

2024 ACC Top 10 30-Somethings: Abigail Genevieve Tan

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.



Abigail Genevieve Tan, senior corporate counsel for Elastic, a New York Stock Exchange-listed company that provides search capabilities for IT infrastructure, has cultivated an authentic leadership

style that helps her establish trust with her business colleagues in the Asia Pacific Japan (APJ) region for which she's responsible.

A trusted, authentic leader

Abigail joined Elastic in 2021 and quickly established herself as a corporate counsel who likes to help the business. "The in-house role has changed; we're not rubber stampers. It's about partnering with the business to get the contract across the finish line. Lawyers have more to officer than just law. In-house counsel have the ability to help business partners come to the right decisions," she says, adding that you can't blindly say yes to everything, ensuring that all rights and obligations are fulfilled is also critical.

Elastic works with major companies — Cisco, Wells Fargo, and BMW are all customers — to understand and transparently view transactions across IT systems. With complex corporate commercial work, it can be helpful to have direct face-to-face meetings with the counterparty to negotiate, Abigail explains. In order for her business colleagues to trust her, she has always been authentic: "Trust is earned, and not given as a right. It is truly humbling and rewarding to have earned the trust and support of the business, and the leadership team. This was cultivated over the years having spent the many long weekends working together, and supporting each other on the late night and early morning calls. Elastic's source code is the customer first, which, in my case, means my business team is my priority."

Abigail, who grew up a Singapore, didn't have an inkling that she would wind up as a corporate lawyer. If anything, after some familial encouragement, she thought she was destined to go into medicine. Never one to shy away from things, she believes that more girls should aspire to be lawyers. Thinking back on her youth, it wasn't even a career path she knew about.

That's why she is passionate about DEI initiatives, running the DEI team in her region and helping to host events such as an International Women's Day panel. "It's very self-limiting to focus only on the law," she believes. "You should also make time to push for those things you believe in and focus on your values."

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>
> AbigaL Tan

Facilitating connections

Together with a fellow lawyer, Abigail ran a Lean In group for women in law in Singapore, offering a safe space for its members to share challenges and support each other. When COVID lockdowns loosened, she became involved in the ACC Singapore Chapter, joining the board in 2023.

As a chapter board member, she is constantly asking herself one question: "How can we make things more exciting?" She's especially keen to find ways to engage what she calls "silent members," who may be new to the in-house community and are looking to make connections.

The chapter, which has a few hundred members, recently held a "family day" so members could entertain their children and network in the background — a nice change of space from virtual meetings, Abigail notes.

During her travels, she has met up with ACC members in British Columbia and Washington state. “I love how ACC allows for interconnectivity and making connections and forging relationships. It’s so cool to share ideas across the word!” she exclaims.

Pro bono for pets

Abigail recognizes how important self-care is in today’s work environment. It just so happens that for her, it comes in the form of her dog, Bruno, a seven-year-old corgi. “I’ve tried meditation, yoga, and walking, but the best way for me to refresh is to spend time with my dog,” she shares.

For the past 10 years, she has been very involved in animal welfare. Like many people during COVID, Singaporeans adopted pets for companionship. Abigail participated in a country-wide webinar to educate the population on the rules and obligations — for example, what constitutes neglect, or who gets the pet in the event of a divorce — for pet owners. (Only dogs are currently allowed but rules are changing to allow cats. And no, you can’t feed pigeons in Singapore.)

The webinar, which was initially broadcast in English, was so successful that it was reproduced in the local newspaper in Mandarin to educate another subset of the population.

To Abigail, her advocacy for animals is an extension of her support for DEI in general. “What does family mean to you?” she reflects. “To me, self-care is a four-legged word.”

She hopes this award will give visibility to young girls who — like Abigail — didn’t know being a corporate counsel was a career option. She reminds them that it’s so important to bring a ladder and help the next generation coming up behind you.

And she stresses that it’s OK to not be OK. “Oftentimes, we feel the need to slap on a smile in spite of hardships and personal challenges,” she shares. “I am grateful for my company and the management team who have created a safe space for me to be myself, and grow and develop in my own time.”

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