



Day in the Life: Ben Weinberger

Interviews and Profiles



DAY IN THE LIFE



Name: Ben Weinberger

Title: Senior Legal Counsel

Company: Rakuten Advertising

Location: London

Note that this was one day in the life of my previous role; that said, my new role already has proven to be similarly as busy and random and I'm pretty much now the "odd job man" for Rakuten Advertising's legal team.

4:30 am

I wake up early this morning, for no apparent reason, and figure it's not worth trying to go back to sleep as my alarm is set for 4:55 am, anyhow. I boot up my phone and casually scroll through notifications for anything important, check my schedule for the day, and check my Garmin app to see my sleep stats.

4:55 am

My Garmin watch alarm vibrates — I jump out of bed, throw on my gym clothes, chug down a quick mix of pre-workout and protein powders, and head to my 24-hour gym. I spend about an hour hitting the weights.

6:15 am



I get back to the house, have my bowl of low sugar granola, and put on my pot of coffee. While I eat my cereal and drink my coffee, I watch the news (usually flipping between about five different networks), intermittently browse LinkedIn and Facebook, as one does, and complete my daily routine of 10 different Heardle games, then Lyrical, then a movie round, then various word puzzles ranging from Wordle all the way to Duotrigordle (32 words at once). That whole routine takes about an hour. My wife thinks it's ridiculous, but the puzzle stuff is something my friend Graeme and I have been doing together (sharing each result via WhatsApp) for almost a couple years now.

7:30 to 8:00 am

I finally get myself showered and presentable for the day. Say bye to the two younger kids still at home as they head to school (at 8 am), a short walk down the road, and then head to the station to catch an 8:13 am train/tube to work. I'm usually in the office a couple days a week — two of my teams

(my various roles straddle the legal, finance, and people teams — I have somehow become the “odd job man” of my organization) have their team day on Wednesdays.





Ben Weinberger and beautiful family share heartwarming smiles for the camera.

8:13 to 8:45 am

While on the train, music on shuffle, I catch-up on some email, including reading the various ACC and ILTA digests, then deal with some random personal stuff of the day, including arranging delivery of a new appliance and reprogramming my solar/battery array to take advantage of the “free electricity” that my energy company is offering from 1 to 2 pm today only. My house is a massive conglomeration of various IoT devices and I’m really the only one who understands it, so I program and look after the various systems and things.

8:55 am

I get to the office, drop my stuff, socialize with various people, and then get myself plugged in at the desk I’ve chosen for the day.

9:15 am

We were supposed to have a call with one of the suppliers we’ve been negotiating with on a major contract. I’ve been quite direct in letting them know our objections to some of their atypical (and, frankly, bizarre) provisions. Unfortunately, I’ve been told they’re now not all available and my colleague from the people team suggested rather I send my next response via email so that it can easily be escalated. We do the usual redline thing, but I find we get contracts agreed way faster by just meeting with suppliers’ legal teams (assuming they’re interested in meeting) or someone with sufficient authority to agree the key commercial and legal terms. I’m fortunate that my role spans both sides of that here. I send my email and then spend the next 30 minutes catching up on other things while regularly being interrupted by others to discuss other things I’m working on. I find that I

am the least productive in the office, but, because I am really a people person and enjoy the social interaction, I don't mind — as long as I have enough heads-down time elsewhere to get the job done.

10:30 to 11:15 am

My colleague/partner-in-crime from the procurement team and I have our weekly walking meeting to the Caffè Nero over at the BBC building. We get a weekly free coffee voucher courtesy of our health insurance provider simply for scoring points via exercising (we get points for going to the gym and/or walking), which is pretty cool. It's about a 10-minute walk from our office and we discuss a variety of things, both work and non-work-related. When we get back to the office we update my Finance Head's Miro board with our trophies and CIOs (chief impact opportunities) for the week — something I then go over with the CFO and the other heads of teams during our weekly leadership meeting. Our top trophy is usually the savings achieved to do which is one of my objectives for the procurement part of my job.

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11:30 to 11:50 am

Along with our workplace experience (facilities) coordinator, (he really does the bulk of the hands-on work at the London office) I have a look at some of the software our reception and security personnel are using. I've been chasing those suppliers for newer versions, and I've been chasing our IT team to migrate their back-ends into our datacenter where they belong. Because of my prior IT experience, they usually listen to me because they know I'm on their side. We then walk down to our basement storage room and he shows me all of the leftover food items (primarily alcoholic beverages and crisps) which our testing team (part of what our business does is review things for consumers and publish the results — those reviews include food) has left there; he's on a mission to clear things out, as am I, so, we bring it upstairs and share it with everyone else who is in the office today.

Noon to 1 pm-ish

Meanwhile, our workplace experience team has a new joiner from our Cardiff office who is in the London office today as part of her onboarding and our small team of four (this is part of my property remit which reports up the chief people officer, so, I'm the fourth person) is having a "welcome" lunch at a pub across the road.

1pm-ish to 2 pm

Follow-up on a few messages regarding active negotiations on two other significant contracts — one for InfoSec and one for our communications team. It's a constant bit of juggling to keep on top of the multitude of projects we have. I also manage to spend a few minutes looking at some reports which will help me decide which SSMS (service and supplier managers — a term we've assigned to the various "contract owners" around the business) I need to chase to get them to update their Business Continuity Plans for their suppliers (our CFO owns the overall BCP process here and he's asked me to run it for him).

2:00 to 3:00 pm

Our people team has its monthly virtual team meeting (various members of the team are in Cardiff and elsewhere and they don't come into the office every week — we have an in-person, full team meeting every other month and a virtual meeting in between). We always start our meeting with a “voice in the room” exercise that allows everyone to speak — it helps those who otherwise might not be as comfortable speaking up at other points. Our VITR today is to answer the question, “What have you bought recently?” — I mention the fancy new tumble dryer I got which, of course, is connected via WiFi.

3:00 to 3:45 pm

We have a meeting with our IT support engineer — who is a whiz at SharePoint and PowerApps — to discuss further enhancements to our legal and procurement portals (they're tied tightly together partly because I was involved in both of their development and partly because the two processes are so intertwined). We've tried to automate as much as possible — from self-service contract templates and automated notifications to automated filings of supplier due diligence forms and supplier review forms.

3:45 to 4 pm

I have a catch-up phone call with one of the commercial agents trying to help me sublet our first floor. Post pandemic we haven't needed as much space as we previously did (a similar refrain elsewhere, I'm sure), and we own our building; we already have a tenant on half of our ground floor — a law firm, coincidentally — and we're now looking to sublet the entire first floor (10,000 sq.ft.). Just a note to say that, since this was written, we landed a tenant, which is a significant win!

4:00 to 5:30 pm

I spend the next hour and a half or so looking over a mix of projects and things — some contracts, some follow-up on my efforts to find a company to install solar panels onto our building. We have almost 8,000 sq. ft. of roof space and it seems like it'd be a win-win, assuming I can get the planning permission from Camden Council and agreement from The Crown Estate (who own the freehold to our building). This is another cool part of my role — it spans so much of the business and at times seems quite random — and I'm given plenty of autonomy.

5:30 to 8:30 pm

I pack up my stuff and leave to meet my wife at the tube station across the street. We're meeting some of my fellow Wisconsin alumni at a pub nearby for drinks and dinner; there are a couple of assistant deans visiting who want to better understand the high school system here in the UK and how they can better recruit kids from the UK to attend UW. We have three kids, two of whom are still in high school, so, perfect opportunity.

Today was a longer day than usual because of the after-work activity, but at least I'm at home tomorrow so I will have time to catch-up on everything I meant to get done!

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Ben Weinberger is a senior legal counsel at Rakuten Advertising and a law lecturer at The University of Law, where he teaches contract law, cyberlaws, AI, IoT, and several other technology-related subjects. He previously served as managing counsel — major contracts and head of procurement and property at UK consumer champion Which?, and has held leadership roles at several U.S., U.K., and global law firms, two global technology companies, and the largest municipal law office in the U.S. Weinberger advises on complex commercial contracts, compliance, operations, and technology issues — including security, privacy, data protection, and information governance — and has worked with clients in the publishing, insurance, FinTech,

energy, pharmaceutical, and FMCG sectors, ranging from startups to \$68B multinationals. He regularly presents on topics including emerging technologies and transformational trends in legal. Weinberger holds a bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Michigan and a Juris Doctorate from the University of Wisconsin. When not working or traveling, you might find him at the gym at 5am or mixing cocktails in his backyard tiki bar after hours.