



ATTORNEY SPOTLIGHT SERIES:

Attorney Prema Roddam on the Practical Benefits of Diversity

It's no secret that diversity in the workforce is important—and perhaps even more so for a law firm. But beyond the moral and ethical reasons to encourage diversity, attorney Prema Roddam is quick to point out that there's quantifiable value in having a workforce composed of men and women with a broad mix of cultural backgrounds.

Roddam is with **Chugh LLP**, an international law firm and CPA firm with offices across the United States, an office in India, and affiliates in several other countries. The firm specializes in corporate law, tax, immigration and litigation matters, but also works with clients in a number of other areas like employment law and mergers & acquisitions.

"Women hold 80 percent of the leadership positions at our firm," she beams. "And women employees make up 65 percent of our team," so it's no surprise that Roddam recognizes the importance of diversity.

HOW DIVERSITY BENEFITS LAW FIRM EMPLOYEES

The benefits of diversity start with employee satisfaction. Roddam says that the makeup of the firm's **staff roster** shows how committed the firm is to diversity and explains that its composition makes the firm a great place to work.

A big reason why, Roddam states, is that diversity often provides flexibility. "The firm is very accommodating to the needs of its employees," she says. That holds true for the firm's offices in the United States and abroad.

That flexibility also means the firm is well-equipped to address unexpected challenges. For instance, at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the firm leadership quickly encouraged employees to work from home whenever possible. "The firm [took] very good care of us," Roddam says, as she explained how the firm's leadership worked to ensure employees stayed safe.

Going beyond employee morale, Roddam makes it clear that happy employees contribute to a more enriching client experience. And fusing diversity with a positive client experience is a big deal, because...

HOW DIVERSITY BENEFITS LAW FIRM CLIENTS

Being a corporate and immigration attorney, Roddam works with clients from all over the world. In this practice area, having a diverse mix of employees offers some obvious benefits.

She points to instances where she has been able to collaborate with a colleague from the client's country to ensure a more meaningful dialogue. "You're able to have someone that understands the client's language or understands the client's cultural background," Roddam says.

Roddam credits the diversity within Chugh for enabling her to collaborate more effectively resulting in a positive experience and better outcomes for these clients.

HOW DIVERSITY BENEFITS A LAW FIRM

The client-lawyer interaction is critically important, and not just for immigration attorneys. Different cultures have different ways of conducting business, so having a legal professional that understands those nuances can have big impacts on client satisfaction, retention and law firm efficiency—all factors that contribute to the firm's bottom line.

Those client connections play a big role in the firm's strategic approach to business too. Roddam and her colleagues work very closely with clients. "We would like to be their first point of contact," Roddam explains. "We're almost like their business partners."

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

As mentioned above, the firm affords its employees a lot of flexibility, which has translated into a lot of pro bono work and community involvement. "Most of us in each office are involved in at least one nonprofit organization," Roddam says. "The firm definitely supports nonprofit work."

In fact, the firm allows its staff members to choose nonprofit work that's important to them. For Roddam, it's women's rights, but she says that employees are free to be involved with other groups, like child advocacy organizations for instance.

Roddam points out that this community involvement not only boosts morale by allowing employees to pursue their passions, it also helps employees network in the community.

But perhaps most importantly, the nonprofit work helps cultivate **future generations of leaders**—which will only have positive impacts on diversity within the legal profession.

This article is presented by LexisNexis on behalf of the author. The opinions may not represent the opinions of LexisNexis. This document is for educational purposes only.

About LexisNexis® Legal & Professional

LexisNexis Legal & Professional is a leading global provider of content and technology solutions that enable professionals in legal, corporate, tax, government, academic and non-profit organizations to make informed decisions and achieve better business outcomes. As a digital pioneer, the company was the first to bring legal and business information online with its Lexis® and Nexis® services. Today, LexisNexis Legal & Professional harnesses leading-edge technology and world-class content to help professionals work in faster, easier and more effective ways. Through close collaboration with its customers, the company ensures organizations can leverage its solutions to reduce risk, improve productivity, increase profitability and grow their business. LexisNexis Legal & Professional, which serves customers in more than 175 countries with 10,000 employees worldwide, is part of RELX Group, a world-leading provider of information and analytics for professional and business customers across industries.