

GUZMAN LAW GROUP, PC

Denise M. Guzman, Founder/Principal Attorney

Manhattan Beach-based legal firm, Guzman Law Group has been advocating for the South Bay community for more than 30 years. Their clients represent the diverse industries that define the vibrancy and innovation of the South Bay. The firm provides high-caliber legal services in business and finance transactions, trust and civil litigation, estate planning and trust administration. With the proximity to Hollywood, Guzman Law Group also focuses on entertainment law and celebrity estates. The firm is certified as a Women's Business Enterprise by the Women's Business Enterprise National Council.

Founder Denise M. Guzman is a noted business, estate planning and trust attorney who earned her bachelor's degree from USC and her law degree from UCLA. She functions as virtual in-house corporate counsel for many clients and is an integral part of their key decision-making and ongoing operational activities. She is a frequent guest lecturer on business, estate planning and trust administration issues.

WHAT TYPES OF CASES DO YOU FIND THE MOST INTRIGUING?

Denise M. Guzman, Business and Estate Planning Attorney: Those that are the most difficult, where my years of experience make the biggest impact. I also enjoy working in our team environment to help solve our clients' problems. Whether it is a difficult merger or acquisition or trying to reduce estate taxes for an individual's assets. I enjoy finding a resolution and negotiating it successfully.

WHAT PROBLEMS DO YOU SOLVE FOR CLIENTS?

Edward Powell, Corporate, Securities, & Finance Attorney: We help clients find a legal solution to their business needs, whether the need is to raise capital for a new idea, borrow money to fund operations or buy a complementary business. The goal is always to find

a cost-effective solution that maximizes the investment in legal expertise and achieves the client's goals.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST BENEFIT CLIENTS GAIN FROM WORKING WITH YOUR FIRM?

Marcus Chang, Business and Estate Planning Attorney: When clients work with my firm, they gain an ally to assist them with their legal and non-legal needs. Our attorneys and staff truly want what is best for our clients, and we use our knowledge, experience and network of resources to assist whenever we can.

Denise M. Guzman: The biggest benefit that clients gain from working with our firm is the years of experience our senior attorneys provide to a client. We all have varied experiences and rich backgrounds in our careers. Some attorneys have the big-firm experience; others were in-house counsel for a variety of businesses, including a hedge fund company. Those experiences shape how we guide clients.

IN WHAT WAYS IS YOUR WORK WITH GUZMAN LAW GROUP MEANINGFUL?

Edward Powell: Being a part of the client's business for the life span of the company is rewarding. We often represent ambitious clients from their initial ideas and incorporation to growing and running a successful business and ultimately to their exit strategy. These exit strategies can include passing down the business to their children or to an employee group that shares the company's values and excitement for the business, or prepping and handling the sale of a business to an outside group such as a larger company in the same line or to a private equity group looking to grow and expand the company even further.

Marcus Chang: I truly believe that I am providing a service to my clients, whether it is giving them peace of mind by helping them complete and understand their estate plans to

protect themselves and their beneficiaries or helping them navigate the process of administering the estate of a loved one.

Denise M. Guzman: There is a sense of satisfaction when you have brought a client through a difficult period in their business or personal life and provide them with a positive outcome. Whether it's a sale of a business, a litigation case or a trust administration, bringing closure in someone's life is very rewarding.

WHAT SKILLS ARE NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS IN YOUR INDUSTRY?

Edward Powell: Unlike some fields such as litigation, financial services law can be a win-win for both our clients and their counterparties. This requires a calm, measured approach to issues that arise during negotiation and documentation, and creative problem-solving to develop answers that appeal to all the parties in a deal.

Marcus Chang: I believe that compassion is necessary to achieve success in the area of estate planning, trust administration and probate. When I work with my clients, I want them to feel that we understand the position they are in—whether they have recently lost a loved one and are now overwhelmed with what to do or they are involved in a dispute with a relative—and know that we are here to help guide them through the process.

WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT YOUR TEAM?

Charles Shelton, Litigation Attorney: Two things: First, we have real depth of experience in the area of trusts, estates and business. Second, we leverage the expertise of the other lawyers within our firm. When I was in business school, I noticed that a small group of people working together could inevitably produce better results than even the smartest person could working alone. Guzman Law Group understands the value of teamwork.



PHOTOGRAPHED BY MARISA GUZMAN-ALOIA

L to R: Attorneys, Alisha R. Swain-Fall, Carol T. Contes, Drew C. Hallett, Edward Powell, Denise M. Guzman, Charles Shelton, Marcus Chang, Maaha Khan, Jane S. Lee