Day in the Life: Naseera Ebrahim

Interviews and Profiles





Naseera Ebrahim

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5:00 am

No alarm needed because it is currently **30 degrees Celsius in Johannesburg**, so I am wide awake — we are experiencing a heat wave. I toss and turn a bit and then realise that it's pointless trying to go back to sleep. I get out of bed, put the kettle on and have a cup of green tea. At this point I negotiate with myself: If I go for a jog, I can skip going to the gym after work. So I reluctantly put on my running shoes and go out for a brisk walk around the block (It can hardly be called a jog when I am so slow!). I have my phone with me and listen to what I term "get up and go music."

6:00 am

Once back in my apartment, I shower and read for a bit whilst having my breakfast. I am currently finishing a book by Jeffrey Archer called "The Sins of the Father." I can barely put it down! **My apartment does not have a television**. I have lived sans television for almost five years now. But I am addicted to WiFi — it's like air.

7:30 am

I leave for work. I live 30 minutes away from the office. I walk into the office slightly after 8 am and the first thing I do is get a coffee and read the newspaper (if there is no one already waiting for me in my office). Currently, the two big news items getting airtime in the media are the **proposed $104 billion buy out of SAB Miller**, South Africa's largest brewer by AB InBev, and the fact that South African comedian Trevor Noah is the new host of "The Daily Show."

8:30 am

My first meeting arrives. My team is assisting the marketing department with a consumer protection issue. I have been asked to look at an advertisement that will be aired in a few weeks. I did not mention this before, but I look after a retailer (a corporate babysitter of sorts).

9:30 am

My next assignment is looking at the **amendments to the Labour Relations Act**. This is a very topical aspect of labour law in South Africa at the moment.

11:00 am

I have a standing weekly team meeting. **I manage a team of 10 lawyers and three paralegals**. I am updated on what is happening in the governance space, compliance space (we look after 14 areas of compliance), risk environment and commercial legal matters. We have two litigation matters that are in court toward the latter part of the year. One of my team's lawyers manages that in conjunction with an e-commerce project together with the IT team. The compliance officer on my team mentions that he is preparing the risk report for my review and discussion at a risk committee meeting that will take place in a week.

1:00 pm

I often have my lunch at my desk. It's a simple meal, either a salad or a sandwich. I generally review agreements whilst having my lunch and respond to any emails that are important.

1:30 pm

I have a **meeting with the company's CEO to update him on a legal opinion** that we received from outside counsel on the enforceability of restraint agreements.

2:30 pm

I need a break from my computer. I take a walk down to my team to find out what mountains they are chasing, or if there are any fires that they are putting out and whether or not they require assistance.

3:00 pm

Meeting with an external supplier to **negotiate terms and conditions of a commercial agreement**. This has been dragging on for a few months. We are on draft five of the agreement.

4:00 pm

Teleconference with in-country lawyers over a **trademark matter in Mozambique**. We have three retail formats in Mozambique and given that it is not a commonwealth jurisdiction, the laws are vastly different than South Africa's. The lawyer we are dealing with requires a translator as Portugese is her first language.

5:00 pm

I catch up on any **high priority emails.**

6:30 pm

Dinner with my mentor. I update her on career goals and discuss any challenges where I require assistance.

9:00 pm

Draw a bath and switch off the phone. Down time. **Recharging time.**

10:00 pm

Book in hand. In bed. Ten minutes away from sleep time.

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