



Thriving Through Transformation: How PayPal's Emily Ward Used Her Network and Values to Define a Year

Career Development



In 2015, Emily Ward, vice president and deputy general counsel at PayPal, was busy. Her itinerary included helping lead aspects of PayPal's separation from eBay, aiding PayPal's transition as its own company, organizing ChIPs' global event in Washington DC, remaining active in her professional and personal communities, and even adopting a child. So, how has Ward been celebrating the end of such a transformative year?

Clue: She is not taking a yearlong sabbatical. Instead, she is thriving in her new landscape and actively preparing for her next challenge — board service. Remarkably, the transformative year of 2015 has energized and inspired her to aim high, continue growing, and have an even further impact. Ward explained a little about what the year of 2015 entailed, how she successfully managed her loaded itinerary, and how she's preparing for her next big challenge.



ChIPs in the Capitol: Creating your network

Ward's leadership activities well extend beyond her day job. Last year marked the tenth anniversary of ChIPs (<http://chipsnetwork.org>), the nonprofit Ward co-founded with six other women. ChIPs is dedicated to the advancement, development, and retention of women working in technology and intellectual property. The non-profit currently provides support, networking, and education for its membership of over 1,200 women nationwide.

ChIPs has been a labor of love for Ward and has provided a key foundation for her own success. "ChIPs started because several of us noticed there were not many other chief IP counsel in the Silicon Valley who were women. Seven of us started having lunch to build relationships and help support each other. We swapped stories and discussed issues that we were all facing. We quickly established a kinship," Ward explained. The lunches became regular meetings, and the women realized they also shared another goal in common.

"In addition to supporting each other, we also all wanted to be able to turn around and lend a hand to try to make it easier for women coming up behind us," Ward said. The group started organizing events and programs and in 2005, ChIPs was officially formed. "To really succeed, I think you need people who know you very well, who care about you, and want to see you at your best," Ward explained. "Those are the people who support you through your successes and challenges and also can tell you the truth and provide some tough love when you need it. I've been fortunate to have a fantastic husband, close friends from my church, and also the Chipsters and other friends to be that for me."

To celebrate the big ten-year anniversary in 2015, Ward and the other ChIPs directors organized the annual ChIPs global summit in Washington DC. The event included both legal and political superstars, including many judges, government officials, agency heads, academics, corporate counsel, and law firm attorneys. Ward explained, "We often work collaboratively with the policy makers, and for women in intellectual property and technology to have an impact, they have to work closely and regularly with policy-makers, and develop relationships of trust and expertise." As part of the celebration, ChIPs honored United States Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg for her long and distinguished career as a lawyer, law teacher, and jurist. ChIPs also honored Justice Ginsburg's daughter, Professor Jane C. Ginsburg, for her highly lauded work in IP law, particularly in the area of literary and artistic property law.



From left to right, the founders of ChIP: **Julie Mar-Spinola** (Chief Intellectual Property Officer at Finjan Holdings); **Mallun Yen** (Executive Vice President at RPX Corporation); **Hon. Michelle K. Lee** (Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property; Director of the United States Patent & Trademark Office; former Head of Patents & Patent Strategy at Google); **Noreen Krall** (Vice President, Chief Litigation Counsel at Apple); **Emily Ward** (Vice President, Chief Technology Counsel at PayPal); **Mona Sabet** (Founder, VIBLIO and GM, Grace Hopper Conference); **Anirma Gupta** (General Counsel at Tanium). **Photo courtesy of Asa Mathat**

Networking and diversity are key to success

Ward attributes part of her success in her role with eBay and now PayPal — as well as her successful navigation of the companies' split — to the extensive network she has built over many years, both inside and outside of eBay's and PayPal's communities. She explained that as lawyers advance in

their careers, excellence in the substantive work is often presumed. Excellence is "table stakes." The more successful leaders develop a deep network upon which they can draw complex business knowledge and relationships and effect real change.

Ward explained, "One way leaders of an organization bring value is through their experience and wisdom. But that experience and wisdom extends well beyond the individual. Instead, a great leader often utilizes her deep and diverse professional network. Diversity is incredibly important," says Ward. "I work with people from many diverse backgrounds — different cultural, industry, technology, big and small company backgrounds, millennials to baby boomers. The knowledge and understanding that I gain from them provides a wealth of perspectives."

DirectWomen Board Institute: Expanding your network

Ward clearly thrives in her current surroundings and has effected tremendous impact in her many years of board service on the ChIPs board as well as other board leadership and advisory roles. She is seeking to extend that impact by embarking on a journey to obtain a position on a corporate board of directors in addition to her job at PayPal. Her deep expertise as an executive at eBay and PayPal for over thirteen years in the e-commerce and FinTech industries (including mobile, cybersecurity and big data technologies) makes her a catch for board service in technology, mobile, digital, retail, and social sectors.

She also joined the DirectWomen Board Institute program last summer. DirectWomen is committed to increasing the number of women on corporate boards by training and positioning an elite group of exceptional senior women lawyers for service as directors of major US corporations. Its competitively selected Board Institute program, where an extraordinary faculty of CEO's, directors, DW alumnae, and honorees as well as executives from leading national and regional search firms network with participants, discuss how participants can best position themselves for board service, and refine their CVs and elevator pitches to make them board ready. Ward speaks highly of the experience and of the new additions to her network: "I was delighted to be a part of the DirectWomen Institute. The program was excellent and I enjoyed building relationships with a new group of wonderful women leaders and I think we will continue to support each other as we each move through our board journeys."

Ward has been so appreciative of the experience that she is now actively involved in spreading DirectWomen's mission on the West Coast. To kick off this expansion, she is helping organize the first West Coast DirectWomen event, "Breaking Into the Boardroom: The Pathways and the Process," on May 5. The invitation-only event will be held at Facebook's headquarters in Menlo Park. Panelists include Mary Cranston (director, VISA Inc., The Chemours Company, and Lucille Packard Children's Hospital); Connie Collingsworth (director, Premera Blue Cross, Banner Corporation), Priya Huskins (director, Realty Income Corporation and Silicon Valley Directors' Exchange); and Stephanie Tilenius (director, Coach, Inc., Seagate Technology LLC, Tradesy, Redbubble). These distinguished executives will share their insights about board service and provide tips on how other women lawyers can best position themselves to serve on a corporate board.

Staying true to your values

With the PayPal spin-off from eBay in July 2015, you might have thought Ward was far too busy to

adopt a child from China in June. She explained that even though it was one of the busiest times in her professional life, not adopting her son wasn't even an option. "Having faith in God that if you do what is important to the values you hold and what you believe in, that everything else will work itself out. God is the reason for all of the success in my life and my husband and I were overjoyed to be able to share that with our son."

Emily Ward achieved her transformative 2015 by utilizing and expanding her networks and staying true to her values. And Ward refuses to rest on her laurels — as she looks forward to her next challenge, she continues to "pay it forward" by helping other professional women aim high. If her 2015 is any indication, she is sure to have yet another remarkable year.

[Olga V. Mack](#)



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Olga V. Mack is a fellow at CodeX, The Stanford Center for Legal Informatics, and a Generative AI Editor at law.MIT. Mack shares her views in her columns on ACC Docket, Newsweek, Bloomberg, VentureBeat, Above the Law, and many other publications.

Mack is also an award-winning (such as the prestigious ACC 2018 Top 10 30-Somethings and ABA 2022 Women of Legal Tech) general counsel, operations professional, startup advisor, public speaker, adjunct professor, and entrepreneur. She co-founded SunLaw, an organization dedicated to preparing women in-house attorneys to become general counsels and legal leaders, and WISE to help female law firm partners become rainmakers.

She has authored numerous books, including *Get on Board: Earning Your Ticket to a Corporate Board Seat*, *Fundamentals of Smart Contract Security and Blockchain Value: Transforming Business Models, Society, and Communities*. She is working on her next books: *Visual IQ for Lawyers* (ABA 2024), *The Rise of Product Lawyers: An Analytical Framework to Systematically Advise Your Clients Throughout the Product Lifecycle* (Globe Law and Business 2024), and *Legal Operations in the Age of AI and Data* (Globe Law and Business 2024).

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