

THE ASSOCIATION OF CORPORATE COUNSEL'S

TOP 10 30 somethings

The 2017 “Top 10 30-Somethings” represent the best characteristics of ACC members. They all are trailblazers in their own ways – lending helping hands to the business, others in the in-house community, and to their individual communities as a whole.



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The 2017 10 Top 30-Somethings truly do represent the best characteristics of ACC members. They understand that helping the business is core to their mission, and that sharing insights with each other makes every individual in the group stronger.

EFFICIENCY

It's a cliché but it's true: Lawyers will always be asked to do more with less. Every Top 30-Something has leveraged technology to speed up the services they provide. At Exponential Interactive, Thomas Chow engineered a ticketing system that helped the company move at the speed of Silicon Valley. Gladys Chun, the legal leader of Lazada, an e-commerce platform that serves Southeast Asia, had her legal team create a non-disclosure agreement self-service tool that managed the disparate NDA rules of six countries. At the fashion house of St. John, Christina Zabat-Fran was crucial to the rollout of the e-commerce platform of the high-end clothing company and seamlessly integrated the new "door" with its established boutiques.

LEADERSHIP

Dan Seltzer recognized an inefficiency with Accenture's due diligence program. After he led the overhaul, the company reduced its spend by 90 percent. Charlie Bingham, a field attorney for Microsoft, also saw an opportunity that would benefit his company's bottom line. He negotiated a master contract that allowed Microsoft to sell its Surface units to state and local governments, opening a new revenue stream. At Shell, Jessica Roper performed a similar function. Amid a glut of oil production, she helped engineer a plan to save the company US\$500 million by minimizing downtime and using similar oil rigs. Leilani Harbeck played a pivotal role in the relocation of Conagra Brands from Omaha to Chicago.

COMMUNITY

A quick look at *ACCDocket.com* will show the commitment of ForgeRock's Katia Bloom to the in-house community. In addition to her day job, she often authors multiple articles a week that focus on in-house leaders. Jocelyn Shaw worked with her European colleagues at Bayer to establish an anticorruption assessment that is now used company-wide. In Arizona, US Foods' Jennifer Holsman Tetreault teaches law classes at Arizona State University when she's not helping supply the food that feeds the western states. Their commitments to the in-house community are part of the reason they are recognized as ACC's best.

FOR MORE ON THEIR PERSONAL JOURNEYS AND PATHS TO SUCCESS, READ ON.

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About the 2017 Contest:

The 2017 class of Top 10 30-Somethings continues a pattern of excellence that was established by the previous five classes. There are now more than 60 individuals who have been recognized as Top 30-Somethings by ACC (over the years, we have also recognized two honorable mentions). Eleven volunteer judges scored the applicants on their innovative legal practices, approach to challenges, global perspective, and contributions to the in-house community.

ACC WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE “2017 TOP 10 30-SOMETHINGS” AWARDS SPONSOR SAUL EWING, LLP.

We would also like to thank our contest judges:

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- Amy Yeung
Deputy General Counsel
comScore, Inc.

charlie bingham

2017 TOP 10 30-SOMETHING



Charlie Bingham
CORPORATE COUNSEL
MICROSOFT
ATLANTA, GEORGIA

AGE: 37

Charlie Bingham joined Microsoft in October 2013 as a field attorney — lawyers who serve as general counsel for regional sales units — and was eager to help the business. When Bingham came onboard, Microsoft had made it a priority to focus on its recently updated Surface sales. At the time, the company was prepared not to respond to a national procurement for its devices because it required the manufacturer to be the prime contractor. Microsoft traditionally didn't sell directly to state and local governments in part due to a well-established reseller channel model. Bingham saw a lost opportunity; he volunteered to review the situation and, with help from the head office in Redmond, Washington, he negotiated a national master contract to sell the Surface. There was much pushback, but Bingham persevered. After negotiations with 26 states, he created a negotiation playbook and passed the work to a colleague. By then, news reports trumpeted Microsoft's coup: It was the first time the company had beaten its rival Apple in online device sales in the United States.¹ Bingham was recognized for his efforts by Brad Smith, general counsel of Microsoft, with Microsoft's Growth Mindset Award, which is given to individuals who are innovative and take smart risks.

Selling the cloud has been just as important, if not more critical, over his time at Microsoft. In his capacity as a trusted legal advisor and business partner, Bingham assumes legal responsibility for a segment of the company's Global Sales Marketing and Operations Group, where he provides counsel on a variety of corporate, ethics, and transactional matters in the state and local government space that involve selling Microsoft's cloud solutions like Azure and O365. Cloud computing allows software as a service company — Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc. — to function. Part of Bingham's job is negotiating with counterparties who may not understand the allotted risk of cloud computing.

Another focus of Microsoft's that Bingham is intricately involved with is compliance with the FBI's Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS), which allows Microsoft to sell services and devices in the public safety and national security industry vertical. Before law enforcement agencies are permitted to store information on the cloud, the provider needs to comply with the FBI's CJIS Security policy. Bingham has worked to expand the number of CJIS approved states. In 2016, 12 were secured, compared to 13 over the previous three years combined. His work in this area has led to a competitive advantage for Microsoft since its competitors have barely scratched the surface in CJIS compliance.

Bingham has had a long journey to get to where he is now. Growing up in a humble home in Milwaukee, he knew no lawyers. Today, he says, "I knew I had a responsibility to help those like myself who may have not had a clue about some of the aspects of the legal profession." Every year, he returns to his alma mater, the Howard University School of Law, and recruits students to join the Microsoft team. "I'm proud of extending that legacy," he says. "Charlie strives to utilize every available 'pulpit' in his efforts to raise awareness about diversity in the legal profession; whether while hosting a group of the NBA's Crump Law Camp participants discussing the importance of education and planning for a career in the legal profession, or during one-to-one mentoring sessions with diverse law students," according to his colleague, Daphne Forbes. Bingham is also a regular presence on panels targeting diverse communities at ACC, MCCA, and NBA conferences, to name a few. **30**

NOTE

1 www.digitaltrends.com/computing/surface-bests-ipad-online-sales/.

Katia Bloom almost has a sixth sense for relationship building. She contends it's because of her upbringing. When she was a child, her family fled Latvia, a small country on the Baltic Sea which, at the time, was a part of the Soviet Union. Her family was stripped of its Soviet citizenship and left adrift — “we actually were citizens of nowhere,” she remembers. With only a suitcase per person, they settled in the Chicago area. “I think when you grow up that way, you're just very aware that it could all go away pretty quickly.”

She's developed a mantra she remembers when things aren't going great: “We're all people first and employees second.” It grounds her and lets her see the whole situation in a calm manner, a skill that any in-house counsel needs to master. She says that 90 percent of problems are ultimately communication problems, and being a calm communicator engenders problem solving.

Managing relationships is especially important in high-growth companies, which are the preferred environment for Bloom. She is currently associate general counsel of ForgeRock, a software company that provides identity access management solutions that protect, connect, and manage the digital identities of people, devices, and the Internet of Things. ForgeRock's technology helps large enterprises to secure the identity of anything to build trusted, personalized relationships with their customers across all platforms of communication.

Bloom was attracted to the company's technology and interesting time in its lifespan: high growth, but established enough to have solid processes in place. In large part, though, she joined because of its people and amazing legal team. “As I've gotten further and further in my career, the people I work with have become my number one criteria,” she says, adding: “ForgeRock was just the right fit across the board.”

In addition to her day job, Bloom is devoted to the in-house community. An energetic leader, she is a member and secretary of ACC's ITPEC Committee and is also on the leadership team of the ACC San Francisco Bay Area Chapter. She coauthors a weekly column for in-house counsel on *Above the Law*, regularly contributes articles to *ACCDocket.com*, and a monthly technology and career column for *ACC Docket*. Her articles touch on everything from cybersecurity and privacy to diversity-related topics.

The mother of two young daughters, Bloom has started both of her last jobs pregnant. “We have a running joke in our household that I need to be pregnant in order to switch jobs. What can I say — women have children, and I've never thought that should stop me from taking on new opportunities and challenges,” Bloom explains. She credits co-founding her law firm in 2008, during the midst of the Great Recession, with her fearless attitude and desire to pursue many avenues at once. She calls the firm “the single best professional experience” because it made her comfortable with being uncomfortable. Once she let go of trying to be perfect, she says, she magically had a lot more time to do things.

Her prolific contributions are also rooted in her family history. She is a third-generation female lawyer. And her mother, who she says influenced her more than anyone else, left behind an established legal career to move her family to the United States. “My mom gave up a lot for me to have the privilege to be a lawyer in the United States. I feel a tremendous responsibility to give back to whatever community I'm part of,” she reflects, “whether on the legal or personal front.” **30**



Katia Bloom
ASSOCIATE GENERAL
COUNSEL
FORGEROCK
SAN FRANCISCO,
CALIFORNIA

AGE: 37



Thomas Chow
GENERAL COUNSEL,
CHIEF COMPLIANCE
OFFICER & SECRETARY
EXPONENTIAL
INTERACTIVE
EMERYVILLE, CALIFORNIA

AGE: 39

“When you’re doing business in Silicon Valley, you have to do it at the speed that Silicon Valley moves,” says Thomas Chow, general counsel, chief compliance officer, and secretary of Exponential Interactive, a digital advertising company with approximately 600 employees and more than US\$100 million in annual revenue. The company has a network of different websites where it has first rights to display digital advertising. Exponential’s customers are major brands that want to increase their visibility. The company can also create content and provide data analytics, since it has a billion hits of internet traffic a day.

Chow views the legal department through a singular prism: its contracts. “Contract flow is the lifeblood of a company and its revenue,” he explains. The first thing he did when he joined Exponential was engineer a ticketing system and email aliases so all contracts are automatically routed to a legal specialist and designated backups for review. Once submitted, the business team receives approval or requests for more information within 48 hours. The process has helped Chow reduce his time spent on triage because most contracts fit within predetermined categories like sales, marketing, or publishing.

Reviewing every contract connects him to the business in surprising ways. Take the janitorial contract. Something as mundane as knowing how the offices are cleaned gives him more knowledge about office space and how to maximize office decisions in a particular city.

Chow had another mandate from management when he joined: reduce legal costs. Exponential had filed an S-1, the precursor to an initial public stock offer, but decided against it. In the aftermath, the company was spending and being billed like a public company. Chow cut down the expenditures by doing his own due diligence on international law firms. He created a shortlist of potential firms and test their responsiveness with an email, looking for a well articulated answer in flawless English. The second step is an interview. Just like his employees, he wants to partner with a firm that has enthusiasm and energy. “If they’re enthusiastic during the RFP process,” he explains, “they’ll be enthusiastic to do your work later.” The new network of firm partners reduced legal spend by over 50 percent.

Exponential has offices around the world and corresponding challenges. When Chow evaluated the legal risks facing the company, he determined that human resources issues were at the forefront. One of the issues he helped resolve was the ever-important sales compensation plan. The executive team decided, after long deliberations, that each salesperson, regardless of location, would have a fixed salary component and the other half is based on compensation. “There was a need to treat the salespeople equally across the globe despite the legal complexities,” Chow says.

Other international matters range from the prosaic to extremely serious. When India shuts down for the Diwali, the annual Hindu festival of lights, Exponential relies on the Ukrainian team to cover for them. But when an armed conflict breaks out in Ukraine, what happens? Chow says the company offered its employees the chance to relocate to an office away from the hostilities.

Regardless of the problem, Chow helps Exponential solve it — quickly and tactfully. **30**

Gladys Chun, general counsel of the e-commerce giant Lazada, needs to make room on her mantel after a busy few years. In addition to this honor, she received the “In-house Counsel of Distinction” award at the Asia Legal Awards in Hong Kong earlier this year, as well as sharing the “Deal of the Year” for the US\$1 billion stake in the company by Alibaba, the Chinese technology company, and the ultimate prize of “Legal Department of the Year.” Indeed, things are moving fast and there is a lot to celebrate.

Chun joined Lazada in early 2014 when the legal department only had three employees. It now has a legal and compliance department of more than 30. During its rapid growth, the imperative for the legal department was to keep up and scale. That meant that Chun had to put in place processes (including automation tools) and policies governing the contract review process that prioritized the contract according to a business matrix. Using a Formstack solution (which was entirely coded by an especially talented lawyer within her team), critical information like vendor identity, payment terms, and commercial terms are captured. This allows the team to have full visibility of all contract submissions and track the progress of each review. The transparency (including the ability to monitor drop rate and lead time) allows the legal department to forecast which business units need the most legal help.

Lazada uses a similar approach to nondisclosure agreements (NDA). As the commercial team signs a phenomenal amount of NDAs spread across six countries, the legal department was inundated. Instead of managing the process for the business team, the legal department created a comprehensive NDA self-service tool that is comprised of detailed process charts to educate and empower the business team to request, negotiate, and execute NDAs with minimal legal input but optimal legal oversight. The NDA is then automatically routed to the correct signatory using DocuSign software and filed on a cloud-shared database for easy access. “It is hugely successful from a business risk mitigation standpoint,” she says.

In Q3 2016, Lazada acquired Redmart, an online grocery company that has established logistics and technological capabilities, which fills another niche of e-commerce. “Lazada sees itself as a brand-building platform, offering advertising spaces, advanced targeted capability, and state-of-art branding and marketing technology,” she says.

In addition to the blazing speed of a prominent startup, the other major challenge for Chun is the diversity of its business region. Operating in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam, Lazada needs to navigate murky local laws, six languages, opaque business practices, and confusing cultural nuances. A notable asset is Jack Ma, the Chinese businessman who founded Alibaba Group, and now advises several governments in the region. Chun hopes that by working together with Alibaba and other industry associations, Lazada will be able to steer an omnibus e-commerce law that will unite the disparate laws under a single authority. It’s an opportunity for the business to shape trade, intellectual property, and consumer protection laws in the Southeast Asia region.

As the company expands, Chun continues to think about how to make Lazada a truly technology-driven platform. She expects to spend more time with her business counterparts exploring and implementing a design mentality in delivering legal solutions to the business. “The future is to be the best in what we do. We should constantly challenge status quo and embrace changes. Break boundaries as fear inhibits you from creating something big,” she says. With its focus on the future, it’s likely that there will be more honors and awards going to Lazada. **30**



Gladys Chun

GENERAL COUNSEL
LAZADA
SINGAPORE

AGE: 34



Leilani Harbeck
SENIOR COUNSEL
CONAGRA BRANDS
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

AGE 35

Three years ago, Leilani Harbeck decided to go in-house. She liked the idea of being a strategic partner and seeing a project through from start to finish. When she joined ConAgra Foods, she found that opportunity. Less than 18 months after she joined, the company started a seismic shift — it moved toward divesting its private brands business, announced the spinoff of an approximately US\$3 billion business unit, relocated its headquarters to Chicago from Omaha, and rebranded to Conagra Brands.

The transition, which also included an aggressive cost savings plan that involved a large-scale reduction in force, meant that Harbeck had to strategize with the business to find solutions. She led and managed a voluntary retirement offering, with no prior experience, by working closely with the human resources department. While that project was underway, she continued to provide legal advice on employment and labor concerns impacting the company's then 30,000 plus employees.

It is an exciting time to work at Conagra Brands, Harbeck says. “We have a lot of iconic food brands that are part of our branded portfolio” — like Peter Pan peanut butter and Orville Redenbacher's popcorn — “and we are looking at fresh opportunities to really modernize those brands and add emerging brands.” The move to Chicago aligned the business with other major consumer brand goods companies.

As part of the shift, Conagra Brands (then ConAgra Foods) spun off its major food-service portfolio of frozen potato products, offered as Lamb Weston, which primarily made frozen potato, sweet potato, and other vegetable products that were sold to restaurants. Harbeck helped that process by advising on labor and employment matters and reviewing the associated legal documents tied to the spinoff. She also had a major role in the company's legal preparations for employee regulation changes that resulted from reforms to the US Fair Labor Standards Act. These projects, combined with the massive headquarter move, kept her extremely busy over the past year.

Conagra has more than 40 locations, including offices and production facilities, in the United States, as well as in different international locations. They are incredibly varied. “Throughout the United States, we have some unionized production facilities, some non-union, so a large part of my time is spent tracking how federal or state level changes will impact us and making sure we're compliant,” Harbeck says. “It's not like there's a one-size-fits-all approach for us.”

Many of those plants concentrate on one particular food product. She has visited many of the plants. “By far the predominant and most important part of the visits are to help build relationships,” she explains. Once the relationship is established with the plant's leadership and on-site support, she can work toward solutions.

Having the relationship helps when she delivers on-site trainings, something that she enjoys because she gets to interact with the employees who are helping to make the product. She shares the same sense of satisfaction when she sees the products head to market. Every time she sees someone enjoying a Conagra product, she feels like she's done her job. **30**

Growing up in a small town outside Dallas, Texas, Jessica Roper would watch the massive storms roll over the prairie and dream about one day chasing the tornados beyond the horizon. Her wanderlust manifested itself in a college degree, the first in her family to earn one, and law school. An opportunity to clerk for Shell Oil further expanded her possibilities and she was the only person hired directly in-house from her class. “I couldn’t pass up the opportunity to obtain a global perspective and develop as a lawyer at a world class organization,” she says. Today, she advises Shell’s global liquefied natural gas trading business.

Roper is currently working on projects in Trinidad and Tobago, the United States, and Brazil, and is in constant communication with her colleagues in The Hague, London, and Dubai. While she was working at Shell’s headquarters in The Hague a few years ago, she developed significant relationships with legal, business, and functional colleagues from all over the world — relationships that she still values and leverages to this day. Her global outlook and network enabled her to collaborate with counterparts in Australia and Malaysia to craft a guidance document for crisis management situations. The document is a checklist for anyone who serves as a logkeeper during a crisis. It’s now used across the company. It’s a concept the legal department calls “networked performance.” It’s the way that Shell leverages its global workforce to apply solutions from other parts of the world.

Her experience on the crisis management team is one example of how Shell’s lawyers do more than the average lawyer. Last year, while she was still supporting Shell’s global wells organization, and in the context of low oil prices, she helped engineer a plan to save the company millions of dollars by working with Shell’s contractors to minimize downtime, strictly enforcing contractual rights, and leveraging Shell’s strategic relationships.

Roper now provides legal support to Shell’s global liquid natural gas trading organization. “What I’m doing now is completely different from anything I’ve done before, but working at Shell provides so many opportunities for lawyers to develop themselves in new ways to be better prepared for the uncertain and changing future challenges that we may face,” she explains. She supports commercial deals, advises on strategy, negotiates with counterparties, and helps manage compliance and regulatory risks. When she’s faced with something unfamiliar, she can connect to experts in other parts of the world to advise her. The whole enterprise strengthens her position as a knowledge expert within Shell.

With around 92,000 employees in more than 70 countries, Shell and its legal department understand the importance of its workforce and lawyers like Roper. For Roper, who is also the current secretary of the ACC Houston Chapter, and was recently selected as president-elect, her decision to move in-house has opened the door to the rest of the world and she contends that going in-house directly from law school is the best decision she’s made in her career. From small town Texas with dreams of chasing storms, this talented lawyer has found that the world is her oyster. **30**



Jessica Roper

LEGAL COUNSEL,
TRADING & SUPPLY -
GLOBAL LNG
SHELL OIL COMPANY
HOUSTON, TEXAS

AGE: 34



Dan Seltzer

MANAGING DIRECTOR;
SENIOR DIRECTOR,
ANTICORRUPTION
AND GOVERNMENT
COMPLIANCE
ACCENTURE
SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA

AGE: 39

Accenture is a leading global professional services company, providing a broad range of services and solutions in strategy, consulting, digital, technology, and operations. Combining unmatched experience and specialized skills across more than 40 industries and all business functions — underpinned by the world’s largest delivery network — Accenture works at the intersection of business and technology to help clients improve their performance and create sustainable value for their stakeholders. With approximately 401,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries, Accenture drives innovation to improve the way the world works and lives.

To maintain its ethical reputation, it’s important for the company to maintain a strong culture of ethics and compliance, including robust compliance programs like anticorruption and government compliance. One key component of Accenture’s approach is to conduct due diligence on its third party business partners. After all, nearly 90 percent of problems arise out of a third party agreement. Dan Seltzer, the company’s senior director of anticorruption and government compliance, saw an opportunity to streamline and enhance Accenture’s compliance due diligence program. “Doing more with less” is a phrase all in-house counsel know well. Few are able to create a program that delivers a superior product while also reducing the report time from 33 days to three days and reducing company spend by 90 percent.

He leveraged Accenture’s internal legal network, a truly global operation, to set up a test for its outside due diligence vendors. He assigned 10 lawyers in India to the due diligence team, trained them for six months, and compared the team’s results with the vendors’. There wasn’t a single instance of the internal team missing a possible red flag. In fact, the Accenture team caught 20 percent more material than outside vendors. Seltzer sums up the project by saying: “We Accenturized it: It is faster, better, and significantly cheaper.”

The project wasn’t without its risks however. Seltzer and his legal department had to balance the gains against the likelihood that the team could miss something during due diligence. “The idea was that we would not be reliant on an outside vendor to have some unknown person in their company running the reports. Instead, we can track it ourselves, and if there are issues, we can figure out if the person needs additional training and address it,” he explains.

Seltzer’s solution — which mirrors Accenture’s approach — is emblematic of his style of problem solving. That is, most problems require a unique solution. Accenture specializes in them. Seltzer took the same approach when he designed the company’s anticorruption compliance trainings. Most employees receive an annual computer-based training. The employee answers questions that determine their understanding of anticorruption law that then generates a personalized training document that focuses on specific knowledge gaps. For higher risk locales (Accenture operates in 120 countries), he tailored a custom live training program that is delivered in person by local lawyers. The goal of his style of training, he says, is to reinforce the idea that it’s OK to ask a question. He’s found that when a real world scenario is presented, there’s an uptick in questions about ethical behavior.

It’s exactly the kind of lesson that makes Accenture what it is. The ethical, behind-the-scenes company is made up of ethical, behind-the-scenes employees like Seltzer. **30**

It's easy to drive to work when your ultimate goal is to feed the world's growing population. And with 10 billion people projected by 2050, it relies on human innovation like Bayer's Crop Science Division to help grow the food needed to feed the world.

Jocelyn Shaw provides product support for the North American region. Her team includes a product steward, regulatory specialists, financial analysts, and scientists, while she serves as counsel as they work to bring innovative products to market. Bayer invests on average \$US1 billion in R&D to create new, innovative, and trusted solutions for sustainable agriculture.

Shaw's role is varied. Because so much of crop protection and biotechnology products involve IP rights, she helps coach the company's scientists before they collaborate with third parties. This spring, she worked with product development leadership to develop and acquire drone technology. She provided advice on the evolving regulatory landscape, including FAA regulations and the certifications necessary to operate drones to conduct research on plant characteristics in the field. She routinely manages and counsels clients on sensitive production channel issues, negotiates licensing agreements with key partners, competitors, and customers, and provides legal guidance on marketing strategy and the development of Bayer's next generation products.

Shaw really enjoys being a part of the innovation and technology that is transforming the agricultural industry. She especially enjoys opportunities to interact with customers, including one trip to Puerto Rico with some of Bayer's top soybean licensees to see some of their latest field tests. "Bayer has a true focus on the customer and does a good job cultivating relationships with our customers that help us uniquely understand their needs and create technologies to fill those needs. It's very rewarding to be a part of this," she explains.

Shaw, like all in-house lawyers, is especially attuned to risk. She doesn't see Bayer's crops failing or a rival company as the biggest source of risk. Instead, it's the lack of acceptance among the general public when it comes to genetically modified foods and crop protection products. "More than 90 percent of the population has no connection to agriculture, which creates an environment where activists can cultivate fear about modern agriculture technologies in the minds of consumers," she explains. It's an essential part of her role to advocate for Bayer's technologies and the benefits they bring. After all, she adds, it takes over 10 years of research, testing, and regulatory approval and registration before a product gets to market.

In fall 2014, she traveled to Bayer's headquarters outside Cologne, Germany. She worked with her European counterparts to help create an anticorruption assessment, and then helped roll out the training. She says the biggest benefit was forging relationships with her peers in other regions and working toward the common goal of Bayer: feeding the world.

She continues to work closely with her global colleagues and has routinely presented and taken part in global legal meetings in Europe, including leading presentations on the regulatory status in North America of new biotech breeding techniques and providing guidance on US export control law. **30**



Jocelyn Shaw

COUNSEL II
BAYER CORPORATION
RESEARCH TRIANGLE
PARK, NORTH CAROLINA

AGE: 34

jennifer holsman tetreault

2017 TOP 10 30-SOMETHING



Jennifer Holsman
Tetreault
REGION LEGAL COUNSEL
- WEST
US FOODS
PHOENIX, ARIZONA

AGE: 39

In-house counsel often describe their roles as being “embedded in the business.” Few are as involved as Jennifer Holsman Tetreault, who provides legal advice for the entire West region of US Foods, the second largest food distribution company in the United States. Last year the company decided its field operations would be more effective with a dedicated lawyer working side by side with each regional leadership team.

Tetreault is a generalist. Based in Phoenix, Arizona, she has multiple weekly meetings with her regional team, which includes the regional president, the regional vice presidents of local and national sales, the regional vice president of finance, the regional human resource business partner, and other executives. By discussing strategy and business concepts with in-house counsel, the company can identify possible problems before they arise. She also serves as counsel for the other leadership teams in the West region: Seattle, Salt Lake City, Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, Denver, and Albuquerque. She helps with everything from contracts to employment issues to mergers and acquisitions. When she needs specific expertise, she will often call the company’s headquarters in Rosemont, Illinois, rather than a law firm.

She also handles regulatory tasks. As a food producer, US Foods is subject to the Food Safety Quality Assurance Act, which mandates refrigeration for certain foods, and California’s Prop 65 statute, which requires companies to clearly disclose products that contain BPA, an organic synthetic compound, on the label.

Her work helps the company deliver billions of dollars of food in the West region. Many of the casinos in Las Vegas contract with US Foods, as do government agencies. “Often when there is a forest fire, we provide the food services to the firefighters who go out to fight the wildfires,” she says. The company is more than just a food delivery operation though. US Foods also offers technology tools that help customers anticipate when market demand might surge, such as when spring training commences in Arizona. The system helps both small and national restaurant customers optimize their inventory and sales.

Tetreault’s connection to Arizona runs deep. In college, at Arizona State University, she donned the uniform of the school mascot: Sparky the Sun Devil. She is still strongly connected to the school. Her first in-house role was at the Arizona State University Alumni Association, where she managed internal and external programs and handled the legal responsibilities for the organization, while simultaneously teaching a course at the law school. She continues to teach US law and legal analysis to a diverse group of students, which sometimes includes Japanese judges, professional athletes, and Middle Eastern healthcare professionals who are pursuing an LLM. “Every semester is totally different and I love it,” she explains, “It reminds me to stay connected to my own learning, and I look forward to having the connection with the students.” **30**

christina zabat-fran

2017 TOP 10 30-SOMETHING

In an era of ubiquitous branding, establishing one that sets a company apart is more important than ever. At St. John Knits, Vice President and General Counsel Christina Zabat-Fran is at the helm of a team that has brought the iconic Southern California fashion house into an omnichannel e-commerce world — while maintaining the devotion of the 55-year-old company's loyal customer base.

St. John's most visible public window — its website — doubles as a private database, in which orders are organized and fulfilled in concert with the company's other boutiques. Zabat-Fran worked closely with the company's CIO to build the partnerships with technology and data experts that gave St. John a custom information system that anticipates future inventory needs and customer wants. That gives invaluable insight into the brand's current and future performance. "What are people buying and when are they buying it, and how can we use that data to make smarter, more informed decisions when we're designing our products?" Zabat-Fran says. "Our website is now a key tool in helping figure that out."

Other technological hurdles included building an online system that reflected the lifestyles of its globe-trotting customers, who include CEOs, entrepreneurs, and judges, as well as Hollywood A-listers and tastemakers in the industry. The website is now St. John's second biggest customer-driver, behind only its flagship boutique on Fifth Avenue (Zabat-Fran is quick to point out that the online portal does not require leasing a building in Manhattan). Now it's being enhanced through a brand-wide emphasis on interactivity. With Zabat-Fran's leadership, St. John has embraced social media and integrated it into its website. St. John's customers tend to be successful professional women, and the brand seeks to celebrate their stories and provide a platform for them to do the same. "We are working smart for our customer, so she can buy where she wants, when she wants, how she wants," Zabat-Fran says.

St. John's growth hasn't just been online. The brand has blossomed internationally, too, with Zabat-Fran partnering with the business through the opening of flagship stores in China, Russia, and Azerbaijan. St. John now operates in 25 countries. Her team works with St. John's director of international business to vet potential license partners, and Zabat-Fran oversees the development and compliance with the company's code of conduct and ethics and FCPA obligations. She believes her legal department is a steward for innovation. "I've learned so much from our CEO and executive team about how to build and grow a brand," she reflects.

As part of the inaugural class of the University of California Irvine School of Law, and the only graduate to go directly in-house, Zabat-Fran advocates strongly for the in-house profession by speaking about her career path and mentoring law students. Giving back is something she considers part of her personal brand, which she knows how to build. **30**



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