



Insights: Perspectives

## **KTalks | Shyam Reddy**

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# KTalks



Welcome to our second KTalks. This series reaches out to leaders in the business and legal communities with five questions to seek their insight on matters ranging from how law firms work with in-house counsel to tips on mentoring new attorneys, and advice for work/life balance.

[Shyam Reddy](#) is the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) for [BlueLinx Corporation](#) – a leading \$3B+ wholesale distributor of building and industrial products in the United States with over 50,000 branded and private-label SKUs, and a broad distribution footprint servicing 40 states. As the CAO, Shyam is responsible for legal, risk management, real estate, human resources, indirect spend, compliance, customs, and corporate development. Prior to that, Shyam served as the Chief Transformation Officer, where he led the integration of BlueLinx and Cedar Creek – a \$1.4B revenue building products business that BlueLinx acquired in April 2018. Shyam was an attorney at [Kilpatrick Townsend](#) in the firm's Corporate Department for nearly 10 years. He left the firm as a partner in 2010.

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**What was the most valuable skillset that you learned working at Kilpatrick Townsend that translates to your current position?**

Tough negotiating skills.

**Why did you choose to work at a large law firm first before going in-house?**

I joined Kilpatrick Townsend to work on sophisticated transactions that would be challenging, exhilarating and intellectually stimulating. Working at a big firm with plenty of sophisticated work also provides young lawyers with an opportunity to develop and grow faster than they otherwise would. Kilpatrick Townsend's commitment to the community also appealed to me. Firm management encouraged associates to be actively engaged with the community. It also engaged young associates in firm business and management – something other firms didn't really do at the time.

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**If you could offer three tips to law firms about how to work well with in-house counsel, what would those tips be?**

Learn your client's business, set up alerts so you're aware of what's going on with your client (which you can then use to increase the number of non-work related touchpoints), and manage client expectations regarding allocation of responsibilities, timelines, and budget.

**If there was one piece of advice that you could give a new attorney starting at a large law firm, what would it be?**

Take advantage of as many billable and non-billable opportunities that you come across at the firm and in the community. Big firm experience is hard to replicate, but easy to take full advantage of inside and outside the firm. Regardless of the path your career

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ultimately takes, your big-firm experience, along with the reputation you build, will be yours to leverage for the benefit of yourself, your family and society for years to come.

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**What is the best non-legal attribute that you see in the most successful lawyers?**  
Decisiveness.

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