Day in the Life: Margo Lynn Hablutzel of Gainwell Technologies LLC

Interviews and Profiles

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Name: Margo Lynn Hablutzel

Title: Associate General Counsel

Company: Gainwell Technologies LLC

Location: Remote Office

5:50 am

My secondary alarm sounds. I have a permanent 7:00 am weekday alarm, and if I need to get out of bed earlier I set this one. Dutifully I switch it off, roll into the clothes I set out last night, and head to my home office.

6:00 am

Meeting with India Legal, two business leads, and outside counsel on a staffing issue. New laws in India may affect how we treat non-employee workers. We discuss the potential effects and what information we need to gather for counsel to analyze. I make notes for our GC and the attorney who oversees regulatory and employment matters.

6:43 am

Meeting ends. I refill my glass of tea and skim through my inbox. I do quick passes past ACC and ISBA digests and mark a couple to read more thoroughly.

7:00 am

Monthly call with the India Procurement (Supply Chain) team. I inherited this in part because I am a morning person. My regular alarm sounds as the meeting begins and I silence it quickly. This month I don't have a prepared presentation, so we talk about general matters, some specific items various members raise, and a bit about the US weather in advance of Winter Storm Fern. I tell them I'll bring pictures to our next call.

8:00 am

I don't have another meeting for a couple of hours. Breakfast is yogurt and granola (Outer Banks Granola Cinnamon Pecan) and my vitamins. I debate going for a walk before the day gets too busy, then realize I have a PLI program starting at 8:30am.

8:30 am

I start attending the PLI program online. It's two days, and I will be dropping in and out for the sessions most relevant to me. It's also handy to get steps in during the presentations.

8:30am - 11:00am

Catching up on email and reviewing documents while listening to PLI. When I have a minute or two, I

respond to questions in the ACC Communities and start reviewing a piece of proposed legislation in Illinois that was directed to a Section Council I lead. People ping me via Teams — including four bots I've never seen before.

I receive a few new assignments from our CRM system and determine that two can go to the junior attorney I supervise, so I forward them to her. When I refill my glass, I have to set up the next pitcher of tea – I drink quite a lot, in different flavors, unsweetened. The last one was an herbal from Chapters Tea Co.; this one will be a spiced black from Republic of Tea. I'll have to drink the first glass with ice, before it's fully chilled.

9:45am – The 11:00am

Legal Team meeting reschedules to next Tuesday. I post in our chat about the bots. A colleague said he wondered also, deleted and blocked them. I confirm ditto.

At various points when the PLI sessions switch speakers, I do a "5-minute chore" such as making the bed or moving dishes and flatware from the kitchen sink to the dishwasher. Thinking of them in terms of what can be accomplished in five minutes helps with chores, whether tidying the office or the rest of the house.

Noon

Meeting with vendor/subcontractor and customer who wants the vendor to provide certain datasets to another provider. As we gather everybody is talking about what WS Fern is predicted for their area, and reminiscing about a 2011 ice storm that took out power in Connecticut for ten days. Client lawyer and I note the vendor's attorney is not on the call; she joins just as we finish explaining to the business teams why we need to leave even though they think the discussion will be all legal. Turns out it is 50/50 business and trade secret. The call ends with the next meeting set and I have just enough time to make a cameo appearance in a different meeting.

1:00 pm

Lunch break in the PLI program but I have a one-hour CLE on AI and IP. I jump into the program and

during the introductory material give a quick look in the freezer. Today-Me thanks Past-Me who froze a half-order of pastitsio, which I slide into the microwave and return to the program until the timer pings. Dessert is half a ruby red grapefruit, the seeds and peels of which go into the compost bin.

2:00 pm

Back to PLI. And the inbox. I draft a trademark notice for some new websites being hosted by an affiliated company. The copyright notice translates.

2:30 pm

Biweekly 1:1 with the junior attorney I supervise. She has some specific questions about a facility vendor's contract. I discuss the reasoning behind responses I recommend. Several have to do with insurance, not an area with which she is familiar, so it's a learning experience. She was in a different team meeting earlier and reported on their view of the bots.

3:00 pm

A vendor is having performance issues. I review the list of outages and our contract terms and provide a high-level summary to the team. Somebody schedules a meeting to discuss it, early next week. At some point my mother (who lives nearby) texts to ask if I want to pick up from a local food truck for supper; we decide that it's not interesting enough. Throughout the day documents have come for Legal stamp before going out to the signatory, and now some are coming back fully signed.

4:00 pm

Networking break at PLI. I decide to take a quick walk since I didn't get one this morning. I have something to drop into an outgoing mailbox, go on a short path on the nearby greenway, and up a different street. I take in my mail and it's time for the final session in the PLI program for today. I grab a few slices of dried apricot and a spoonful of Big Spoon Roasters' holiday nut butter.

5:15 pm

PLI finishes for the day. I focus on reviewing a document that hit my queue yesterday. The procurement person was sloppy in the submission and I draft a list of questions as I review, plus point

out the items that need to be corrected on the CRM record. I send a couple of follow-up messages on other matters, including to the India Security team, who are reviewing a vendor's security exhibit. Others go out about ISBA CLE program ideas, potential speakers, and agendas.

7:00 pm

Online program for the closing lecture at a museum, at the same time as a lecture from NASA, both online. It's hard to choose which fun thing to do. There's also a town hall with the candidates for one category of the upcoming primary elections, but I know that one is recorded and I can review it this weekend. I heat up some leftover vegetables-laden beans and rice for supper, stirring in a swath of Dragonsblood Elixir hot sauce to the desired "temperature." A stick of Ackroyd's Scottish shortbread follows for dessert.

8:00 pm

Because WFH blurs the end-of-work demarcation, I finish reviewing the lengthy additions a vendor added to a SOW, mostly noting that these should be in the agreement instead and we will not accept adding them to the SOW. I review edits a colleague added earlier, and send the redline to her for review and return to the vendor. One final spin of the inbox and I close the work computer — forgetting to enter my time in the system, which earns me a scolding auto-reminder in the morning.

9:00 pm

Winding down with videos and knitting. Rose City Originals, Sorted Food, Carisa Hendrix, Maize & Blue Mixtape Episode 3, Lateral and QI, and something from Braver Angels. I proofread a local fiber arts guild's newsletter so it can go out over the weekend. I have the first assignment for the ACC Mini-MBA but tonight is definitely not a night to start on those.

10:30 pm

Heading for bed. I do a final work inbox check and confirm receipt of something that will take a bit of research to answer. Because I didn't get to read this morning, I try for a few pages of my current book (something for my library book club — I am old-fashioned and prefer to read on paper with a bookmark) before falling asleep around 11:15pm.

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Margo Lynn Hablutzel is senior counsel for Gainwell Technologies LLC, a healthcare technology and services company headquartered in Irving, Texas. Hablutzel has a bachelors degree from the University of Chicago; a juris doctorate from

IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law; a MA in Intellectual Property Law from John Marshall Law School (now the University of Illinois at Chicago Law School); and is a certified information systems security professional through ISC2. She is or has been active in other bar associations including the Chicago Bar Association, the Dallas Bar Association, the Illinois State Bar Association, the American Bar Association, and the International Trademarks Association. Hablutzel is a frequent writer and speaker on topics including intellectual property and cybersecurity for both bar associations and layperson organizations, and has found herself a fluent translator between legal, technical, and layperson communities.