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Day in the Life: Aparna Williams

Interviews and Profiles



DAY IN THE LIFE



Name: Aparna Dasai Williams

Title: Chief Legal & Compliance Officer

Company: Coalfire Systems, Inc.

6:30 am??

I wake up to the sound of birds chirping, but it's really the alarm clock. Hit the snooze bar for 10 minutes.

6:40 am

Grab the phone and check the weather, then check personal email in case someone is trying to get in touch with me about an unexpected inheritance. That hasn't really panned out, so check Outlook for work email just to confirm that the world is not on fire and to get a sense of what my subconscious needs to be solving while I do the morning Mom routine.



Isaac, Aparna's 13 year-old son, proudly holds up trophy at his baseball tournament.

7:00 am

"Time to get crackin," as I tell my 13-year old son, Isaac. He gets dressed and feeds the lone fish in the tank while my husband, Brandon, makes breakfast and I make sure the backpack and lunch bag are ready. Then, I fold some laundry (always so much laundry), fire up the computer, and fire off a few easy emails. Most importantly, I write Isaac a lunch napkin note!

7:45 am

On our way to school, we have some quality car-talk time about what's going on in Isaac's world and I share some of what's going on in mine. Sometimes it's about saying sorry for anything we got mad about the day before. Hey, being 13 isn't easy, and neither is being a parent!

8:15 am

With a cup of tea in hand, head up to my office and begin the workday in earnest. Today there is a question on impartiality and independence with respect to security audit frameworks, such as ISO and FedRAMP. Double-checking rules on whether or not boundaries are pertinent to our company doing both advisory and audit work, where are we precluded from doing both and how do we make sure we are doing conflict checks appropriately? Edit protocol document to include a few details I think are missing.

9:00 am

Monthly data retention project meeting with CISO and IT on systematically updating our records retention policy and exploring whether our IT systems can automate certain policies or if we need to do so manually. Discuss how litigation holds are addressed and if we need to change that process.

9:30 am

Review questions on Slack, email, and in Ironclad for revenue deals.

10:00 am

Review meeting to go over the draft of modern slavery statement with corporate paralegal who is eager to show me her work. She had it ready six months ago, but it just wasn't a priority. To be fair, we start 10 minutes late because I haven't eaten yet and I need to grab something from the kitchen before we start — it's a cup of yogurt and a few blackberries. As usual, she did an amazing job, revised it a few times in the last six months, used GC AI, our favorite new AI tool to run a benchmark review, and it's ready to send to the Audit Committee for review and approval. She will send me a draft email to set up the review request appropriately. I seriously don't know what I would do without her. Actually, I put money on the fact that I would curl up in a corner and cry.

11:00 am

Since it's Thursday, I work on my update slide for the executive leadership team meeting for the following Tuesday. I have the best record for getting it to the executive assistant on time. My competitive nature won't allow me to lose those bragging rights. My mom calls me and I chat with her while I put the finishing touch on the slide. She is getting her nails done today and I look at mine and wince. They don't look great.

11:30 am

Weekly legal ops team meeting. Discuss the next Ironclad workflow and why it's taking longer to get traction because we are dealing with re-configuring of the SOW and change order workflows. Get

excited, and go on tangent, about planning our team off-site set for mid-May which should be great weather in Chicago. Back to focusing on Ironclad and how we will get everything done now that we are four team members down due to budget cuts.

12:30 pm

MsJD mentoring chat. This is my favorite part of the day. My mentee's ask of me is to help her navigate a situation with a law firm partner who is very particular in how they want things done. I encourage her to dive deeper with the partner, take them up on a learning session on why they like to do things a certain way. Don't focus on showing how well she can do something, focus on showing how good she is at listening and learning. That's how she will gain their trust and respect. Showing off her big brain can come later.

1:05 pm

Late to product legal weekly meeting. SKUs, SKUs and more SKUs with a sprinkle of how to support the marketing team under new management and how to rein in the sales team who wants to resell products even though we are not a reseller.

2:10 pm

It's ok that I am late, because it's mostly the same people from the previous meeting. Procurement review weekly meeting where we figure out some of our go-forward risk tolerance policies and work on a standard amendment template to make vendor contract reviews more streamlined. AI is our biggest risk factor and greatest challenge in what to do to keep risk within smart tolerances.

3:05 pm

One-on-one with team member. Practice thoughtful-listening and empathy skills learned from ACC NCR Leadership Academy the week before.

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3:35 pm

Ah, finally not on a video call. Shut off the camera and the mic and become a real lawyer. Research various labor and corporate jurisprudence laws to give an opinion on which state would be a better choice for a new principal place of business (PPB) now that we are officially remote-first. Send opinion to CHRO and CFO. Research how to respond to an RFP for work in Saudi Arabia, requirements to do business, whether we should find a local partner or prime contractor, and wrack my brain to remember the name of the outside counsel I used at a previous company for this very topic two years ago. Brain does not deliver the goods. Email current counsel instead. My husband is texting me about our home insurance policy endorsements. Huh?

4:30 pm

Meeting with our federal subsidiary on the protocols for selling and delivering CMMC assessments under the new rules that came out in December 2024. Use some of the research I did earlier in the AM to explain our options. Listen to very creative business plans on how to navigate my company being considered a “foreign” entity due to our ownership by a non-United States private equity firm. Explain, for the umpteenth time why we have a proxy agreement with the Defense Counterintelligence Security Agency for just this purpose.

5:45 pm

We knew the previous meeting would not end on time, didn't we? Last meeting of the day (I hope). Brainstorm with a law firm contact on a possible new offering that my business team is thinking through which would have us partnering with law firms. Get a sense of if it would resonate or the wish list for how to provide value in certain post-security breach scenarios. The president of the company tapped me to be the ELT leader on this project. I really hope I do a good job here because my reputation as a business-driven CLO is on the line.

6:30 pm



Big smiles in family photo with 13-year old son Isaac, and husband Brandon.

I am finishing up emails to run out the door to take Isaac to karate training. My CEO calls me for a quick catch up. Wait, is it karate or baseball tonight? I'll find out when I see how he's dressed. My husband asks me for the third time if I am OK with him going to play basketball.

7:10 pm

Relax with the karate parent friends and chatter while keeping one eye on the kids so we can honestly say, "Yes, honey, I saw that, it was awesome!" Text some friends to see how they are doing. Check work email and then get mad at myself that I can't disengage fully.

8:30 pm

Back home and starting the wind down routine. It's a lot of work to get a teenager to shower and get in bed on time. It requires constant reminding to keep him moving. Check email while he's in the shower so that I am not doing work when I can be hanging with my family. Talk to my husband on the phone while he drives to basketball. Catch up on all the stuff we didn't get to text about during the day. Lots of hugs before Isaac gets into bed.

10:00 pm

Finally in bed, with the Kindle, reading a cozy mystery novel until my husband comes in a few hours later and takes my glasses off my face and puts the Kindle on the nightstand and tucks me in. It's the end of a beautiful day.

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[Aparna Wiliams](#)



Chief Legal & Compliance Officer

Coalfire Systems, Inc.

Aparna D. Williams has over 20 years of experience scaling international legal teams in high growth private and public cybersecurity companies. She successfully built and managed teams supporting sales and revenue, product development, compliance, and M&A teams. The breadth of her experience includes software, SaaS, hardware, hosted services, and professional Services. Her focus has always been innovative solutions to match the pace of business without compromising quality. She was the first in-house lawyer and head of legal at Shippo, a venture backed ecommerce company with a focus on API technology to facilitate courier services. She served as the associate general counsel- corporate at Imperva, Inc., a privately held application cybersecurity provider. She spent 19 years at Symantec Corporation, the world's largest public cybersecurity company at the time, working through the evolution of cybersecurity and it's evolving threats and leading through the transformation from on-premises solutions to the cloud. Williams received her B.A. in literature and history from the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) and a juris doctor from the UNC Chapel Hill School of Law. Williams is admitted to practice in Maryland, Virginia, and Washington DC. She focuses her non-work hours on her family and mentoring the next generation of women leaders.