

Day in the Life: Zach Brown of IBM

Career Development



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Name: Zach Brown

Title: Senior Attorney

Company: IBM

Location: Raleigh, NC

5:00 am

Brain: On, no alarm needed. Like clockwork, I’m up and moving. No easing into the day here — I head straight to the computer, check my inbox to see what’s already brewing overnight, and scribble out my to-do list. Before diving into actual work, I take a moment to survey my office kingdom. Is today the day for a grand “desk reordering?” Maybe … but the emails start calling, so I get moving.

7:00 am

Time to switch from attorney mode to home operations manager. Dishwasher loaded, pool filter checked, trash taken out, laundry started, and a quick spot check of the first floor. Fuel comes in the form of Zipfizz — no coffee. Then it’s prep mode for the kids, ages one and three.




BE THE
SUN
SHINE

7:30 am

The toddler tornado and baby potato are roused from their slumber. Breakfast is an event: waffles, smoothies, pouches, watermelon, grapes, pancakes. Tornado eats none of it. Potato eats everything in sight.

8:15 am



The Queen arrives to whisk the tornado off to school. I savor two seconds — literally — of sweet, sweet silence before grabbing my bag and heading out.

8:30 am

The commute is my non-work conversation window. I call a friend to talk about anything that isn't contracts, risk clauses, or indemnities.

9:00 am

First stop: the office phone booth for a meeting with the legal team about a big consulting deal on the horizon. We talk RFP instructions, who's taking which redlines, upcoming business meetings, and how to manage expectations before they spiral out of control.

9:30 am

Back to my double desk setup with dual monitors … except I've forgotten my adapter back in the phone booth. Retrieve it, plug in, and — of course — the monitors don't cooperate. A few rounds of "turn it off and on again" later, victory is mine. Technology, you fickle friend.

10:00 am

Solutioning call with the deal team. My role here is to listen, absorb, and advise when needed — but mostly let the business folks shape the vision.

11:00 am

Time to engage international stakeholders. I internally marvel (and mildly panic) at how many people it takes to get a single proposal to approval. Unlimited resources are amazing … until you realize they also come with unlimited opinions.

11:30 am

Meeting with internal clients about a termination notice from one of our current clients. We cover termination assistance, rights to hire our employees, and mitigation options. I mentally prep the emails and Slack messages that will need to go out to manage the fires.

11:30 am (yes, again)

Different meeting, same big deal. I join halfway through — an external advisor is giving input on how to approach this first-of-its-kind opportunity. I appreciate the perspectives, even as the list of stakeholders grows longer.

12:30 pm

Lunch with the local legal team. Down to the cafeteria for a buffalo chicken wrap that somehow defies the laws of spinach wrap physics. Back upstairs to trade stories about house projects, the NC State

Fair, upcoming vacations, and whose kids staged bedtime door-banging protests (spoiler: it's always mine).

1:00 pm

Contract redlining time. I weigh each change against company legal positions: unlimited liability? No way. Infringement indemnification? Sure. Double-dipping warranties? Absolutely not. Strike, unstrike, strike again, but less — measured risk is the name of the game.

2:00 pm

The redlines are interrupted by a corporate business development meeting on the deal. More risks to review, more approvals to target, more gaps to close. My mind wanders briefly to what life must be like in a small company, then refocus.

2:30 pm

Early escape to avoid traffic. One road; home, super simple. I call my friend again for our afternoon check-in. The Jeep is loud, but he doesn't care — he's barely listening anyway. I vent about the million people I had to (oops, got to) talk to today.

3:30 pm

Vacation backup planning with a colleague. I'm headed to Italy for two weeks — Florence, Venice, Rome — with a big group of 20. Lots of coordination to make sure clients are covered while I'm gone.

4:00 pm

Schedule a meeting with the lead client partner to review legal issues in the contracts. Attendance is spotty, which I note for future escalations.

4:30 pm

Tech demo for the legal department. Thirty minutes later, no meaningful solution. Fingers crossed the next call brings more promise.

4:48 pm

Toddler tornado breaches the office door. I quickly assess whether I'm on camera before deciding whether to redirect or ride out the storm.

5:00 pm

"Work is done, Dadda," declares The Queen via text.

5:02 pm

Full family invasion. Time to wrap up.

5:15 pm

Dinner planning: mac and cheese (yes), chicken nuggets (only if stolen from the tornado), HelloFresh vs. takeout. Takeout wins.

6:00 pm

Race to the bath: baby potato vs. toddler tornado. The psychology always works — tornado takes the win.

6:15 pm

Towels, bedtime stories, and the nightly “which kid do you want?” debate. The answer is always the same. I’ll take the easy one.

6:30 pm

Kids down, cleanup done, couch claimed. Attempt invisibility. Fail — The Queen sees all.

7:00 pm

Soccer. Will I score and earn another captain’s star? Only time will tell.

8:00 pm

Drive home, quick check of Slack and email for deal chatter.

8:25 pm

HBO Max wind down. Ballers, Entourage — the usual comfort viewing suspects.

9:25 pm

Sudden realization: 9:30pm deal checkpoint with the global team. Hop on Teams (no video, of course).

10:00 pm

Another meeting on the deal. More perspectives to soak in.

10:30 pm

Video games. Brain off.

1:00 am

Sleep.

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Zach Brown



Senior Attorney

IBM

Zach Brown serves as Counsel within IBM Consulting’s Complex Deals team. With over a decade at IBM, he brings deep experience in technology law and complex commercial transactions. He began his career at IBM’s Legal Resource Center in East Lansing, Michigan after earning his J.D. from

Michigan State University College of Law.

Throughout his tenure, Brown has supported a wide range of IBM offerings, including collaboration tools such as Connections, Sametime, and Verse, as well as numerous security solutions. He spent several years as the lead LICR Attorney, guiding software licensing across multiple IBM brands. Later, he joined the Partner Ecosystem legal team, where he focused on innovative routes to market, including partnerships with Amazon and Microsoft on their digital marketplace platforms.

Outside of work, Brown is a family man devoted to his wife Laura and their two kids Bella (3) and Leo (1). He enjoys soccer, racquetball, tennis, camping, and exploring complex Euro-strategy board games.