

Nexsen Pruet's Howard Janis Discusses Professional Management and Organizational Evolution

Media Mention

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Howard Janis, Chief Financial Officer of Nexsen Pruet, was recently featured in a Meridius Matters article. The article, "Firm in Focus: Nexsen Pruet," is a Q&A overviewing Howard's career arc and his current role within the firm.

Article Excerpt:

I know you joined as CFO about a year ago. I'd like to get a sense of your journey and your role at Nexsen, and particularly the areas of responsibility and what you manage, wearing the CFO hat.

In late 2017, I was recruited to join Nexsen Pruet. As I interviewed with the firm, I did my own due diligence, and a lot of people said to me: "Howard, you are going to the preeminent law firm in the Carolinas." And I have realized is absolutely the case.

I started here in February of 2018, as CFO. My roles and responsibilities have already evolved in that time. Originally, I was hired to focus on the more traditional focus of a CFO role with the idea that this might expand over time into a COO role.

That expansion happened quicker than anyone had planned and I'm overseeing many areas of firm business operations now.

Today I oversee our finance department, records, HR, facilities and IT — everything that's operationally based and not directly practice based, which falls under the management of our professional leaders.

Further:

What's on the horizon for you or for your firm? What are the larger trends touching on these operational issues as we kick off a new calendar year?

Pricing is always on our radar. We're really looking at how we can partner with our clients as it relates to pricing new work that we're doing.

The key for us doing this, and doing the actual matter work, is in a spirit of partnership with our clients to create a clear "win-win."

If we don't partner with our clients, they're not going to want to partner with us, and it needs to be a team approach.

Some say the hourly billing is dead or is dying. It's not yet. There are still a lot of clients that want us to bill by the hour.

But there's also a number of clients that want to look at alternatives. They want to share the risk with you. They want to know that their counsel, their trusted counsel is able to really partner with them so that if the deal doesn't close, we're on the hook somewhat as they're on the hook. But if the deal closes, let's share in some of the success together.

The general counsels and the CFOs of clients are really putting a tough push on the people internally at their organizations as well as outside counsel for cost-spend management.

And that makes sense — as a law firm, we do the same thing. We go back to our vendors and we push them on cost-spend.

The key question is: "How can we partner together? How can we give them certainty so that they know that their expenses are going to be X, Y, and Z?"

We have historical information within our systems. We know how to budget a matter. We know how to communicate with clients and find out the best way to make this work. It's always a partnership and it's always evolving.

To read the full article, [click here](#).

Howard Janis is the Chief Financial Officer for Nexsen Pruet. He brings more than 27 years of Business, Finance, HR, IT and Facilities Management for professional service companies, with an emphasis in Law Firm Pricing, Business Analytics and Client Accounting. Howard is one of the first Accredited Legal Pricing Professionals (ALPP). He has participated in several panels on pricing and partnering with clients to make the RFP process easier and more efficient.

Nexsen Pruet is one of the largest law firms in the Carolinas, with more than 190 attorneys and offices in Columbia, Charleston, Greenville, Hilton Head and Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, as well as Charlotte, Greensboro and Raleigh, North Carolina. Founded in 1945, Nexsen Pruet provides a broad range of legal services to the business community and represents companies and other entities in local, state, national and international venues.