



# Next Gen



This week's Q&A with

**Zachary Lerner**

New York Regulatory and Transactional Insurance Partner [Zachary Lerner](#) primarily focuses on helping insurance companies and intermediaries (increasingly in the nonadmitted or "surplus lines" market) buy and sell each other and develop legally compliant business practices. Having knowledge and experience on both sides of the coin allows Zach to be intricately involved in his clients' growth and expansion, while also being mindful of the practical legal implications of doing business in the United States.



## More About Zach

### What has helped you to become successful in your field?

Understanding how to maximize value, which usually entails more than just imparting knowledge. Clients look to us to interpret, strategize and innovate to help them get to where they need to be.

### What's the biggest challenge you've faced in your career?

Developing and improving my attention to detail, which I believe is a skill that must be cultivated over time, rather than by spending more time on a task. It's not simply about catching spelling mistakes. Often, it's recognizing subtleties in a particular law or noticing the absence of a word in a contract that can make all the difference.

### Who has had the biggest professional influence in your life? // Did you have a mentor? If so, tell us the most important things you learned from them.

I am fortunate to have worked with many brilliant lawyers who have helped me tremendously. I am particularly lucky to have been mentored by my colleague New York attorney Jack Dearie Jr. When I was an Associate, Jack brought me to a client meeting, where I expected to be a fly on the wall but instead led the meeting — and I still have the sweat stains on the shirt to prove it. Client interaction is the most valuable experience a junior lawyer can have, and Jack gave me that exposure from the outset.

### If you could have dinner with one person, living or dead, who would it be and why?

I would walk into a medieval pub and strike up conversations with local patrons. I'm curious about whether I would have a functioning and entertaining conversation or be accused of being a warlock within minutes.

As for someone alive, at risk of being burned at the stake by both the medieval patrons and my colleagues: Dave Matthews. For better or worse, Dave Matthews Band defined my acne-riddled adolescence. Even after seeing them more than 80 times, I pressure (bribe) friends and family to come see them with me.

### **Tell us your favorite book, movie or TV show and why you like it.**

My favorite TV show is *Lost*. I never miss a chance to argue the brilliance of the ending. I haven't met anyone who agrees with me, but I won't stop trying.

I've seen all the *Back to the Future* movies hundreds of times. I am eternally grateful that it has not been rebooted, but I am disappointed that we do not have hoverboards or flying cars. (However, Nike has released self-lacing shoes, so the future of our planet looks bright.)

### **What would be your fantasy career if you weren't a lawyer?**

Shortstop for the Yankees, but I'm left-handed, so that won't work. Perhaps a professional tennis player, but I stopped growing at age 14, so my serve is never going to come around. I love all things space, but it is easier to hope Elon Musk makes space tourism affordable than to become an astronaut. My most realistic dream job is to own a tennis club with friends, somewhere warm, where I could exercise every day, spend time with loved ones and avoid the New York winter.



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