

# Kiran S. Advani

General Counsel

*SQN Associates, LLC*

In current position for: 7 months

Years in-house: 16 years

Law School: Roger Williams School of Law

Undergrad: Dickinson College (B.A. in English and Political Science)

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## **An overview of my role is:**

SQN Associates partners with various City and County agencies, construction companies, and general contractors to provide customized construction and project management services across a number of States. I provide strategic guidance and support to the executive, administrative, and construction/project management teams at SQN Associates, LLC.

## **Brief description of your past legal jobs:**

Over the past two decades, I have held both law firm and in-house positions, and practiced in a variety of areas. After acting as lender's counsel in Rhode Island, I relocated to Illinois and worked with Vedder Price's Global Transportation Group. I was recruited for an in-house position with Columbia College and have continued in-house practice, often as the sole transactional counsel for the company, and have expanded my practice areas to include real estate, construction, technology, data privacy and security, dispute resolution, and commercial transactions. As in-house counsel for the YMCA, I enjoyed both the legal and project management aspects of the \$25 million dollar construction of YMCA's headquarters in Chicago. Two of my final transactions as Chief Attorney for the Chicago Transit Authority included the sale of the Thompson Center and negotiation of a development agreement for the construction of a \$164 million dollar training and control center, and a multi-million-dollar joint IP agreement.

## The best thing about my current job is:

The employee-supportive culture is one of the best things about SQN. It has been selected as Crain's top place to work for years 2021, 2022, and 2023! I am pleased to be part of the team that has made it part of its mission. Furthermore, SQN's President is a very savvy and intelligent woman. This makes my job very exciting!

## The most challenging thing about my current job is:

All those things that you experience when you start a new job: learning the culture, the business, the personalities, and aligning your skills with the company's needs and wants to ensure a job is well done.

## What I've accomplished as an in-house lawyer of which I'm most proud:

I am most proud of the trust I have earned from my clients/business teams. They trust that I will get their deal done, their decisions will be knowledgeable and with mitigated risks, and that we will address the unexpected as a team.

## Advice I would give to new in-house lawyers:

Learn from your business counterparts; keep them updated on their matters. Empower your clients with the assurance that you will assist them take protected risks. If our clients weren't risk takers, they wouldn't need legal advice.

## Most valuable life lesson that I still apply:

It is OK to be uncomfortable; that's when the most change happens.

## My favorite *pro bono* projects or volunteer activities:

When I can, volunteering with [Dress for Success](#), and working with the women of [Chicago Women in IP](#).

## When I am not working, I like to...:

Cook, read, dance, listen to music.

## **If I were not practicing law, I would probably be:**

An interior designer or an event planner.

## **My favorite vacation spot:**

Greece.

## **My music playlist:**

My playlist consists of both American and Indian popular songs, with some classical, jazz, and Trans-Siberian Orchestra thrown in. At the moment my go-to when I first get into the car is a Bollywood tune titled “Kudi Nu Nachne De” from the movie Angrezi Medium. Literal translation is “Let the Girl Dance” and the underlying message is let a woman be who she wants to be without being judged for it.