

Paula Hinton Discusses How Women Can Climb the Ladder in Big Law

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According to a recent American Bar Association report, despite representing nearly 50 percent of law school graduates, women only make up 24 percent of Fortune 500 general counsel and 18 percent of equity partners in general practice. Litigation Partner Paula Hinton, who serves as chair of Winston & Strawn's Women's Leadership Initiative, discusses how to manage the business of Big Law in Bloomberg Law's August 25 article titled "[Five Women on How to Climb the Big Law Ladder](#)."

Ms. Hinton explains her secret to climbing the ladder as communicating strategically. She explains that a few simple communication tricks could have helped her get her voice heard more in meetings. Many women in the workplace complain that men will listen to their ideas only to later present them as their own. The best way to deal with that, she explains, is to politely stake a claim to your idea every time it is repeated.

"If they then repeat what you said as if it was their own, I repeat my own idea again, whether they adopt it or not," Ms. Hinton said. "For example: 'As I mentioned 15 minutes ago, the best argument is this.'"

Other strategies include using humor, playing off of misguided expectations, choosing your firm wisely, and selecting a mentor.

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