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Employment & Labor Law Committee Spotlight

Employment and Labor

Interviews and Profiles



David Berndt

DIRECTOR OF EMPLOYMENT COMPLIANCE

I am the director of employment compliance within Walmart's US compliance organization and I'm responsible for compliance with wage and hour and EEO-related matters for approximately 1.4 million employees. I have over 20 years of legal experience, having previously worked at Ford Motor Company, Terex, Boston Medical Center and One Communications. Over the past 10 years, I have primarily focused on national and international employment laws, regulations and compliance.

What interested you in the in-house practice of law and how did you come to be an attorney at Walmart?

In-house practice has always attracted me because it provides me with the opportunity to focus my work on one dedicated client. I enjoy the opportunity to dive into the business and operations side of my employer and make a difference. I ended up at Walmart through a friend of mine that I met at an ACC function. She and I became cochairs of the ELLC's policy sub-committee. A few years later, when I saw an open position at Walmart, I reached out to her and she made the introductions!

What is the single greatest challenge that your law department is facing today, and how are you dealing with it?

Walmart's legal department faces many challenges. From an employment perspective, one of our greatest challenges is the scope and scale of our employee base. We have to consider a significant number of variables before finalizing any decision, process or procedure. Addressing the laws of various jurisdictions requires us to work closely with numerous departments within the company in order to ensure we are taking care of our employees in a fair and consistent manner.

In October 2014, you were elected chair of the Employment & Labor Law Committee? How did you initially get involved?

Approximately eight years earlier, I attended my first ACC annual meeting. It was a great experience! At that event, I decided to join the business meeting of the ELLC. I was impressed with the people I met there and decided to jump in and participate on the policy sub-committee. I had the ongoing opportunity of co-leading that sub-committee for five years, until October 2012. At that time, I was invited to serve as the new committee secretary, becoming the vice-chair the following year and, last October, becoming the chair.

What are some of the ways that the Employment & Labor Law Committee provides value to its members?

The ELLC provides significant value to its members. Our committee calls include a relevant, timely Legal Quick Hit and Sounding Board discussion every month. The ELLC also has one of the most active eGroups in the ACC, allowing our members to obtain answers and informal mentoring as needed. In addition, our sponsor, Jackson Lewis, does a great job working with our various sub-committees to develop new infoPAKs and to host webinars that are relevant and timely. Finally, our committee works hard to ensure that the programs we sponsor for the annual meeting are engaging and educational for attendees.

What substantive practice issues does your committee address?

We have several substantive subcommittees that are represented on each monthly call: policy, ERISA, health and safety, and labor. Each of these areas provide valuable insights into the developments of emerging and established topics.

How has the Employment & Labor Law Committee helped you in your career?

As I mentioned above, I wouldn't be in my current position without the ELLC. The ELLC provides me with a great network of great attorneys that understand how to excel as in-house legal counsel!

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