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A Day in the Life of a Hollywood Lawyer

Interviews and Profiles





Michael Chang

Vice President, Business & Legal Affairs

Warner Bros. Studios

Burbank, California

8:00 am

Awakened with a startle by the lawnmowers and leaf blowers. It must be a Friday.

During a long period of time when everyone is working from home (or, in my case, the yard), one weekday has a tendency to blend into the next. It takes the gardener to remind me exactly what part of the week we're heading into.

9:00 am

Log on to the network (which I have nicknamed "The Matrix" after one of the studio's most popular film franchises) and enter passwords and access code for what seems like a gazillion times.

9:15 am

Join a long-term planning global streaming presentation to review trailers, sizzles, and other upcoming content that we will be focusing on over the next few years.

I love working in the industry. One of the reasons I decided to work in the content business is the abundant creative talent and, in particular, Paul Thomas Anderson and the team that made the epic film *Magnolia*, which I enjoyed watching while in school.

10:30 am

Review and reply to emails and other client requests. I've established a personal goal to answer all emails the same day (or in case of emails from Asia, the following day), or set aside in a "to-do" folder for follow up with third parties and other stakeholders.

"Log on to the network (which I have nicknamed 'The Matrix' after one of the studio's most popular film franchises)."

11:30 am

Jump online to attend a complimentary law firm CLE course on NFT technology and its impact on the entertainment business.

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client alerts. But only to the extent we opt in and sign up for them. Unsolicited ones go right into the spam folder. If we find your materials relevant and well-analyzed, we may even call you.

12:00 pm

While enjoying a homemade Japanese bento lunch, review headlines in the *Variety*, *Deadline* (formerly *Deadline Hollywood*), *Licensing Magazine*, and other trade publications.

1:00 pm

Hop on a video call with the privacy team to discuss best approaches to drafting an agreement to onboard a new retail and eCommerce logistics partner.

Having worked in the logistics and internet broadband fields, I've seen firsthand issues relevant to an online retail shop and am uniquely positioned to take on the role of eCommerce advisor.

During the call, I turn on the camera. During one of my office visits in the past year, I took a picture of the office to upload as a virtual background. Not very creative, but it brings some semblance of a work environment to my living room.

2:00 pm

Based on notes (taken on pen and paper) from the call, draft said agreement.

"Having worked in the logistics and internet broadband fields, I've seen firsthand issues relevant to an online retail shop and am uniquely positioned to take on the role of eCommerce advisor."

4:00 pm

Review and reply to quite a few urgent emails and other client requests that may have come in since noon.

5:00 pm

I try, but not always successfully, to put into practice work and life pointers offered by Tim Ferriss in his book *The 4-Hour Workweek*.

Hop on weekly video call with the Asia team who are starting to come online. When you regularly work with Asia, the daylight savings time change wreaks havoc on finding a mutually convenient time slot, but I always enjoy the opportunity to use my Mandarin or Japanese.

Growing up as an immigrant in the United States, I was in grade school and spoke no English when we moved to Northern California. As a teenager, my non-native, heavily accented English was the

target of teasing. In addition to English as a Second Language classes, I began to absorb bits and pieces of my new culture by watching cartoons like Bugs Bunny — a character I'm particularly proud to work with at the studio.

And through learning English as a second language, I discovered that I was good at languages. I have found that being multilingual gives a lawyer, particularly an in-house lawyer who is part of a global team of professionals, a competitive advantage.

"I have found that being multilingual gives a lawyer, particularly an in-house lawyer who is part of a global team of professionals, a competitive advantage."

6:00 pm

Head out of the "office" to begin a three-days-a-week backyard workout.

Rope jumping is a vigorous and demanding exercise. Work your jump rope exercise into three 10-minute rounds and you're looking at 480 calories in half an hour. No need for a gym.

7:00 pm

While enjoying a homemade Chinese chowfan dinner, go over the schedule for the following day and listen to music by Depeche Mode, The Smiths, and New Order. I've been known to play an artist on the small screen.

8:00 pm

Having finished the dishes, catch up on some of my beloved shows like *Love Life*, *Insecure*, *South Side*, *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, all on HBO Max.

10:00 pm

End the day with my absolute favorite TV show of all time, *Ie, Tsuite-itte li Desu ka? (Is It OK to Go Home With You?)* on TV Tokyo. Laughter is the best medicine for a long day working from home.

11:00 pm

I read a few more pages of Roger Ebert's *Life Itself: A Memoir* before turning in for the night. As he wisely observes, sometimes on this voyage through life we need to sit on the deck and regard the waves.

The views represented in the article solely are the author's and in no way represent the views of any past or present employers.

[Michael Chang](#)



Vice President, Business & Legal Affairs

Warner Bros. Studios

Michael Chang is vice president, business and legal affairs, at Warner Bros. Studios, where he specializes in creating, defending, and maximizing the value of some of the most iconic brands in the world. He is a past board member and chair of the Pro Bono Committee at ACC SoCal. He is fluent in Mandarin Chinese and Japanese.

