

## The Winner's Circle Showcase Series: LSSO 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Sales and Service Award Honorees



Submitted/Accepted  
by Project Team Leader  
**Frederick J. Esposito, Jr., MBA, CLM**  
COO, Rivkin Radler LLP &  
LSSO Editorial Board Member

**About the Award:** Fred Esposito led the project team at Rivkin Radler LLP that received the Leonardo Inghilleri Service Excellence Award for Transformation of the Year. This prestigious award recognizes outstanding accomplishments in delivering exceptional service and value as perceived by clients. It encompasses a relentless dedication to people, pioneering solutions, streamlining processes, leveraging technology, and driving transformative shifts that empower organizations to deliver an exceptional and exemplary client experience.

The judges were impressed with Fred and the Rivkin Radler's team's transformation, which focused on the firm's Client Intake process. The project focused on assessing the current state of client intake, and exploring how and what changes will streamline and make the individual and firm processes related to a massive, business critical process more efficient. The team was comprised of three attorneys from varying practice areas to gain different perspectives. Others involved included the Director of IT, Director of Finance, Director of Marketing, Conflicts and Billing Managers, and a legal assistant. Two professionals on the team were Legal Lean Sigma Green Belt candidates. They engaged leaders and various stakeholders inside and outside the firm, including partnering with several software providers.

The judges were struck by what the team accomplished, noting how impressive it is that the firm "addressed something that rarely gets solved." They also noted that the transformation involved "people who perform different functions and have competing priorities and that everyone worked together to get it done." By taking the time, following the process

improvement framework, and using the tools of Legal Lean Sigma, the team gained a deep understanding of the current process and tasks associated with the process. They identified areas where we can eliminate waste and unnecessary variation and create a more efficient process that can be monitored and controlled for favorable performance.

Finally, the judges said that the nomination focused on “a really, different thing – and is focused on clients – **anyone who has worked inside can see that it would make a difference. It’s the unicorn project.**”

**About the Winner (Team Leader):** Meet Frederick J. Esposito, Jr., a dynamic C-level Executive with over three decades of accomplishments in shaping and revitalizing business strategies. With an unwavering focus on innovative legal design thinking, Fred’s expertise spans the realms of business growth, process optimization, project mastery, and enhanced productivity. Fred collaborates closely with law firms, dissecting financial performance, crafting pricing strategies, and championing operational excellence.

His mission? To ignite efficiency, supercharge profitability, elevate billings, and optimize collections.

But Fred's influence doesn't stop there. He's the architect behind professional development programs, strategic blueprints, succession plans, and risk assessments. Fred is a thought leader, speaking on topics such as strategic pricing, attorney incentives, the innovative realm of Legal Lean Sigma®, and the world of design thinking, all culminating in a crescendo of profitability models.

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

**LSSO: How would you use being the recipient of this award to influence others?**

**Fred:** As a recipient of this prestigious award, I view the recognition of my team and me as an honor, but more so as a milestone in law firm innovation. It is a recognition and acknowledgement from our peers that the work we are doing to improve the client intake process, or any other process for that matter, is highlighted and recognized with the significance of the impact our work has made, not only for our law firm, but for the profession. The recognition and word of mouth this award has created should create opportunities for other law firms to follow our lead as well as inspire and motivate our peers to move forward and affect positive change. We believe our work in tackling the client intake process will motivate and challenge others to take a hard look at how they are providing legal services and to take a hard look at how that work is being produced. On the surface it all seems relatively simple, but the process improvement DMAIC framework placed our objectives into perspective and created more innovative approaches to looking at the “behind the scenes” of one of the most critical processes in the law firm today. Not only did our work with the client intake process create improved efficiency, but also impacted other law firm processes connected to the intake

process. We have created a chain reaction of positive change and one which will benefit all concerned. We have introduced change management, but in a “user-friendly” fashion which has already gained acceptance in our firm. We believe our comprehensive approach to introducing process improvement and change in methodical steps, i.e., training and education, will not only improve productivity and revenues, but will move our firm in a learning culture, thus paving the way for the firm to introduce more innovation and improvements moving forward. This award again was not only an acknowledgement of our hard work as a team but created a portal for additional innovation and change acceptance for all our peers to see.

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

**Fred:** The greatest reward in my role is being the primary player to introduce the concept of improving law firm processes to maximize efficiency and firm success. I believe folks in my position are inherently change agents and need to take on the responsibility of moving our law firms to the next level. The buzz word years back was “progressive,” but I view it more as an antiquated term. Now, law firms need to be innovative and transformative and open to changes that are one, clients are looking for to maximize the value for the services received, and two, an opportunity for law firms to step up to the client challenge by providing added focus along with the expected value. Leaders like me need to step up and put forth this initiative and challenge the status quo. What worked many years ago is no longer feasible and it must change. My rewards are simple, it is about gratification and knowing I played a significant role in making all these wonderful initiatives happen. Not only as a leader, but as a collaborator, as a team player, and sometimes, a cheerleader! We are always educating, but more importantly, folks in my role should be aspiring to inspire! That is my greatest reward of all -being able to inspire others to embrace positive change and watch them aspire to their meet their personal and professional goals.

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

**Fred:** I remember the recession of 2007-2008 when all professional service firms were crippled by the economic market. Real estate values dropped 30%, bank credit dried up, small law firms were struggling to survive, and we entered an era of commodity work and alternative fee arrangements and a resurgence of legal project management. All of which is still part of our profession but has evolved as most trends do. Clients were in the driver’s seat on pricing of legal services and to survive, the legal sales and service industry had to adopt the new paradigm. Now, post-pandemic, many familiar trends are resurfacing, but with a few more added twists. Alternative Fee Arrangements have evolved into more sophisticated pricing strategies, to the point law firms are recruiting strategic pricing personnel as well as building up the value proposition of creating value and client focus. This continues to be accomplished with pricing folks working with legal project managers to address client concerns and meet expectations, while also juggling the profitability pie plate. The future holds many opportunities for those in the legal sales and service industry for those who wish to embrace change management. While pricing and legal project management are still very much a part of the profession, we have a new player in the mix. The new player was ever present in 2007-2008, but

it now has a front row seat. Process improvement is now more on the front lines and services as a methodology for assisting law firms in streamlining their processes, minimize errors and downtime, and developing more efficient and cost-effective processes for providing profitable legal services. Legal sales develop the necessary tools for creating the efficiencies and through collaboration with the legal service industry, create a powerful combination of strengths that promote not only efficiency and profits, but also promote opportunities for innovation -teaming up to create ideas that's benefit the legal sales and service industry, as well as clients. It is a strong partnership that will grow in the years to come. It is no longer a world of vendors and law firms, but rather, business partners collaborating on a profession with considerable room for growth through innovation and change management. We will see much more "partnering" in the years to come.