

## 'I've seen too many young talented women shy away from a law firm job' – Latham's Alex Kelly on making it to the top



**Georgina Stanley**  
[georgina.stanley@legalease.co.uk](mailto:georgina.stanley@legalease.co.uk)  
1 April 2025

Private capital DEI

Alex Kelly is global vice chair of Latham's private equity and investment funds practice, based out of the firm's New York office. Ranked by the Legal 500 as a leading partner for private equity, she joined Latham in 2008 after graduating from New York University School of Law. Here, she discusses everything from the skills needed to succeed in PE through to her advice to women who want to get to where she has.

### What do you most enjoy about practising law and your practice in particular?

I enjoy being a trusted adviser to clients and helping them navigate difficult situations and achieve their objectives.

### What are the top three skills you need to succeed as a private equity partner?

Clients want lawyers who not only have exceptional substantive expertise and market knowledge, but who are problem-solvers that will work with, not against, their counterparties to get a deal to the finish line as efficiently as possible.

### How has the profession changed since you started out?

The legal profession continues to evolve. When I started, there was a more defined timeline and track for career progression. Today, it's widely accepted that there are various paths to making partner – lawyers will still need to meet the same standard, but there is more flexibility as to how (and how long it takes) to get there, which has been particularly beneficial for women who are more likely to need to ramp down at various stages of their careers.

As I look around today at the successful women in the profession, there is not one model for how they achieved their success, which I think is highly encouraging for young associates who have access to more data points and more examples of how different partners make it work.

**What does it take to get to the top in a global firm and how did you manage it?**

Achieving the highest levels of success in any profession demands substantial commitment, prioritisation and dedication, regardless of gender. [My career success] was – and still is – the product of a lot of hard work and dedication to my clients and the firm.

**How important is it for firms to offer career flexibility ?**

Allowing flexibility isn't just a nice thing to do, it's also a strategic advantage. Without flexibility, we artificially shrink our talent pool to those lawyers who fit a certain profile or mould.

**What's your career advice to women specifically?**

I've seen too many young talented women shy away from a law firm job not because they do not want the job in the present, but because they look into the future and become overwhelmed at the prospect of juggling the demands of the job with what they envision they will want in their personal lives in the future.

My advice is always to not make career-limiting decisions in the present based on how you think you might feel in the future. Instead, make choices that maximise optionality so that you have the freedom to pursue whatever path you want to choose when you have more information.

Life takes many twists and turns; it is hard to predict how the future will unfold and even harder to predict how you will feel when it does.