2021 ACC Top 10 30-Something: Anushree Bagrodia

Interviews and Profiles

The ACC Top 10 30-Somethings awards recognize in-house counsel between the ages of 30 and 39 for their innovation, global perspectives, proactive practice, advocacy efforts, and pro bono and community service work.

Anushree Bagrodia's resilience and confidence carried her from Mumbai to London to New York and

allowed her to turn a six-month assignment at Mastercard into a career that has spanned eight years, two continents, and countless hours of trusted work. And in all of this it was her adaptability to reinvent herself that allowed her to advise diverse businesses across many countries.

During her undergraduate years in India, Anushree pursued a degree in finance. She jokes that her eventual interest in law was derived from novels — and not the fact that her mother had been an attorney. “I can totally blame John Grisham for it,” she says. With the encouragement of her family, Anushree moved to the United Kingdom to earn her master’s in law from Oxford University.

When she first started at Mastercard in London, Anushree had many questions. How does the business work? What are the company’s best interests in negotiating contracts? What more does the company do other than credit and debit cards? To help her answer these questions, there was no program. So Anushree took it upon herself to build an onboarding program for Mastercard’s new in-house legal hires.

Now senior managing counsel in New York, Anushree has been running this onboarding seminar for almost five years. She expanded it from a regional program to one with global reach, and successfully pulled off a virtual version during the COVID-19 pandemic, hosting 150 participants across time zones in eight live sessions.

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Anushree is also the co-owner of Mastercard’s contracts policies, which gives her the ability to simplify the company’s procedures and improve cross functional collaboration. The goal was to make a procedure guide that is easy for all employees to understand. The result was a successful standard operating procedure plus the creation of the “Procedure Wizards,” a working group designed to improve communications between departments regarding their interdependent policies. The Procedure Wizards exist so that “no policies exist in a silo,” Anushree explains.

Anushree is always looking for ways to improve Mastercard’s systems, but she recognizes that change can be hard. “People are accustomed to doing things a certain way and that hard wiring is difficult to change even though the new way maybe easier. That is why it is important to design new processes that will allow people to adapt to the change more readily and that comes when they realize the benefits they will get from the change,” she says.

In her role at Mastercard, taking a different route meant transitioning the company away from pen and paper and toward electronic signatures. Mastercard has not gone away with ink entirely, but Anushree led the team that developed the global e-signature policies for the company — a project completed a year prior to the pandemic.

When executives started running to the legal department looking for how to implement the use of e-

signatures in the spring of 2020, “Tthe legal team didn’t have to say, ‘give us some time and we’ll come back to you,’” Anushree proudly states, "We had a simple, user-friendly guide and processes already set-up in place."

> "I am very passionate about paying it forward."

Another source of pride for Anushree is her work to support the next generation. “Having had many mentors and sponsors over the course of my career, I am very passionate about paying it forward,” Anushree shares. She participates in Mastercard’s Women’s Mentoring Program and chaired Mastercard UK’s Women Leadership Network, where she advocated for Mastercard to sponsor local awards for leading women in technology and organized a two-day corporate work experience program for first-generation high school girls.

Since moving to New York in 2016, she has quickly entrenched herself in organizations like ACC, the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity (LCLD), and the New York chapter of the Asian American Bar Association (AABANY), where she mentors law students and young professionals. She also recently recorded a podcast on career development for young lawyers.

Recalling her own journey, Anushree advises those just starting out, “You need to be resilient, but on top of everything, you need to be confident about the value that you bring.”

Read more about the 2021 Top 30-Somethings

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Before joining ACC as a contractor, Rachel worked as a reporter at at the DC-based congressional publication CQ, the local Illinois paper the Rock Island-Moline Dispatch-Argus, and her college paper the Augustana Observer, where she also served as editor over the Opinions section.