Insights: Perspectives

KTalks | Taylor Ludlam

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KILPATRICK TOWNSEND

KTalks

Welcome to KTalks. This series reaches out to leaders in the business and legal communities with five questions to seek their insight on matters ranging from how law firms work with in-house counsel to tips to mentoring new attorneys, and advice for work/life balance.

Taylor Ludlam is Executive Director of Global Litigation at Lenovo in Raleigh, North Carolina. Lenovo is a Fortune Global 500 technology company and one of Fortune Magazine's World's Most Admired Companies. As the Executive Director of Global Litigation, Ms. Ludlam oversees and manages, from complaint to conclusion, Lenovo's portfolio of both commercial and intellectual property litigation around the world. Working strategically and cooperatively with business leaders to identify areas of risk and to mitigate exposure across product offerings, Ms. Ludlam is responsible for helping to create and drive litigation strategy for the company in a way that aligns with its core values and supports its business.

As a partner in Kilpatrick Townsend's nationally recognized Patent Litigation Team, Ms. Ludlam gained more than 18 years of trial experience handling patent infringement and complex commercial litigation matters. Ms. Ludlam served as head of the Patent Litigation Team in North Carolina and represented a wide range of clients in the telecommunications and technology industries. She has significant courtroom and trial experience in federal courts throughout the United States, including the U.S. International Trade Commission. Ms. Ludlam co-led a trial team representing GREE, Inc. in a series of patent infringement suits against Supercell, resulting in over $100 million in jury verdicts in GREE's favor following two jury trials in 2020 and 2021. Ms. Ludlam was recognized in the NC Lawyers Weekly's "2019 Women of Justice". She was awarded the "Women in Business Award" from the Triangle Business Journal in 2018.

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What was the most valuable skill set that you learned working at Kilpatrick Townsend that translates to your current position? TIME MANAGEMENT & PROPER DELEGATION! With a docket as robust and sophisticated as I have on a global scale at Lenovo, time management and appropriate delegation are absolutely necessary in order to stay on top of our matters so that I can confidentiality advise our business on issues that might impact them. This entails not only managing your own time, but being an effective leader to appropriately allocate resources among the teams supporting you as well so that tasks are being done in a timely manner with the right expertise.

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If you could offer 3 tips to law firms about how to work well with in-house counsel, what would those tips be? Most importantly, ask your clients how you can best serve them. Be open to having a conversation with them in which you listen to their needs and can learn about where they are having the most difficulty managing or new markets in which they are entering. This is not a time to sell yourself or your firm, but to listen and contemplate what the client is sharing with you so that you can later come back to them with a thoughtful proposal of what you or your firm can offer to support those efforts. Another tip would be to maintain clean billing hygiene practices that align with your client's processes. There is nothing that can sour a relationship faster than late, unexpected bills that your client then has to go explain to their businesses. It may seem like a small matter, but when your clients spend large amounts of their time reviewing invoices, this can be a small act that goes a long way. Lastly, be creative and solution-oriented. Your clients are coming to you because they need a solution to a problem and they are looking to you to help them navigate the solution, not create more barriers or problems to overcome. Be willing to offer creative solutions. Even if they are not right for that particular matter at that time, they might prove useful in another matter down the road and your client will remember that you

were the one taking the initiative to think ahead.

3

What is the best non-legal attribute that you see in the most successful lawyers? Interpersonal skills. It doesn't matter how smart you are or how skilled you are in the courtroom, if you can't form and establish relationships among your team and your clients, you can't build trust. This will serve you not only in a law firm setting, but certainly within business as well.

Is there something you do in your personal life that contributes to your professional success? Aside from spending time with my family and friends, the thing that really "fills my cup" is serving my community and volunteerism. I was raised with a strong sense of community and started in middle school volunteering with Habitat for Humanity and collecting "pop tops" for the Ronald McDonald House. As an adult, that has translated into a strong commitment to being a contributing member of my community and to demonstrate to my children the power of giving back and volunteerism. For me, that has meant serving on boards of non-profits that have personal meaning to me. For instance, I volunteer with Habitat for Humanity and have served on their board for more than 6 years as well as their steering and executive committees. Most recently, I also helped to plan a major fundraising event to help launch the Lee Fitch Pediatric Rehabilitation Program at UNC Children's Hospitals, which raised more than $300,000 to help build a comprehensive pediatric rehabilitation program at UNC.

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What inspired you to pursue a legal career? My father. My father formed and started his own practice after graduating from Carolina and turned it into a thriving law firm, which he led for more than 40 years until his retirement. My father is a very rare blend of attorney who is both a brilliant lawyer, but also a shrewd business man. You don't often find those two characteristics together. He treated his clients like family and was very thoughtful and careful in his guidance, but was not afraid of risk, which many of his business clients relied upon. The fact that he maintained the same business clients over the course of his entire 40+ year career, even through management changes, generational shifts, and major market turns, is a testament to what a truly incredible attorney and counselor he was (and still is to some because he just can't seem to give it up entirely!)

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