New Partner Spotlight: Rafael Llano

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For Rafael Llano, business litigation is about more than resolving disputes. It's about understanding what's at stake for a business, protecting its interests, and finding solutions that support its long-term goals. Whether helping clients navigate complex disputes, evaluate the risks and costs of litigation, or address potential legal issues before they arise, Rafael takes a practical, strategic approach to achieving the best possible outcome. He recognizes that a successful legal strategy requires more than strong advocacy; it also means understanding each client's business, knowing when to fight and when to negotiate, and keeping the bigger picture in focus. With an emphasis on trust, communication, and proactive counsel, Rafael works to build strong client relationships and help businesses navigate challenges with confidence. As we recognize his promotion to partner, we asked Rafael to share his perspective on business litigation, the importance of aligning legal strategy with business objectives, and what he believes makes a successful attorney-client relationship.

What's a common misconception about business litigation?

That every business dispute needs to end in a courtroom. A lawsuit is not the only way to resolve a dispute. Sometimes the best outcome comes from aggressively pursuing a claim, and other times it comes from finding a practical resolution that allows the client to move forward.

How do you help clients balance the legal considerations of a dispute with their business objectives?

I start by understanding the client's business goals, because a favorable legal outcome isn't always a favorable business outcome. My role is to help clients understand their options, assess the risks and costs, and develop a strategy that makes sense for their business.

What's one lesson you've learned from representing businesses in litigation?

That it's often a mistake to wait until you're facing a lawsuit to call a lawyer. Some of the most valuable legal work happens before a dispute ever arises. Whether it's carefully drafting agreements, addressing potential risks, or navigating compliance issues, involving counsel early can help businesses avoid costly lawsuits. I've seen this firsthand in disputes between business partners who either operate without a formal agreement or rely on a generic operating agreement that doesn't reflect the realities of their business.

What do you think makes a strong attorney-client relationship?

Trust, communication, and honesty. Clients should feel comfortable picking up the phone, asking questions, and knowing they'll get a straightforward assessment, even when the answer isn't what they want to hear. The strongest relationships are built when clients know their attorney understands their business, is invested in their success, and treats their legal matters with the care and attention they deserve.

What's one skill you think every successful litigator needs?

The ability to see the bigger picture. It's easy to get caught up in individual motions, arguments, and disputes, but successful litigators need to constantly evaluate how each decision advances both the case and the client's ultimate objectives. Every litigator needs to know when to fight, when to negotiate, and when to change course.

Related People



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