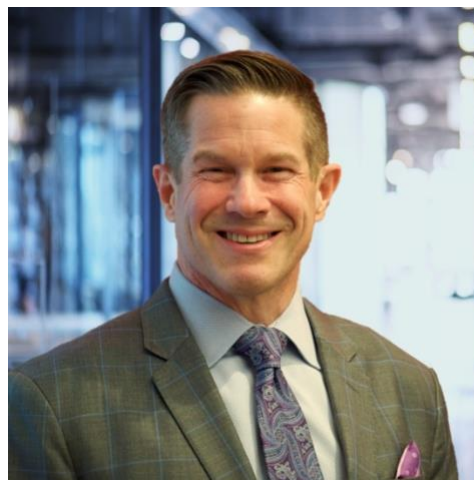


The Winner's Circle Showcase Series: LSSO 20th Anniversary Sales and Service Award Honorees



Accepted By

Darryl Cross

Norton Rose Fulbright

About the Award: This award is for a professional—who leads and is primarily responsible for sales/business development—who played a crucial role in acquiring and/or growing clients.

About the Winner: Darryl Cross and his talents embody this award, from both a wallet and market share perspective. Darryl views revenue generation as a distinct function of the firm and considers it the last mile of marketing and business development that is often left to chance - and the partners - and never completed. His philosophy is built on the premise that law firms urgently need more sales leadership as much as it needs sales executives.

In the words of Bill Flannery himself, Darryl Cross “...in a focused manner, achieved measurable, reliable results.” The judges were impressed with what was accomplished as well as the detail and specific metrics included in the nomination.

Darryl Cross was brought into Norton Rose Fulbright to establish a coaching culture and improve the revenue generation efforts of its partners. The firm decided that having a full-time in-house coach would prove to be an advantage due to access to firm financials, leadership, and insider knowledge on collaborative opportunities.

Coming in as US Executive Sales Coach, Darryl's strategy was to focus on building foundational systems and mechanisms that would be self-sustaining even when coaches were not present. This involved selecting the right types of partners for coaching, rolling out firmwide sales training, leveraging technology for pipeline management, and collaborating with teams and management to drive results.

As a result of these efforts, over \$10 million in new revenue has been documented in less than one year.

Darryl successfully demonstrated that successful sales leadership demands tools, mechanisms, and metrics to deliver results and serve clients. We sat down with Darryl to learn more about his career, outlook, and philosophies that yield success.

LSSO sat down with Darryl to learn more about his accomplishments and outlook on the industry.

LSSO: What is the greatest reward of being in your role?

Darryl: The biggest rewards I get from my role both relate to who I get to work with as a coach. First of all, I get to work with some of the smartest, hardworking, innovative, and elite lawyers in the world. They are the best at what they do. However, sometimes they are not doing the best that they COULD do. My job is to make them better than they were yesterday, and that is especially rewarding when you work with our industry's version of Olympic athletes. The margins of winning are small and the consequences of failure are high. I love watching my coaching clients move from one tier to the next---and then crave even more.

I also have to point out the reward I get from working with my leadership. The members of the Executive Committee of my firm have positioned me as mission critical to our firm's success. They constantly are reinforcing my message and approach to revenue generation. In an industry where some firms won't even say the word "sales" out loud, my firm insisted it be in my title. I am so grateful for their foresight and commitment to sales excellence.

LSSO: What is the greatest piece of advice you ever received?

Darryl: My mentor at LexisNexis was a gentleman named Keith Hawk. He was beloved by thousands at the company as the SVP of Sales, and he is a highly accomplished speaker and published author on the subject. One of the things he told me once was. "Do not expect to pull your foot out of a bucket of water and think there is going to be a hole there."

His point is that we are all replaceable. The company and the world will move on without us, so make the most of your time when you are here. He also emphasized how this pertains to clients---internal and external. If you are not creating value and helping others every day, it is like you pulled your foot out of the bucket. Clients will find someone else to help them. Someone at the office will step up and take your spot. This goes for work, sports, or anything competitive in nature. It isn't a demand to sacrifice your life to stay ahead. It is a reminder about the power of creating impact and generating momentum. Go forward!

LSSO: What does the future of the legal sales and service industry look like to you?

Darryl: Back in 2010, I was interviewed as part of a panel offering up ideas on what the industry would look like in 2020. I have to say I was pretty accurate in what needed to be done. I was less accurate on what would be accomplished. Some of the things I talked about were the use of technology to create scale, using data to make better decisions, and lawyers becoming proactive in approaching clients with opportunities. My observation now is that we spent the past 10-12 years getting bigger (more volume), but not growing (more effective).

We still operate in an analog way when it comes to generating new business. Clients today would never stand for lawyers billing time doing case research in a book and discovery by having associates manually review documents. However, that is how we still handle too many things related to sales. Like with how we do the legal work, clients will expect better from us in how we approach them to acquire the work. They will be demanding we spot opportunities and challenges before they call us. They will demand collaboration across practices and geographic borders. They will expect us to make THEM more successful.

Law firms will have to start using data to make better decisions and pay attention to a much, much smaller segment of clients. We may bill 10,000 clients in a year, but it is the top 300 (or less) that will make or break the firm. The future will be through focus, discipline, and intensity.

Luckily, the integration of artificial intelligence into our daily activities is accelerating exponentially and will make this possible. It will require coaching of team-based selling to solve the whole business issue for the client. And, it will require a mindset shift where lawyers focus on probability (what should we do) versus capability (what could we do), which is the essence of a formalized pipeline management strategy.

In short, expect to see sales leadership roles and sales management tools emerge over the next 24-26 months as the norm at the most successful firms.