



Brandon Hall Group

# EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2023

## Kirkland & Ellis’s Leadership Training for Remote and On-Site Global Law Firm Associates

Kirkland & Ellis, LLP and Socratic Arts  
Best Advance in Leadership Development  
January 2024



### Company Background

## KIRKLAND & ELLIS

Company-at-a-Glance	
<b>Headquarters</b>	Kirkland & Ellis has an international platform of offices in 18+ cities around the world with more than 3,000 attorneys. Kirkland & Ellis has no headquarters location and operates as an integrated whole, with a culture that encourages and draws strength from the diversity of their employees' backgrounds, knowledge and skills, and supports the wellbeing of their employees.
<b>Year Founded</b>	1909
<b>Revenue</b>	\$6B
<b>Employees</b>	6,500
<b>Global Scale</b>	North America, Europe, Asia
<b>Customers/Output, etc. (Key customers and services offered)</b>	Kirkland & Ellis is a full-service law firm working with a broad range of clients around the world in private equity, M&A and other corporate transactions, litigation, white collar and government disputes, restructurings and intellectual property matters.
<b>Industry</b>	Legal Advisory Services
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.kirkland.com">www.kirkland.com</a>



## Company Background



Company-at-a-Glance	
Headquarters	Florida, USA
Year Founded	2001
Revenue	\$5M in 2022
Employees	35
Global Scale	Courses developed for our multinational clients are delivered at multiple locations worldwide.
Customers/Output, etc. (Key customers and services offered)	Socratic Arts is a learning design services firm. Since 2001, they've been creating science-based learning that improves performance for individuals and their organizations. Socratic Arts serves global and smaller companies, government agencies, schools, and universities.
Industry	Learning and Development, Education
Website	<a href="http://www.socraticarts.com">www.socraticarts.com</a>

## Budget and Timeframe

Budget and Timeframe	
Overall budget	900k
Number of (HR, Learning, Talent) employees involved with the implementation?	4
Number of Operations or Subject Matter Expert employees involved with the implementation?	14
Number of contractors involved with implementation	14
Timeframe to implement	5 months
Start date of the program	October 12, 2022



## **Business Conditions and Business Needs**

### **Leadership Development for GLOBAL Law FIRM Associates:**

Kirkland & Ellis is an international law firm with offices in 18+ cities and more than 3,000 attorneys. Kirkland serves a broad range of clients around the world in private equity, M&A and other corporate transactions, litigation, white collar and government disputes, restructurings and intellectual property matters.

Kirkland associate attorneys progress over the course of their typically 6-year tenure at the associate level from junior, to mid-level, to senior associates, with increasing levels of leadership and management responsibility as they approach the transition to partner.

(Note: progression paths vary by US and international office location and practice group.)

### **BUSINESS CONDITIONS & NEEDS:**

The legal industry, like many highly skilled professions requiring advanced training, has a long history of focusing predominantly on the development of technical skills. This is reflected in the structure of Continuing Legal Education (CLE) credits, which are typically only awarded for technical programs. Leadership development in areas such as communication, leading and developing teams, and executive presence, while essential to professional success, is not formally recognized at an industry-level.

Kirkland values leadership development, but until the creation of the firmwide Leadership and Management Training (LMT) Curriculum, there had not been a comprehensive, integrated, firm-owned, and global approach to this training.

Kirkland & Ellis has no headquarters location and operates as an integrated whole, with a culture that encourages and draws strength from the diversity of their attorneys and employees' backgrounds, knowledge and skills, and supports the wellbeing of their employees.

Given the diversity of practice groups and offices around the globe and the differences of their work processes, skill sets, and cultures, training in leadership and management skills at Kirkland had traditionally been addressed by the local offices and practice groups on an as-needed basis.

### **A CHANGING LANDSCAPE BRINGS NEW CHALLENGES:**

As the firm continued to grow, it became clear that there was a need to create a firmwide shared understanding and practice of the core skills, leading behaviors, and traits associates need to grow into leadership and management roles over time. This was



essential to develop future leaders within the firm, optimize the performance both of individual associates and teams, and enhance job satisfaction across tenure levels.

To add to the challenge, no firmwide standard definition or framework of leadership and management skills existed. Learners were not only distributed globally with differing skillsets among offices and practices groups – they were also a hybrid mix of remote and on-site learners. Finally, the Covid-19 pandemic radically disrupted the in-person apprenticeship model that had previously existed in many offices.

Despite obstacles, the Kirkland Legal Education & Development (LED) team successfully developed the Leadership & Management Training (LMT) curriculum for remote and on-site associates and has delivered it over the course of five months to outstanding reviews for its engagement and efficacy.

## **Overview**

### **THE GOAL: A FIRMWIDE LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT CURRICULUM:**

Kirkland's over-arching goal was to create a multi-year, global leadership and management curriculum for hybrid, remote, and on-site associates across tenure levels and with diverse skillsets. For Kirkland, the comprehensive LMT curriculum represents a significant cultural shift within the legal industry and a monumental effort to define firmwide leadership and management skills and leading behaviors. Candidly, big law tends to invest in learning centered almost exclusively on technical skills and compliance and this program would represent something significantly different. It also showcases the successful development, delivery, and reception of a global learning initiative, and a new level of investment in the professional success of its associate attorneys.

### **To achieve success, courses within the curriculum needed to be:**

- Relevant for associate attorneys in all global offices and practice groups
- Accessible to both remote and on-site learners
- 60 minutes or less, as learners have little time outside of client work.
- Aligned to Kirkland's newly defined leadership and management skills framework.
- Leveled appropriately for associates at each tenure level (e.g., 1st years would need different training than 6th years)
- Designed to reflect the specific work contexts and challenges of Kirkland attorneys, featuring concrete examples of authentic work tasks and scenarios.
- Engaging and effective in structure, featuring discussion, hands-on practice, and practical tips immediately applicable on the job.
- Well-rated by the learners and effective at improving on-the-job performance.



## ESTABLISHING A FIRMWIDE SKILLS FRAMEWORK:

Development of the Leadership Management & Training (LMT) curriculum for Kirkland associates began by establishing a firmwide skills framework where none had previously existed. This was a careful, methodical process that required curriculum analysis, focus group research, and many internal conversations across the firm (including with senior partners) to arrive at organizational consensus. Specifically, a group of associates from each of Kirkland’s global offices and practice groups was interviewed against a set of structured questions to determine a universal leadership development model.

The LMT skills framework identified six competency areas with associated skills, behaviors, and traits at each tenure level: Communication, Time Management & Project Excellence, Delegation & Feedback, Presenting & Presence, Teaming & Building Teams, and Building Relationships. Course offerings then map to these skill areas and are leveled based on associate tenure.

## HIGH-LEVEL CURRICULUM DESCRIPTION:

The Leadership & Management Training (LMT) is a re-envisioned curriculum developed to help 1st through 6th year associate attorneys excel as leaders at Kirkland & Ellis – both in their roles today, and in their future at the firm.

The suite of 11 programs (a mix of nine vILT and two digital offerings) is targeted to associates across tenure levels to provide them with the skills, leading behaviors, and traits they need to succeed, when they need them most. The programs were intentionally designed to meet the needs of a distributed, global population of learners with a mix of remote and on-site participants.

All courses are custom designed to reflect the unique experiences, work contexts, and leadership expected of associates at Kirkland.



1 <sup>st</sup> Year	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	4 <sup>th</sup> Year	5 <sup>th</sup> Year	6 <sup>th</sup> Year
Time Management & Project Excellence	Presenting & Presence	Developing Others	Handling Difficult Conversations	Leading & Developing Teams	Executive Presence
Asking for & Receiving Feedback	Delegating & Delivering Feedback				
Communicating Effectively					
Succeeding Your 1 <sup>st</sup> Year at KG (self-paced, on-demand)					
Succeeding as a Lateral Hire at Kirkland & Ellis (self-paced, on-demand)					

**LMT CURRICULUM LIBRARY:**

The following courses are included in the LMT curriculum. Courses are sequenced to match the job responsibilities and identified growth areas of each tenure level.

TITLE	YEAR / LEVEL	MODALITY
<i>Succeeding in Your 1<sup>st</sup> Year at KE</i>	Y1	Digital on-demand
<i>Succeeding as a Lateral Hire at KE</i>	Experienced hires	Digital on-demand
<i>Time Management &amp; Project Excellence</i>	Y1	60-min vILT
<i>Asking for and Receiving Feedback</i>	Y1	60-min vILT
<i>Communicating Effectively</i>	Y1	60-min vILT
<i>Presenting &amp; Presence</i>	Y2	60-min vILT
<i>Delegating &amp; Delivering Feedback</i>	Y2	60-min vILT
<i>Developing Others</i>	Y3	60-min vILT
<i>Handling Difficult Conversations</i>	Y4	60-min vILT
<i>Leading &amp; Developing Teams</i>	Y5	60-min vILT
<i>Executive Presence</i>	Y6	60-min vILT

**OUTCOMES AND IMPACT:**

Response to the program has also been overwhelmingly positive. Kirkland & Ellis collected survey data on the nine virtual instructor led training programs and the feedback was outstanding. Of the more than 1,400 participants who responded to post-delivery surveys, 94% rated the courses as either Good, Very Good, or Excellent.

What has been particularly gratifying about the virtual, instructor-led programs is that, since they are offered firmwide across all practice groups and locations, each learner is connecting with others across the firm using the same content and engaging in discussion about similarities across practice groups and locations. The result is that the curriculum has a global presence and relevance to an audience with an exceptionally diverse skillset. An international conversation about what it means to lead at Kirkland is now happening, and that's exciting for the future of leadership at the firm.



## **Design and Delivery of the Program**

### **A MIX OF VIRTUAL AND DIGITAL OFFERINGS FOR REMOTE AND ON-SITE LEARNERS:**

The Leadership & Management Training (LMT) curriculum is a mix of nine virtual, instructor-led trainings (vILTs) and two digital on-demand courses. All courses were designed in partnership with associate and/or partner subject matter experts (SMEs), based on needs identified by associates and partners.

Each vILT is a 60-minute discussion-based workshop that includes a mix of lecture on core concepts, engaging small group discussions, debriefs with expert practitioners, and breakout activities to enable skills-based practice.

The vILTs provide equal access to remote and on-site learners, a low-risk environment to practice new skills, and an opportunity to foster a firmwide conversation about leadership skills and practical tips for using them on the job. Each vILT also provides downloadable, quick-reference job aids (as makes sense for the content), such as templates and at-a-glance tip sheets.

The two digital, on-demand courses communicate the core leadership tenets, skills, and behaviors associates need to succeed and grow at the firm. From a hybrid learning perspective, the digital courses are accessible to both remote and on-site employees and act as a modular, just-in-time reference on the job. Learners can access information when they need it most and refresh themselves on core concepts and skills.

In addition to the vILT and digital offerings, all the vILT courses are recorded so that they are accessible on-demand for anyone. Junior associates are welcome to access more senior training, and senior practitioners can brush up on fundamentals.

### **VILT COURSES FEATURED DISCUSSION AND AUTHENTIC SKILLS PRACTICE:**

The vILT courses provided an ideal modality for engaging both remote and on-site participants around the globe, while retaining many of the benefits of in-person training. The courses were intentionally designed to devote as much time as possible to in-depth discussion and skills practice in small breakout groups, not only to enhance the learning experience, but also to help build firmwide connections. Culturally, this design is a significant shift from commercially generated (i.e., “off-the-shelf”) materials that were historically presented with minimal to no interactivity. Most courses featured two breakout room sessions, each allowing for ten minutes of active discussion or work time, followed by a robust debrief discussion in the main classroom. There was an overwhelmingly positive response from participants about the value of the breakout discussions. The following walkthroughs will highlight some of the interactivity.



## SAMPLE INTERACTION: LEADING AND DEVELOPING TEAMS:

The purpose of Leading & Developing Teams is to help 5th year senior associates succeed while leading teams with diverse backgrounds, skills, and experience. The course was co-facilitated by partners at Kirkland, which allowed for Kirkland-specific advice and increased partner-associate connectivity and knowledge-share. Core concepts included: setting teams up for success, navigating challenges effectively, and building relationships with junior associates. The structure of the workshop also invited participants to reflect on their own experiences and take an active part in creating a positive leadership culture at Kirkland.

Breakout room discussions were clearly structured by first providing step-by-step instructions. These same instructions were also available to participants in the breakout.

**Activity 1:**  
Setting Teams Up for Success

You have **7 minutes** to work with your team.

Reference these **Activity 1 Instructions**, as needed in the breakout room.

**Open** the participant materials (see chat) and discuss the following prompts with your team:

- *Think about a time when you were part of a unsuccessful team. What types of things did the leader do/not do that made it unsuccessful? How did it make you feel? Why?*
- *What about when you were part of a successful team? What types of things did the leader do that made it successful? How did it make you feel? Why?*

**Document** your discussion on the **Activity 1 Worksheet**.

Be prepared to **share** with the whole group.

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Once in the breakout room, participants used a worksheet to structure their discussion and record their thoughts so they could share them afterward with the larger group in the main classroom. In the breakouts, they engaged in small group discussion and explored firmwide similarities across practice group and location.





## Activity 1 Worksheet

### Unsuccessful Team

**Discuss:** Think about a time when you were part of a unsuccessful team. What types of things did the leader do/not do that made it unsuccessful? How did it make you feel? Why?

#### Notes



### Successful Team

**Discuss:** What about when you were part of a successful team? What types of things did the leader do that made it successful? How did it make you feel? Why?

#### Notes



During main classroom debriefs, facilitators invited participants to share their thoughts from the breakout room and recorded them live, on-screen. A mix of participants representative of Kirkland’s global offices were able to brainstorm about what it meant to lead teams successfully at Kirkland. Together, they weren’t just learning about successful team leadership – they were co-creating it.

## Debrief

### Unsuccessful Team

- failing to define roles
- treating junior associates as transactional—no context for jrs.
- ineffective communication of timeline and expectations, deadlines—especially when there was lead-time/when you're working specialists
- not answering questions/not giving good answers
- serving as an umbrella-but in a shielding way, kept away from partner/visibility
- inconsistent/left alone
- dropped huge hours on you without being committed
- 
- deal/case fatigue
- lack of empowerment
- psychological safety

### Successful Team

- monitoring who is assigned what
- ensure an even-workload
- frequent check-ins
- keeps transparency on the different pieces for the overall
- importance of the hierarchy is minimized
- leaders keep communication open
- facilitate issues being raised quickly
- adaptable mindset
- being respectful of team's time
- expectations are clear - deliverables, roles
- give credit



### **BENEFITS OF LEADING AND DEVELOPING TEAMS COURSE DESIGN:**

Participant feedback on Leading & Developing Teams highlights some of the benefits of this course specifically, and the learning design approach generally. Some of the comments relate to the activity featured above, and others relate to later activities in the course.

#### **A non-judgmental space and facilitated conversation enabled participants to build stronger, more comprehensive solutions in real time.**

- “I thought this was a great exercise and really useful. Facilitators did a good job prompting participation and making it conversational, and the breakout rooms were a good way to help people feel more comfortable talking... it was a nice opportunity to actually stop and be introspective about my leadership strengths and weaknesses and bring the concepts to the front of my mind.”

#### **Participants practiced skills and received immediate feedback in a low-stakes environment.**

- “We were provided good strategies for providing feedback to junior associates in multiple different contexts, as well as an opportunity to practice providing that feedback.”

#### **A holistic perspective on managing multiple relationships between junior and senior associates and partners.**

- “I'm starting to lead teams and it's an entirely different ball game. Having these tips and reminders on how to manage both up and down is really useful.”

### **SAMPLE INTERACTION: ASKING FOR AND RECEIVING FEEDBACK:**

The purpose of Asking for and Receiving Feedback is to help 1st year junior associates understand the value of constructive feedback, become more comfortable with it, and develop strategies for seeking it out and integrating it into their work.

One of the most highly rated activities was “Feedback Request Planning.” Participants used a template to breakdown the actions and data points they needed to successfully ask for and receive high-value constructive feedback from busy senior attorneys.

Each learner created their own plan, using an example as a guide. By getting tactical and concrete in the activity, learners were better able to translate the concepts they were learning into action on the job.



FEEDBACK REQUEST PLAN			
Area of Focus	Who to Ask	Current Relationship	Communication Preferences
<i>Ways to provide more value to the team on calls.</i>	<i>Jo Bradley, Senior Assoc</i>	<i>SA on Chapman matter; daily interaction</i>	<i>Email before 9am</i>
What's Your Ask	Request: Medium / Moment	Your Goal	Meeting Questions
<i>What else could I be doing on client calls to provide value to the team?</i>	<i>Email: Request a 15 min meeting next Monday.</i>	<i>Learn team standards; understand my role</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Am I meeting expectations on calls?</i></li> <li>• <i>Are my notes detailed / accurate enough?</i></li> <li>• <i>Should I be sharing notes with the team after all calls? If not, which ones?</i></li> <li>• <i>Would it be helpful if I followed up on next steps with other team members?</i></li> <li>• <i>How have you seen others do this well and what can I learn from those examples?</i></li> </ul>

After creating their plans, learners participated in a whole classroom debrief. The facilitator asked for volunteers to share their plans, and collectively they had a robust discussion about the best tactics and techniques to achieve their desired outcomes.

**BENEFITS OF ASKING FOR AND RECEIVING FEEDBACK COURSE DESIGN:**

Participant quotes on Asking for and Receiving Feedback highlight some of the benefits of this course and its instructional design approach.

**Space for associates to reflect on what types of feedback are meaningful to them, and its importance to their careers long-term. Learning to ask for feedback is crucial for associates to plan their career trajectory at the firm.**

- “Thinking more critically about what I want feedback on and how I should thoughtfully ask for it.”



**The “Feedback Request Plan,” a job aid template, has been incredibly well-received by juniors and helps them convert feedback into action. This organizer allows juniors to plan how they want to ask for feedback ahead of time, actually implement that feedback, and ultimately be more thoughtful and intentional about how they’re contributing to overall team success. It’s introduced during the course and provided as a downloadable job aid for later use.**

- “I found the ‘feedback request plan’ the most helpful because it caused me to pause and think about how I should go about requesting feedback and also on what the next steps should be after receiving feedback.”

**Precise, tactical examples and advice enabled participants to apply new skills and behaviors. “How to” advice on tasks 1st year associates can accomplish today may seem small, but these small efficiencies provide significant value-add to their use of time and ultimately the firm’s.**

- “It was helpful to really drill down and think about how to ask for specific pieces of feedback I want to receive - this is one of the first times I've had to really get in the weeds and think about getting feedback at a granular level, and that was really helpful.”

These walkthroughs are a small, illustrative sampling of the design of the nine, virtual instructor-led programs that compose the LMT curriculum. Similar instructional design strategies were employed throughout the suite of courses and received consistent praise from participants.

#### **DEMO OF DIGITAL, ON-DEMAND COURSES:**

The two digital, on-demand courses in the LMT curriculum, Succeeding in Your 1st Year at KE and Succeeding as a Lateral Hire at KE communicate the core leadership tenets, skills, and behaviors and act as a modular, just-in-time reference on the job.

Each course is designed to communicate information as quickly and clearly as possible. The information design and content were intentionally kept simple and scalable to maximize access, usability, and retention.

The leadership and management core competencies covered in these digital courses are expanded upon in greater depth in the virtual, instructor-led offerings. Together, the virtual and digital trainings re-enforce each other, deepening the learning and ensuring better knowledge and skill retention for both remote and on-site learners.



## **Adoption of the Program**

### **LOGISTICAL CHALLENGES REQUIRED A THOUGHTFUL APPROACH:**

As the largest international law firm in the world, Kirkland faced particular challenges when it came to implementing a firmwide training program across its US and international offices.

The first challenge is due to traditional training standards within the legal services industry. Historically, Continuing Legal Education (CLE) credits have been the primary driver of the learning and development budget allocation; however, the firm chair and supporting committee determined this curriculum as a strategic imperative and required mandatory attendance. Learning without CLE attached has discouraged investment in non-technical training within the legal industry as a whole. In this context, leadership and management training at Kirkland had previously occurred ad hoc in local offices and practice groups. Kirkland went through an internal change management process (see details below) that enabled it to make a case for a larger, more global investment.

The second challenge Kirkland faced was the distributed nature of its 18 international offices and practice groups. Within such a diverse landscape, divergent standards of leadership skill development emerged. While Kirkland values its diversity, “what it means to succeed as a leader at Kirkland” became increasingly difficult to define. Internal discussions and focus group research were essential to developing a perspective that reflected the similarities across offices and practice groups.

Finally, the effort to define the LMT curriculum requirements (before building out the component courses) occurred at the height of the pandemic. Transitioning to a remote and virtual style of work was a radical cultural shift both at Kirkland and across the legal industry. Traditional forms of in-person apprenticeship and mentoring were challenged by overall firm growth and decentralization; therefore, new training needs emerged for the firm to address. The LMT curriculum provided an opportunity to embrace the future of learning in this newly hybrid work environment.

The LMT curriculum successfully met and addressed each of these challenges at Kirkland, has been adopted and rolled out across the firm, and garnered glowing reviews from the learners themselves.



### **AN EFFECTIVE CHANGE MANAGEMENT PROCESS:**

To establish the training needs for the firmwide LMT curriculum and begin development work, the Kirkland Legal Education & Development (LED) team underwent a multi-step process to develop a skills framework, identify gaps and training needs, create a program development plan, and gain buy-in from leadership.

- **2019 Curriculum Analysis:** Conducted a curriculum analysis of existing leadership & management training across associate tenures at the firm.
- **Late 2020 - early 2021 Skills Analysis:** Conducted a skills analysis to develop a leadership and management skills framework for junior, mid-level, and senior associates (1st through 6th years). This was the first time a comprehensive, firmwide leadership and management skills framework was defined at Kirkland. Previously, skills and knowledge areas had been defined informally by each practice group and/or local office. To conduct the needs analysis, the Kirkland LED team analyzed existing skill definitions (when available) and conducted focus groups with associates and partners with balanced representation across firm office locations and practice areas. Findings were shared with firm leadership.
- **2021 Training Roadmap:** Based on the analyses and resulting skill frameworks, the LED team recommended a comprehensive curriculum for associates. The training plan was shared with leadership at the firm, and the LED team received approval to move forward with development.
- **2021-2023 Course Development & Delivery:** The team designed and developed the courses from late 2021 until early 2023. Beginning in October of 2022, Kirkland began delivering the courses and rolled them out over a period of five months. Along the way, Kirkland collected data and feedback from learners and continued to refine delivery, facilitation, and course content to create the optimal experience. The firm will continue to offer courses firmwide on an ongoing basis.

### **Measurable Benefits**

Response to the LMT curriculum has been overwhelmingly positive. Of the more than 1,400 participants who responded to post-delivery surveys, 94% rated the courses as either Good, Very Good, or Excellent. Below is a sampling of the types of measurable benefits that participants described.



Participants\* who have taken the course have shared feedback around the following benefits:

- A judgement-free space to discuss growth areas with peers and to meet new colleagues across the global firm. Participants overwhelmingly reported that it was valuable to meet and collaborate with others across the firm, and hugely validating to openly discuss on-the-job challenges with others. Having smaller, private conversations in the vILT breakout rooms with peers not in their immediate work teams was key to fostering trust and open communication. This kind of interaction only became possible for a global, hybrid mix of remote and on-site employees due to choosing the vILT modality—and proved hugely beneficial for authentically discussing leadership skills.
  - “Discussing weaknesses - we do not have many opportunities to do that day to day, and hearing folks express the same concerns was really comforting.”
  - “The end discussion/brainstorming on what is hard about giving feedback and executing delegation. Honestly just nice to hear other people struggle with it and find it hard.”
  - “The validation of being able to ask confidently for feedback on the basis that the firm wants this from you and it is necessary.”
  - “Talking with other first years in the breakout rooms about things they have struggled with / encountered so far.”
  - “The breakout rooms were actually very beneficial, and it was nice meeting associates from other offices/practice groups.”
- Mindset shifts about the importance of leadership skills, and that it’s possible to break less technical skills down into actionable, step-by-step frameworks. Attorneys naturally think about the technical part of their job as “the work” and can sometimes overlook the leadership and management skills required to operate at the highest levels in the firm. The LMT curriculum has elevated these skills as expectations for professional growth on par with technical aptitude and created the space to better approach the very real challenges of managing people and teams effectively. Providing associates with logical frameworks to tackle these skills proved useful and lowered the threshold for change.
  - “Just generally being forced to think about my executive presence as a skill in itself worth improving, as opposed to the substantive legal advice we provide.”
  - “Really appreciate having a framework to use to plan and identify who to seek feedback from, how (medium) to seek it out, and how to ask



- specifically enough to make it easier on the person to respond with a non-generic answer.”
- “It is beneficial to break down conversations into specific phases and objectives to ensure that all information and messages get conveyed. When giving (or receiving) feedback, this makes it easier to have a positive conversation and actually make an impact.”
  - Participants saw the value in breakout discussions and skills practice sessions. This will open the door to further evolution in how learning is approached at Kirkland. Even though Kirkland is well known for its practice-based mock trial program, the Kirkland Institute for Trial Advocacy (KITA), leadership at the firm has historically approached most other training – not just in leadership and development, but all areas – as classic lecture. This is natural, as it reflects the culture of learning at law school. The efficacy of the LMT courses for teaching practical skills by incorporating concrete examples, stories, discussion, and hands-on skills practice will help open the door to new modalities that will be increasingly effective in today’s fast-paced, distributed, and hybrid work environment.
    - “I found the breakout rooms activities very helpful. They were very realistic and forced us to use practical application for the lessons that we learned during this training.”
    - “I found the activities and breakout sessions to be most helpful because it allowed me to think through strategies and hear what other people’s recommendations were.”
    - “The interactive materials and breakout rooms were a nice change of pace. It was easier to remain engaged with the material having to apply it directly during the session.”
    - “I enjoyed the breakout sessions where we could work through problems or questions in small groups and apply the information directly to our own work.”
    - “I liked the activities, which were based on realistic scenarios that may or have come up. I thought this training was very engaging.”

\*Participant names and details are confidential.





## Overall

Overall, the Leadership and Management Training (LMT) curriculum has had a powerful, positive impact on the nearly 1,700 learners who've participated in the courses. The LMT Curriculum has already reached over half of the firm's attorney population and garnered extremely favorable reviews, as illustrated above.

Lessons learned included:

- Firm leadership saw these workshops as a real need and the investment was very well received.
- Discussion in small groups of peers is ideal for enabling open communication across practice groups and international offices.
- Remote and on-site learners can collaborate effectively in a vILT environment.
- The importance of expert facilitation. The ideal model was having a professional facilitator lead the course while a more senior attorney acted as co-facilitator and spoke to the realities of work at Kirkland and fielded more technical questions. 97% of survey respondents rated the facilitation positively.
- Confirmation of assumptions about attorney time – they do not have much, and prefer short, targeted courses that have immediate utility. A pilot of 90 minutes was not received well.
- It's possible to move away (gradually) from a traditional instructional model by introducing discussion-based breakouts and skills-based practice.
- Concrete examples and stories pulled from authentic work scenarios at Kirkland enhanced the courses and made the learning more relevant.

## LOOKING AHEAD TO THE FUTURE:

Kirkland will continue to offer the curriculum to associates and believes that these courses represent only the beginning of a shift in awareness across the global firm around leadership and development skills. Over time, Kirkland hopes to broaden the offerings, provide more targeted and specialized skills practice through on-demand digital offerings, and continue to upskill its diverse and distributed population of learners.

Additionally, this curriculum represents a significant shift away from Kirkland's traditional live, in-person (or recorded live, in-person) lecture-based style of instruction. With the success of delivering a well-received global training initiative for remote and on-site participants, Kirkland has opened the door to more innovation and change for learning across the organization.



Brandon Hall Group

# EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2023

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