

Sarah Levy

Associate General Counsel

Weaver Companies

In current position for: 9 months

Years in-house: 7 years

Law School: American University, Washington College of Law

Undergrad: Kenyon College (B.A. in Political Science)

An overview of my role is:

Weaver Companies is a privately held engineering firm with over 30 years of experience supporting clients with specialty environmental, civil engineering, and construction-related services. Our clients range from small businesses to Fortune 100 corporations across countless industries and sectors. With over 100 professional services offered, our experienced team delivers a comprehensive and holistic project experience. As a generalist, I advise the company on a wide range of legal matters, including commercial contracts, employment law, litigation management, corporate governance, insurance, and real estate.

Brief description of your past legal jobs:

After law school, I completed a judicial clerkship, which exposed me to a wide range of civil and criminal cases. I developed relationships with judges who taught me what qualities the best attorneys have, beyond substantive knowledge, and how to represent the profession in and out of the courtroom. It was during my clerkship that I learned the meaning of advocacy, candor, and ethics in the profession.

I then transitioned to private practice with a law firm focused on management-side employment litigation. Since that time, employment law has been a common thread throughout my legal career, and I believe that it is one of the most versatile practice areas because every company with employees must grapple with potentially hundreds of different local, state, and federal employment laws. Additionally, my litigation focus during private practice prepared me to transition to an in-house role because I believe it is imperative to have experience as a litigator in order to nourish relationships with outside counsel. As a generalist, my experience in-house has always spanned multiple practice areas as part of a small legal team.

The best thing about my current job is:

The culture. The company places a high value on innovation, collaboration, and employee engagement.

I wanted to work in-house because:

While in private practice, I observed that a different approach often would have reduced the likelihood of litigation. I kept thinking that the only accomplishment more rewarding than achieving a favorable outcome for a client in litigation would be to prevent the litigation from happening in the first place. In addition to the appeal of focusing all of my attention on one client, I was drawn to in-house work because it maximizes an attorney's ability to have a positive impact and empowers the company to focus on business objectives.

Advice I would give to new in-house lawyers:

Get comfortable with ambiguity. Not all in-house work is strictly legal advice; unlike litigation, there is no playbook.

Avoid legalese.

Be confident about what you know and transparent about what you don't.

Understand the company's culture and business objectives. Know the strategic plan inside and out. Without this foundational knowledge, your legal advice will fall short.

Most valuable life lesson that I still apply:

Adversity propels evolution. Both personally and professionally, I have found that challenges always present opportunities for growth and greater awareness.

My favorite *pro bono* projects or volunteer activities:

My favorite volunteer activity is teaching for Street Law. I am so impressed by the students' enthusiasm, courage, and ability to quickly grasp complex legal concepts.

When I am not working, I like to...:

Enjoy playful time with – and constantly learn from – my son (8) and daughter (7).

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

A yoga instructor, interior designer, or florist.

My favorite vacation spot:

The Dead Sea.

People may be surprised to learn that I...

Love astrology. It brings levity to every conversation, and it's surprisingly accurate.