



# Acritas Stars

Independently rated lawyers

## Spotlight on Acritas Stars 2018

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Driving high performance through  
Star talent and gender diversity

Acritas  
SHARPER INSIGHT

# WHILE LAW AT THE HIGH END IS DEFINITELY A TEAM SPORT, LIKE ANY HIGH PERFORMING TEAM, LAW NEEDS ITS STAR PLAYERS.

## How to get involved in Acritas Stars



**Individual Star lawyers** – please respond to our surveys and you will receive exclusive reports summarizing our ground-breaking work as well as invitations to webinars and events.

**Law firms** – encourage your Stars to respond and you too will receive the exclusive reports highlighting the key findings. You can also buy the full research findings and where you have sufficient numbers of lawyers responding, benchmark your firm's performance.

Please note we will always protect the anonymity of your Star lawyers' individual responses and you will not be able to see individual firm findings aside from your own firm.

**Senior in-house counsel** – to gain free access to the global database of Star lawyers and to our broader research including spend benchmarking analytical tools, contact us to participate in our 25-minute Sharplegal research telephone interview.

Please note qualifying criteria apply including minimum revenue size and decision-making authority when appointing external providers.

## Introduction



**STAND-OUT LAWYERS CREATE A SIGNIFICANT UPLIFT IN CLIENT SATISFACTION, ADVOCACY AND SHARE OF WALLET.**

Acritas has spent the last three years building up more than 10,000 independent nominations of stand-out lawyers from law firm clients all over the world. More than 8,000 individual lawyers have been identified altogether from 4,300 clients. 701 lawyers received nominations from more than one client.

While this is far from being an exhaustive list, and won't be unless we seek the opinion of every client in the world, it does provide a huge dataset which reveals some fascinating insights not previously explored in the legal industry.

The nominations are collected during a broader research study of senior in-house counsel. This research has revealed how stand-out lawyers create a significant uplift in client satisfaction, advocacy and share of wallet.



**MALE AND FEMALE LEAD PARTNER PERFORMANCE WAS EQUAL, BUT WE FOUND A VERY CLEAR GENDER BIAS IN SELECTION – MEN WERE FAR LESS LIKELY TO SELECT FEMALE LEAD PARTNERS OR TO IDENTIFY FEMALE STARS.**

Now, this broader research has identified another route to increasing performance – gender diverse teams perform better. Male and female lead partner performance was equal, but we found a very clear gender bias in selection – men were far less likely to select female lead partners or to identify female Stars. To help balance the scales, in this report we put a spotlight on some of the most identified female talent so far.

The research is still evolving. In addition to analyzing how Stars achieve stand-out status and looking at the impact of Stars on law firm key performance indicators, we have been surveying the Stars themselves about how firms help and hinder them to serve clients. We have also started to look at employer brand from the perspective of which firms Star lawyers want to work for. Our very latest survey asked Stars to evaluate their clients – identifying both obviously deficient areas and a picture of best practice. There are many avenues to explore.

# Five key insights



## 1. IMPACT OF STARS

### Stars drive higher performance

When a client identifies a Star at a firm:

- ▶ Satisfaction improves and Net Promoter Score® triples\*
- ▶ Share of wallet increases
- ▶ The firm's brand favorability increases

Add multiple stars into a client relationship and performance increases further.

### More Stars = higher PPP

The high PPP firms tend to have a higher proportion of their partners nominated as Stars. Statistical modelling shows that each extra Star delivers a 3% uplift for **every** Equity Partner.



## 2. DEFINING STARS

### Three types of Star have emerged

Stars identified their own qualities and when analyzed, three clusters have emerged. We are currently reviewing what drives these clusters and which types of work and client demographic each are connected to.

### Do clients have a lawyer 'type'?

In the same way different types of Star emerge, different clients appreciate different qualities. We are expanding our analysis to see if the 'match' drives the Star nomination or more the work requirement.



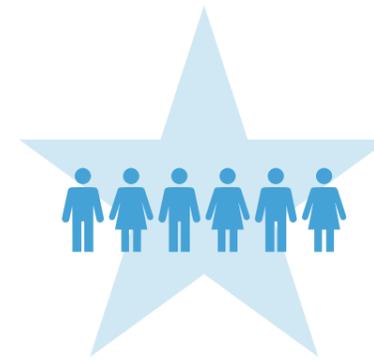
## 3. RETAINING STARS

### Stars need to grow

Even though 85% of Stars are Equity Partners, they still need to feel they are progressing in their careers and that they are at a firm which is strategically heading in the right direction. This is an area where many firms are failing to meet their Stars' expectations – be it through lack of opportunity or apparently unfair practices.

### Reward systems aren't fit for purpose

Only 56% of Stars feel their compensation system is fair. There is a desire for more clarity and transparency around criteria for allocating reward and a more holistic approach towards that criteria.



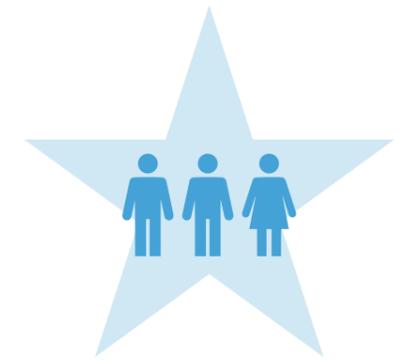
## 4. GENDER DIVERSITY IN LAW

### Gender diverse teams perform better

Acritas evaluated 1,000 client reviews of law firms comparing single gender teams to mixed gender teams. Mixed gender teams achieved significantly higher performance with the greatest uplift on relationship strength.

### Male and female lead partners perform equally well

Acritas evaluated 1,000 client reviews of law firms comparing male lead partners to female lead partners. There was no difference on any individual attribute. And yet male clients were a third less likely than female clients to pick a female lead partner.



## 5. GENDER BIAS IN STAR SELECTION

### Male clients rarely pick female Stars

The same bias we see in men mostly selecting male lead partners translates into Star selection. Only 15% of male-nominated Stars were women. This compared with 29% of female nominated Stars being women – almost twice the level.

### Female Stars recognized more often for their style of service

The quality of the lawyer was the number one star quality for both genders in equal measure. However, female stars on average had a higher number of qualities mentioned in their nominations. Female Stars were significantly more recognized for being responsive, approachable, professional and diligent.

# Female Star Talent

Clients have made over 1,000 nominations of female Star lawyers. To help increase the levels of diversity at senior levels in law, we are encouraging our senior in-house counsel panel to use our database to find more female Star lawyers to instruct.

This report reveals the most nominated female talent, those lawyers who have received nominations from three or more individual clients – an exclusive group of just 13 women. This group will grow as we increase our sample to more clients across the world so please don't assume we are presenting this as a complete list but help us in celebrating the brilliance of these women as recognized by their clients.

A selection of the most nominated female lawyers to date



**KAREN JENSEN**  
NORTON ROSE FULBRIGHT  
LABOR & EMPLOYMENT DISPUTES  
CANADA

*"An exceptional litigator, very responsive to client needs, subject matter expert."*



**BRENDA L. PRITCHARD**  
GOWLING WLG  
ADVERTISING & MARKETING  
CANADA

*"She spots the issue really quickly and comes up with creative solutions."*



**MARNI J. LERNER**  
SIMPSON THACHER  
PRIVATE EQUITY M&A  
US

*"Phenomenal M&A attorney. She's an expert negotiator... very good at persuading others to adapt their views."*



**PATRICIA M. WAGNER**  
EPSTEIN BECKER GREEN  
ANTITRUST & REGULATORY  
US

*"Expert at the top of her field, she's very practical and she always picks up the phone."*



**BARBARA ROSENBERG**  
BARBOSA MÜSSNICH ARAGÃO  
ANTITRUST  
BRAZIL

*"Technical expertise, problem-solving and results delivery."*



**ANN BENZIMRA**  
FIELDFISHER  
DISPUTE RESOLUTION  
UK

*"Knowledgeable, persistent, imaginative and real attention to detail."*



**JANE HAXBY**  
SQUIRE PATTON BOGGS  
CORPORATE AND M&A  
UK

*"Very professional, a really good mentor, good advice and real grace under pressure."*



**LÉNA SERSIRON**  
BAKER MCKENZIE  
COMPETITION  
FRANCE

*"Ability to handle a complex matter within contract deadlines and also innovative solutions."*



**RAFFAELLA QUINTANA**  
DLA PIPER  
LITIGATION & REGULATORY  
ITALY

*"Excellent strategy in litigation proceedings. Great promptness, reliability and trustworthiness."*



**ZIA MODY**  
AZB & PARTNERS  
CORPORATE LAW  
INDIA

*"Incredibly smart, extremely knowledgeable, extremely technical and has a broad knowledge base."*



**KAYAL SACHI**  
MAYER BROWN JSM  
BANKING & FINANCE  
SINGAPORE

*"Solution-oriented approach and her vast experience in terms of dealing with complex situations and making it very simple for the other side."*



**GINA CASS-GOTTLIEB**  
GILBERT + TOBIN  
COMPETITION & REGULATORY  
AUSTRALIA

*"An absolute stand-out... Technical and commercial excellence."*



**REBECCA MASLEN-STANNAGE**  
HERBERT SMITH FREEHILLS  
CORPORATE AND M&A  
AUSTRALIA

*"She's finding solutions for us across the board not just in her own area. Very client-focused, responsive, practical and the quality of her legal skills is fantastic."*

## Stars research moving forwards

In 2018, in addition to launching the 2018 survey of Star lawyers, we are expanding our Stars program to look at the firm view of Stars and how much this overlaps with the external perspective. The ultimate goal for any firm is to maximize the number of people who are seen as Stars from both the firm and the client side.

Our new Acritas Advisors offering will be helping firms to evaluate how fit for purpose firms' programs are when it comes to retaining and developing more Stars.

To find out more please visit [www.acritas.com/stars-and-future-stars](http://www.acritas.com/stars-and-future-stars)

**Acritas provides market analysis, research and advisory services, through a unique combination of:**

- ▶ Our research-led scientific approach
- ▶ Our unparalleled legal market insights
- ▶ Our expert researchers who are passionate about helping clients succeed.

For further information on how Acritas can help you and your firm, please contact Lizzy Duffy on [eduffy@acritas.com](mailto:eduffy@acritas.com) or +1 646 480 5738 or Jo Aitken on [jaitken@acritas.com](mailto:jaitken@acritas.com) or +44 808 178 3020.

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