Day in the Life: Justin Coss

Interviews and Profiles

Justin Coss

Group legal counsel and company secretary,

AUB Group Ltd.

Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

6:00 am

My labrador wakes me by licking my ear. She is like an alarm clock and knows it's breakfast time. **Turn on the coffee machine and start the "waking process" of our three daughters** — none of whom are morning people.

6:30 am

Check to see if any urgent emails came in overnight and review the day's diary to understand where I need to be. I am not big on breakfast, but coffee is mandatory. The house descends into mayhem as our family of five gets ready. This usually involves a mixture of complaints from the children followed by urgent appeals from the parents to hurry.

7:45 am

Drive the kids to school and do some diary planning with my wife, who is a private practice lawyer. To fend off chaos, our lives have to be coordinated with military precision — our mantra being: "If it's not in Outlook, it's not happening." After the kids exit the car, we spend a peaceful 10 minutes of catch-up time until we arrive at the car park and the day commences in earnest.

8:15 am

Arrive at the office and **grab a coffee with the M&A manager** with whom I work closely. AUB is effectively an asset manager and we acquire and divest businesses on a regular basis. There is always M&A activity happening, which keeps the adrenaline going.

8:30 am

Before the market opens, I **release an announcement on the ASX platform** relating to a change in one of our directors' shareholdings. The ASX listing rules require us to notify the market within very short timeframes on any material developments, including with respect to the changes in directors' shareholdings so this sort of task usually gets priority at the start of the day.

9:00 am

Review due diligence information on a potential target we are looking to acquire and identify areas of potential concern for further investigation.

10:00 am

Meet with the group chairman as part of a regular governance catch up to discuss updating our policies on insider trading and conflicts of interest.

11:00 am

Review, amend, and send out a new employment contract for an executive joining the business.

11:30 am

Review a lease for new office space for one of the group entities and send comments back to our external leasing lawyers.

12:00 pm

Meet a fellow GC for lunch at **a new Spanish tapas place** that recently opened around the corner from the office. We talk about a frequent topic: doing more with less. Some corporate legal departments are using students and graduates to undertake some of the the more administrative work involved in the in-house counsel perform.

1:00 pm

Back to the office to **go through "business as usual" emails.** AUB Group has over 75 businesses across 310 locations in Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. The flow of emails is relentless and requires constant attention. Email is a useful tool, but also has the ability to absorb the entire day if you aren't careful.

2:00 pm

Self-seclusion time to read documents. Like most offices these days, everyone sits in open plan so I find it useful to "self-seclude," which is really a euphemism for **"hide," in a meeting room to read and think without the constant ping of emails, the buzz of phones, and the distraction of colleagues.**

3:00 pm

Attend a board meeting of one of our subsidiaries.

5:00 pm

The CEO, CFO, and I **attend an impromptu meeting of the Management Continuous Disclosure Committee** to discuss whether a potential acquisition might be material if it proceeds and therefore becomes disclosable to the market.

6:00 pm

The ACC Australia board meeting begins. Due to the tyranny of distance in Australia, and that board members come from all states across the country, most board meetings are by telephone. **I find out during the board meeting that my six-year-old, Claudia, has broken her arm at gymnastics training.**

7:00 pm

Meet my wife at the hospital and **give Claudia lots of cuddles and the iPad to distract her** while we wait for the orthopedic surgeon. Apparently, surgery is necessary.

8:00 pm

While my wife spends the night at the hospital, **I go home to take over from the nanny** and put my other two daughters to bed.

9:00 pm

After a quick bite of leftovers for dinner, I **review emails and draft board minutes** for distribution.

10:00 pm

Catch an episode of *Game of Thrones* to unwind and head to bed.

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