

2023 ACC Top 10 30-Somethings: Carolina Lobato

Interviews and Profiles



The ACC Top 10 30-Somethings awards recognize in-house counsel between the ages of 30 and 39 for their innovation, approach to challenges, well-rounded perspectives, contributions to the in-house community, and pro bono and volunteer work.



With a dedication to corporate and trade law, Carolina Lobato found her calling as an in-house counsel. Bringing a wealth of experience in labor litigation, corporate litigation, and corporate

consulting to the table, she emerged as the head of legal for Anglo American, a multinational mining company employing 12,000 people locally, in Brazil, and a staggering 95,000 globally.

Upon joining Anglo American in 2020, Carolina's impact was swift and substantial. Brazil, with its notorious and complex labor laws, accounts for 98 percent of Anglo American's labor litigation. A strategy to reduce this cost was needed, and Carolina rose to the challenge. "We focused on settling cases early to avoid lengthy litigation processes," she describes. Harnessing the power of artificial intelligence, her team succeeded in reducing the variability of accounting provisions in labor lawsuits filed against Anglo American. This project, led by a diverse, female-majority team that Carolina assembled, achieved a remarkable US$21 million reduction in provision and a saving of US$85 million from court settlements.

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In addition to managing labor litigation, Carolina and her team have undertaken significant work in risk management. They conducted comprehensive environmental, operational, and legal assessments, identifying common causes for problems in these areas. The findings were consolidated into a single risk matrix, and an action plan was devised to address potential problems, taking into account both criminal risks and the necessity of business continuity. Prior to this initiative, similar root causes were often treated in differing ways by different departments, leading to a disparate perception of the consequences.

Furthermore, Carolina led a joint venture with the compliance department to conduct a legal requirements assessment in the mines, evaluating all necessary permits, not limited to environmental ones. This initiative filled gaps swiftly, providing a clear and concise view of current obligations and terms.

Both endeavors led to significant increases in inter-departmental collaboration, bolstering the perception of the legal department as a value-adding partner to the business. This collaborative and preventive approach to risk, exemplified by the identification and codification of trends in non-settled labor litigation cases, has now become the standard. "We created a settlement matrix to guide future settlement decisions," Carolina reflects. Her efforts in early risk assessment and mediation have not only minimized potential legal complications but also empowered businesses to make informed decisions.

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One of Carolina's most notable achievements is the transformation of Anglo American's legal landscape through the Visual Contracts project. She championed the simplification of contracts and legal documents, making them more accessible and understandable for employees, suppliers, and stakeholders. Her commitment to transparency and trust-building has considerably improved the legal environment within the organization.

A prominent advocate for gender issues within the company, Carolina sponsored and led the gender affinity group, WoMine, at Anglo America in Brazil. Under her guidance, the group has grown to over 145 members, with numerous initiatives developed to address gender inequality within the company.

She has also led a restructuring of her department, elevating two women to leadership roles and creating a new role of Coordinator of Innovation and Legal Operations. As a leader, she empowers her team, encouraging independent decision-making and fostering an environment where mistakes are seen as opportunities for growth and innovation.

In addition to her work at Anglo American, Carolina contributes to the wider legal community through active participation in state and federal commissions of the Brazilian Bar Council, focusing on mining-related education initiatives.

Carolina's journey at Anglo American encapsulates her commitment to adding value and effecting positive change. With innovative projects and a visionary mindset, she has revolutionized the legal department, making it more accessible, transparent, and human-centered. Her ability to bridge the gap between law and business, empower her team, and embrace the potential for learning from mistakes sets her apart as a standout legal leader.

Carolina Lobato's acceptance speech for ACC's 2023 Top 10 30-Somethings.

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