortune to work closely with Blair Kaminsky on many of my cases. Blair made partner during my first few months at the firm. I have learned, and continue to learn a ton from her, both by observing how she operates—getting into the weeds, seeing the angles that others miss, managing even the most contentious situations with poise and tact—and from direct, specific feedback she has provided me over the years. When thinking through problems, I ask myself, “How would Blair handle this?” And if it does not come to me, I just ask Blair!

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

Take ownership of the cases you are staffed on. On every matter you work, take time to think critically about the big picture issues facing your client, even if the specific task you are assigned does not require going that far. And if you have an idea, share it. Do not wait to be asked and do not worry about being wrong!

Similarly, I’ll share some advice I received that resonated: Strive to make the junior partner on the case redundant. That can mean ensuring that you are thinking strategically about your case. But also tackling the more mundane: be the first to jump on issues or emails that come through by proposing responses or a path forward. By jumping at those minor tasks without being asked, you can demonstrate your reliability while also making yourself indispensable to the team!

**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?**

Perhaps counterintuitively, I think it is easy for law firm associates to focus too much mental energy on

whether they will make partner. I was guilty of this too at times, but focusing on that unknown can create unnecessary anxiety and take a lot of the fun out of litigating. I encourage my colleagues to set it aside as best they can, and focus on controlling what they can control, which is primarily doing their best work. Letting that hang over you like a cloud is largely a distraction that can get in the way of that goal.

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

This goes for so many, but balancing the work of a law firm associate with trying to be a good partner and parent is no small feat. The major lesson for me was that my wife is incredible and any success I have had career-wise I owe to her.

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

I studied filmmaking in undergrad and thereafter worked retail and odd jobs in the film industry before law school. I would reassure my younger self that, while not obviously applicable to my ultimate career path, I believe all those experiences helped positively shape the lawyer and colleague that I am today.

**Do you utilize technology to benefit the firm/practice and/or business development?**

With my teams recently, I have tried to utilize different collaborative tools, like live documents to streamline the editing processes, and digital workspaces to stay on top of projects. Other than that, I send a ton of emails, but maybe that does not count!

**How would you describe your work mindset?**

Deep in thought always, as the sun rises and sets, What is our next move?

(My reputation among Holwell Shuster associates is that I use the haiku form at times when it is not [traditionally] called for.)