

Day in the Life: Darleen Harris

Interviews and Profiles





Darleen Harris

Corporate Paralegal

Zix Corporation

5:30 am My husband Mike leaves for work, while my daughter Rachael and I get ready for another busy day.

7:00 am Drinking coffee to start my day is a must since working from home. Enjoying my fresh brew, I am thankful to no longer have my hour-long commute.

After 30 years as a public company corporate secretary paralegal, I’m proud of our ongoing efforts to enhance efficiency.

If we hadn’t adopted new technology, I would be chained to the office managing paper files and binders. Now, I have flexibility to work-from-home and can take on more tasks to support the rest of the team.

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8:15 am Mike and I exchange a quick text telling each other to have a good day.

8:30 am I draft a proposed board meeting agenda, checking items on our compliance checklist are included, to be circulated and revised for use at this year's meeting.

Next, I prepare a meeting minutes outline based on the agenda that the corporate secretary will

use when taking the actual minutes.

My role supports the corporate secretary function. In some ways, I’m the “secretary” to the secretary.

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9:00 am

Using a portal to distribute board meeting materials, the process is vastly more efficient than when I first started. Now, materials are converted to .pdf, changes are easily managed, and final materials are distributed with a link to the portal.

Years ago, creating board meeting binders was a big production especially when it run late into the evening. They were beasts, hundreds of pages long, with colored tabs, which had to be delivered to members in advance and carried to the meeting. Making hardcopy page-by-page corrections or updates was painful. May the board binder rest in peace.

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10:00 am

I’m interrupted by a request to coordinate schedules for a special call with the board. It still takes time to work with executive assistants and sort out board member schedules.

11:00 am

Later in the morning, I review the governance and compliance documentation for our various subsidiaries, consulting with our advisors, filling out and sending forms, and making required payments.

This component of my responsibilities has grown as we've expanded internationally.

11:30 am

While drinking one last cup of coffee, I note that the annual meeting preparations are just a few months away. This is an immense effort that requires cross-functional coordination.

In the spring, I will be coordinating with others, filling out forms, creating a timeline, and preparing and reviewing proxy and script drafts in anticipation of the next meeting.

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12:00 pm Break for a bite of lunch. I've been eating healthier at home. A salad with avocado, feta cheese, cucumber, bell pepper and turkey is my favorite.

1:00 pm Turning my attention to our denied party screening process, I send lists of parties who sell our services to a third-party vendor. They check the names against OFAC, criminal sanctions, and other denied party lists. I review any "hits" so we can make an appropriate response — most of them are false positives.

I gained responsibility for this process mid-way through my career as we developed our corporate compliance program.

2:15 pm I'm asked to help obtain our CFO's signature on an agreement. This only takes him a few minutes with electronic signing.

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3:00 pm Review any patent or trademark action items and maintain an accurate portfolio.

4:00 pm Prepare Form 4 disclosures, as needed, in connection with equity vesting even for certain board members. We recently obtained technology to help automate tracking of equity awards, but preparing the Form 4s can be complex.

Romeo & Dye is an excellent resource for guidance, and their Section 16 boot camp webinar is essential learning.

5:00 pm Managing a schedule and ensuring completion of a governance checklist is one of my strengths. Each day presents different action items to prioritize and execute.

I go over my to-do list, checking off completed items and noting pending tasks. Before ending the day, I review and calendar upcoming events such as SEC filings, Edgar code renewals, and annual

	reports due for states we are qualified to do business. Feeling prepared for tomorrow, I call it a night.

"Managing a schedule and ensuring completion of a governance checklist is one of my strengths. Each day presents different action items to prioritize and execute."

5:30 pm	Mike arrives home; it was a long day for him. I normally prepare dinner, but tonight we order takeout. Love the chicken enchiladas from nearby El Rincon Mexican restaurant.
6:30 pm	Clean the kitchen. (There always seems to be dishes.)
7:30 pm	Spend the evening with my family and catch up on how their day went. Rachael arrives home and talks about what a great day she had as an assistant stylist and shares all her fashion knowledge. Interesting to hear how styles resurface and are reinvented.
10:00 pm	Time for a hot shower, put on some soft warm PJs, fluff my pillow, and drift off to sleep.

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Darleen Harris has been a corporate paralegal at Zix Corporation for almost 30 years.