



Sheryl L. Axelrod

President & CEO, [The Axelrod Firm, PC](#)

Tell us about your firm or business including history, specialization, and years in business.

The Axelrod Firm, PC is a certified woman-owned law firm with offices in Philadelphia and Washington, DC, focused on business and the bottom line. Founded in 2007, we advise and represent local, national, and multinational companies, governmental bodies, and nonprofit organizations, addressing their legal needs. We are skilled litigators in state and federal courts, as well as before administrative bodies. We also help parties resolve their disputes through Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). We have extensive experience in employment law, commercial law, and products liability in industries such as aviation, insurance, and manufacturing. We provide advice and training to our clients as we team with them to help them manage their risks.

We are thought leaders in several areas in the equality, diversity, and inclusion space, all spheres in which we bolster our clients' leadership. The Axelrod Firm received a Diversity Law Institute award for our diversity work. We also pride ourselves on the relationships we build with our clients. At The Axelrod Firm, we get to know our clients — who they are, their goals, their concerns, and their interests. We listen to what they want and work together at the beginning of our engagement to develop a strategy aimed at achieving the best results. Every step we take thereafter is designed to effectuate that strategy and is done in consultation with our clients. Throughout the process, we demonstrate our commitment to our clients' success. That is why our clients are our best source of repeat business.

What's an interesting fact about you or your firm that most people don't know?

For myself, I'm 1 of 8 kids, I speak Spanish, I love to salsa dance, and have a four-year-old daughter.

For the business, The Axelrod Firm is a Women Lawyers on Guard Conversations with Men Advisory Organization, a member of the Law Firm Antiracism Alliance, and a sponsor of The Barristers, APABA-PA, and the Hispanic Bar Association of Pennsylvania.

What's a favorite moment of your career so far?

When I was a mid-level associate at Blank Rome, where I worked before launching The Axelrod Firm, I co-coached an inner-city high school team to victory in the regional championship of a national high school moot court competition, propelling them to the state semifinals. That happened in my second year of coaching them. One of our star students went on to graduate from UC Berkeley and then from my alma mater, Temple Law School. (I'm a past President of the Temple Law Alumni Association.) My favorite career moment so far was seeing her, as a practicing attorney, coach a team herself, and not only just coach them, but bring them to victory in the regional high school moot court championship, and thereby onto the state semifinal round, in her first year of coaching!

What challenge are you most proud of overcoming?

I'm most proud of launching my law firm, and growing it, which was a huge challenge, as 95% of small businesses fail in the first 5 years. This year, the Axelrod Firm celebrated its 15th year in business, retained an external vendor (a woman-owned company) to serve as its external CFO, and is engaging in long-term strategic planning.

Tell us about a recent professional accomplishment of yours.

First, a few years ago, I became specially rated to serve as an AAA Arbitrator handling Large & Complex Commercial Disputes. As I write this, I am in Boston serving as an AAA Arbitrator on a two-week Arbitration in a Large & Complex Commercial Dispute.

Second, I just published an article in the American Bar Association's award-winning [Law Practice Today](#) e-magazine entitled: *The Underrepresentation of Women at the Highest Levels of the Legal Profession*. It's a sobering, data driven piece that is a call to action, and will be followed by a piece on what we can do to change this.

Tell us about a recent personal accomplishment of yours.

I am raising a now four-year old daughter. Raising my little Latina to be a happy, confident, and good person will always be my greatest accomplishment.

What advice would you offer new business owners?

Do everything they say – work hard, study the rules, etc. – but get out there and build relationships. You will become successful in proportion to the number of people who care about you, think highly of you, believe in you, and want to see you succeed, so take the time to sit down and talk with other people (whether virtually or in-person). Invest in building relationships. Be strategic. Think about business development from the beginning of your career and come up with a plan to attract clients that fits your personality. Think about launching a firm. Many women found firms as a last resort. Instead, consider planning for it. Owning a firm can be a great option. If you really want to go far, then have a vision, clearly define it, and pursue it. Law firms generally do a terrible job of defining their vision. Being the best, most reputable, the brightest, etc. isn't a vision. When have you achieved that vision? How far are your competitors from reaching it? Come up with a vision that distinguishes who you are (brand yourself) and make that vision concrete.

How can you help other Women Owned Law members improve their businesses?

We refer work to Women Owned Law members, just as they refer work to us. We also speak highly of them and when we know they have a need, we can help and provide them with resources and information.

How has Women Owned Law been of value to you and your career?

Thanks to Women Owned Law's listserv, we've been able to refer work to great Women Owned Law members when our clients have had needs beyond our practice areas. We've also been able to guide others looking for referrals to Women Owned Law members who can assist them. Plus, we've made great professional contacts at Women Owned Law events!

About Women Owned Law

Women Owned Law is a ground-breaking group created to connect and advance women legal entrepreneurs. WOL supports its members and other women entrepreneurs in the law in their business endeavors at every point in the business lifecycle. We advocate on behalf of women legal entrepreneurs and have been instrumental in raising the profile of women entrepreneurs in the law.

For additional information about Women Owned Law visit <http://www.womenownedlaw.org>