



2024 Ones to Watch Industry Leaders: Leo Leyva, Cole Schotz

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Leo Leyva
Member

“Referred to as a sophisticated, pragmatic deal maker with strong commercial awareness and vision, Leo is highly revered by his clients and consistently ranked by Chambers USA. Even during a down market, Leo led the negotiations and closing of complex transactions worth hundreds of millions of dollars throughout the year.” - James Corns, Content, Presentation and Proposal Manager at Cole Schotz.

In the last 12 months what accomplishment are you most proud of? I am most proud of our ability to attract new talent, which has led to an expansion of our footprint in our New York City office during what many consider a downturn in the real estate and financial marketplace. Cole Schotz recently announced that our New York office is expanding by roughly 25%, to 32,000 s/f, and I am proud our real estate team is a pivotal part of that growth.

In the last 12 months what was one of the biggest challenges you faced as a leader and how did you overcome it? Motivating both attorneys and support staff to get back to the office has been a challenge, but I am helping to solve that by promoting the value of teamwork and mentorships while demonstrating that important skill sets are best learned in person. Through that mentorship and training, I am helping build a stronger, tighter firm culture.

Best books, podcasts, or apps for aspiring leaders: I just read “Greatness” by David L. Cook, which offers a lot of insight into how to be a better person, and through that a better leader.

Best advice for new leaders: Quoting the book I just cited, by David Cook, something he said stood out to me and sums up my feelings quite eloquently: “Greatness is expressed most authentically and powerfully as selfless exceptionalism during the defining moments of both life’s greatest performance achievements and life’s greatest challenges... Selfless-Exceptionalism during the tough times becomes a foundation of thriving versus surviving...”