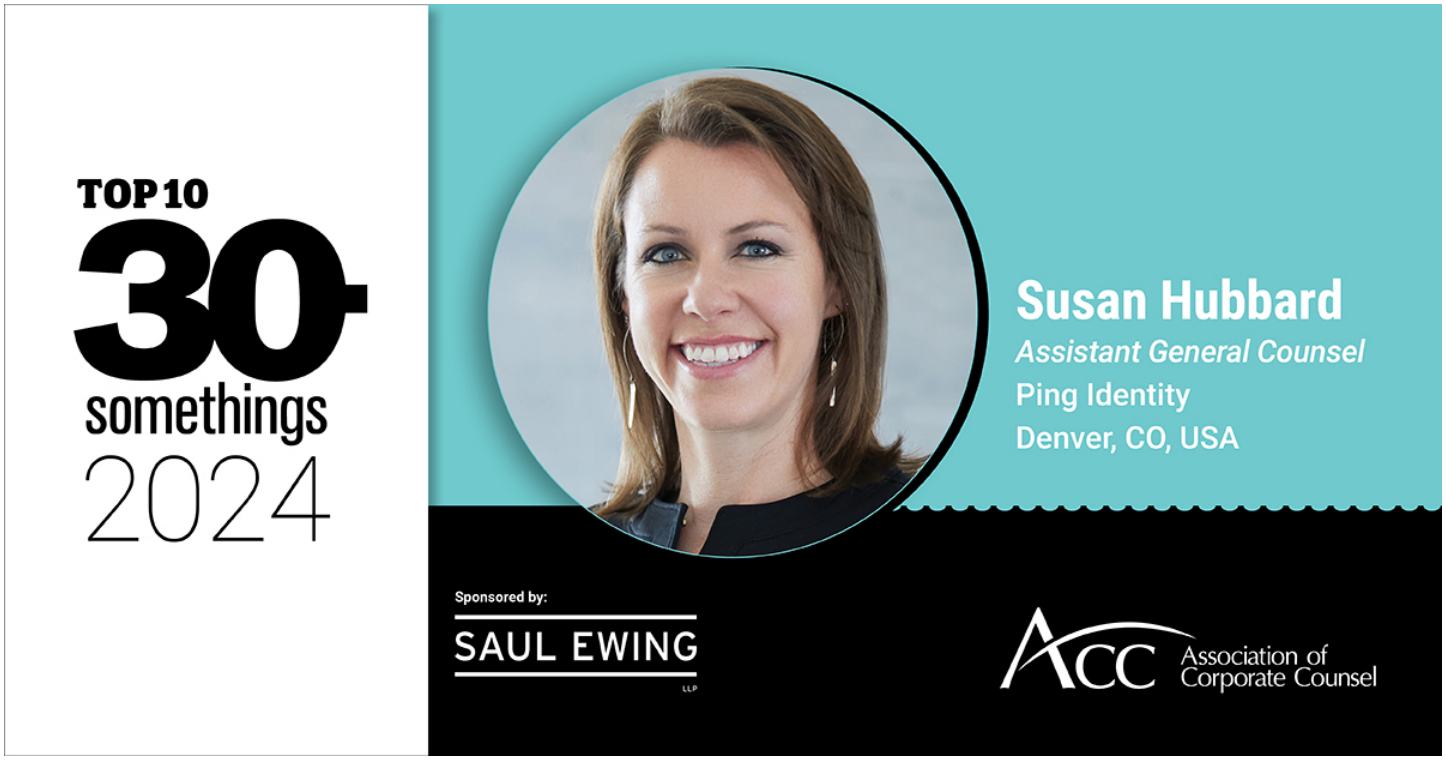


2024 ACC Top 10 30-Somethings: Susan Hubbard

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.



Navigating the challenges of corporate law and artificial intelligence governance while building out a legal department sounds daunting, but Susan Hubbard, assistant general counsel at Ping Identity, a

cybersecurity technology company, mastered it. As Ping rapidly expanded, Susan adapted to the practical demands of in-house counsel, moving away from the intricate legal details of law firm work to focus on strategic risk analysis and practical solutions. “There were only three lawyers on the team when I joined Ping. Now, we’ve built a strong legal team of 20 people — it has been an exciting journey,” she reflects.

Leadership in a high-tech world

The strength of Ping's legal team lies in its camaraderie and cooperative spirit. She understands the importance of a likable, well-trained staff that can interact effectively with coworkers in sales, product, and finance.

“It’s important to build a team of people who work together collaboratively,” Susan explains. This cross-functional connectivity enhances legal outcomes and strengthens the overall business, demonstrating the value of legal insights in corporate decision-making.

Ping is a leading US$5.1 billion cybersecurity technology company with a brand dependent on trust and preventing data breaches, so AI governance is an especially critical initiative.

Susan has led Ping's adoption of artificial intelligence (AI), particularly in areas like cybersecurity, fraud prevention, and productivity. She launched the company’s artificial intelligence governance program in early 2023 which set a benchmark for responsible and ethical AI usage. The program is a structured and comprehensive framework designed to guide Ping’s ethical, responsible, and compliant use of AI.

Susan is also a key figure in the company’s cross-functional AI Governance Committee. In that capacity, she assesses potential risks associated with AI implementation, such as bias, privacy considerations, and regulatory compliance. In addition, she has drafted AI guidelines and FAQs, contributing to employees’ understanding and integration of AI technologies.

The first lawyer on her team to use ChatGPT, an AI-powered chat program, she regularly helps colleagues use the tool and notifies the team of various AI-powered tools for contract review, regulatory compliance, and workflow automation.

In 2023, in only five months, Susan helped orchestrate the integration of a major competitor post-acquisition. This transaction nearly doubled the size of Ping to 2,200 employees globally, resulting in a 2023 valuation of US$5.1 billion. She conducted a comprehensive assessment of both companies’ privacy programs, enabling her to integrate improvements for enhanced data protection and compliance.

Beyond the legal expertise and technological know-how, Susan thinks ”holistically,” as she describes it, using a complicated negotiation with a large, highly regulated customer as an example. At the close of the deal, she says, the chief revenue officer said she performed like “’a businessperson with a legal background, rather than just a lawyer.’”

Key, she says, was that she “leveraged her extensive network of cross-functional relationships to effectively communicate risks while also developing innovative strategies to get the deal done.”

A voice in the legal community

As a board director for the ACC Colorado Chapter, she has organized networking and educational initiatives, showcasing her commitment to enhancing the professional development of her peers.

One notable event she spearheaded was the Chief Legal Officer Dinner in 2023, which provided an opportunity for members of the in-house community to dine with CLOs.

“Early in my career, I was exposed to ACC events through my in-house colleagues. The sense of community has been a principal element of my personal and professional journeys,” Susan shares.

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She’s often found on legal panels, whether it’s ACC Colorado, ACC New Jersey, the Colorado Bar Association, Denver StartUp Week, or the Rocky Mountain Information Security Conference, among others.

And a voice for the community

Susan served as a Court Appointed Special Advocate for four years, representing four children adjudicated as dependent and neglected. She investigated their backgrounds and family dynamics, attended court hearings, and recommended placement and services. Susan’s advocacy led to all four children being adopted by a caring aunt, ensuring a safe and nurturing environment.

She has also represented clients in various pro bono matters. In one particularly impactful case she represented two teenage girls in their US Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) applications. A “transformative” experience for Susan, she says it offered her “a firsthand perspective on the challenges faced by undocumented individuals who arrive in the United States as children.”

Susan’s ethical compass, whether in the community or courtroom, extends to her workplace at Ping where she relies on it to help guide her company in the new age of AI.

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