

## MVP: Skadden's Sonia K. Nijjar

By Christine DeRosa

*Law360 (September 12, 2022, 2:02 PM EDT)* -- Sonia K. Nijjar of Skadden Slate Arps Meagher & Flom LLP led the team representing video game giant Activision Blizzard when it was purchased by Microsoft for \$68.7 billion, the largest all-cash deal in U.S. history, earning her a spot among Law360's 2022 Mergers & Acquisitions MVPs.

### **HER BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THIS YEAR:**

Nijjar told Law360 that she had several notable deals this year, but the Activision Blizzard acquisition by Microsoft stuck out as a huge personal accomplishment.

Microsoft agreed to purchase the video game company this year, creating the third-largest gaming company in the world based on revenue. As of January, Microsoft was set to pay \$95 per share in cash.

The \$68.7 billion deal was the largest Nijjar had done, but was also the largest ever technology deal, gaming deal and all-cash U.S. deal, she said.

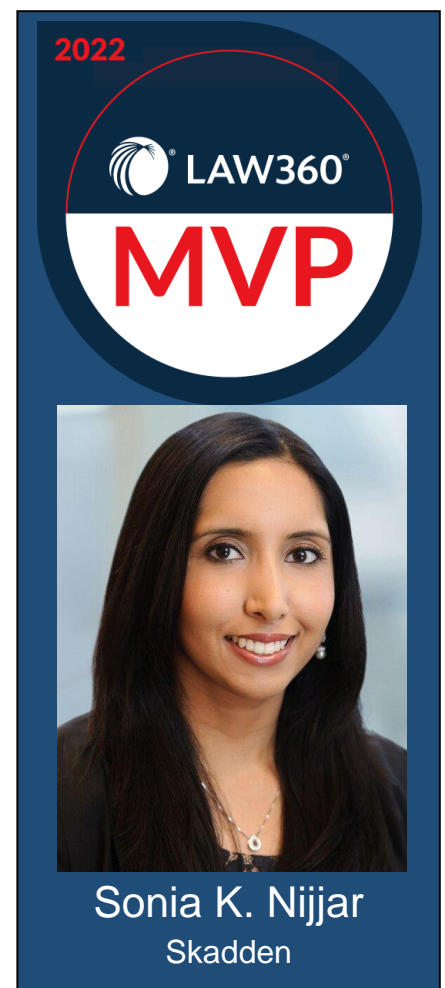
"There were a lot of superlatives surrounding the deal, but for me, we had a great relationship with the client," Nijjar said. "It was just an intricate and really fun deal to do. I mean, what an industry to be a part of, to be doing the largest deal as a part of this industry and just having this complex transaction that I was able to lead was really tremendous."

The deal itself was fun, Nijjar said, but all of her deals are enjoyable to her, adding that she loves that Skadden gets to do cutting-edge work.

"I'm always doing a different type of deal," Nijjar said. "Even when it looks the same on its face, each deal brings its own issues, its own considerations based on who your client is and who the counterparty is, and that's really true in all situations."

### **HER BIGGEST CHALLENGE THIS YEAR:**

Despite working on history-making deals, Nijjar's biggest challenge this year has been trying to return to the in-person work world.



Clients are still using video, some have meetings in person, and Nijjar is still trying to navigate all that while making deals, she said.

Firms and attorneys learned how to do virtual deal-making in 2020, but before the pandemic, it was always done in person, she said.

"I think something that has been a challenge that we've all been overcoming is now doing hybrid deal making where there's always going to be some people on video, some people in person, and making sure everyone has a chance to be heard and you're connecting with your client and you're adequately discussing and working through issues with the other side," Nijjar said.

She added that she hopes to move back to in-person deal making.

#### ***WHY SHE IS A MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS ATTORNEY:***

Nijjar had majored in economics and international relations and had a sense that going toward the business world was something that would interest her. Attending Columbia Law School and doing her summer internship with Skadden cemented her interest.

Nijjar began her career at Skadden as a summer associate, where she got substantial experience with the type of deals the firm works on. She also saw what her career at Skadden would look like, not just as a junior associate but also as a mid-level and senior associate and as a partner.

She further learned that M&A was something she really loved and would love to do going forward.

Nijjar also said she loves being a part of a group that is creating something.

"You're creating a new combined company or you're creating a joint venture, there's always an element here of you want to get the deal done for the benefit of your client and the other side," she said. "You really want to add value. I love that aspect. I also love being a trusted adviser on these deals."

#### ***WHAT MOTIVATES HER:***

Creating new value for her clients is her biggest motivation, Nijjar said.

She said she likes knowing that the firm is doing something that will have an effect on her clients' companies, whether it's on the buyer-side or seller-side, or doing a joint venture or other transactions.

"I love that we're there, we're making an impact, we're adding value to our clients," Nijjar said. "I think that really drives me."

#### ***HER ADVICE FOR JUNIOR ATTORNEYS:***

Nijjar's key advice for younger attorneys is having a great mentor who you like, respect and can look to for advice on deals but also on more abstract things like career goals.

Another piece of advice Nijjar had was to always think one step ahead. She said it means going the extra step beyond your assignments and, for example, bringing additional ideas to the table. It's more about anticipating what the person receiving the information would want, she said.

"I think about that often myself when I'm advising clients," Nijjar said. "It's really, 'What's the way in which my client would find this information most useful?'"

— As told to Christine DeRosa.

*Law360's MVPs of the Year are attorneys who have distinguished themselves from their peers over the past year through high-stakes litigation, record-breaking deals, and complex global matters. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2022 MVP winners after reviewing more than 900 submissions.*

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