

Member Spotlight

Beth Shapiro

General Counsel

Abt Electronics, Inc.

In current position for: 3.5 years

Years in-house: 6 years

Law School: DePaul University

Undergrad: Illinois State University (BA in Political Science)

An overview of my role is:

My main role is to mitigate and manage risk for the company. Most of what I do is comprised of contract review, claim management, compliance, and some labor and employment.

The best thing about my current job is:

Working for a family business where the ethos is to “do the right thing.” This principle really starts from the top and the owners embody this, and it carries over into every decision within the organization. Issues that arise during contract discussions or policy decisions become easier when you look at it through a lens of equitability.

The most challenging thing about my current job is:

One of the most challenging things is also what I enjoy the most. As the sole attorney at a company with over 1,500 employees, there is a wide breadth of issues that I deal with. No day is ever boring and I have become somewhat of a jack of all trades.

My most pivotal career move:

I started off my career as a civil litigator which was a great primer. About five years in, I moved in-house because I had a child and wanted a more stable schedule. As a litigator, you may work with businesses during a stressful time and view everything through the lens of a lawyer and make judgments accordingly. Working as in-house counsel adds an entirely different perspective and I am able to see things from multiple angles and formulate opinions from a business and legal perspective.

My favorite pro bono or volunteer activity is:

My mother-in-law is disabled and I have a son with autism. I volunteer with the disability commission in my town. The commission provides social activities for those with disabilities as well as raises awareness of challenges the disabled community may face that the average person may not understand. Oftentimes, people with disabilities are marginalized, and up until recently, they were not realizing their full potential. Luckily, there is now a realization that with supports in place, individuals with disabilities will contribute to society in a meaningful way.

Hardest lesson I have learned as a lawyer:

Law is not a profession where you can rest on your laurels. When I graduated law school, my perception was that all the work I had put in to earn the title of Esquire would make me qualified to practice law. This illusion quickly dissipated and to this day, I try to come to work each day proving I am an asset to the company.

Advice I would give to new lawyers, in-house or otherwise:

Try to be the person your company can count on to take on new challenges. You learn not only what you are capable of but also establish yourself as someone that can be relied on in any situation.

What I like most about the ACC:

Lexology helps keep me up to date on new legislation and case law. The forums have also been indispensable. I quickly realized with the passage of each new law that many people are going through the same challenges and the forums help connect with other attorneys for advice.

The worst job I ever held was:

In order to earn some extra spending money, when I was thirteen I passed out flyers for a t-shirt store in the dead of winter.

Most valuable life lesson that I still apply:

People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, people will never forget how you made them feel. It's a Maya Angelou quote but I think it resonates through all aspects of life.

I achieve work-life balance by:

When I go home I try to leave my cell phone in my work bag and just spend time being present with my three kids (ages 2, 4, and 6) and husband. I have a smart watch so as emails come in after hours I glance down to see if it is anything I need to handle. Unless it is urgent, I leave it be until the kids go to bed.

If I were not practicing law, I would probably be:

Working with animals in some form or fashion.

My favorite vacation spot:

Costa Rica. It is beautiful and the people are incredibly nice.

I'm currently reading:

The Harry Potter books for the first time.

My current playlist includes:

I love Billy Joel so he is always on my playlist. I also enjoy listening to Hozier and Ray LaMontagne while working.