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Engaging Your Network

Interviews and Profiles





Shaka Johnson

LEGAL DIRECTOR, LAW DEPARTMENT

SONY ELECTRONICS INC.

SAN DIEGO

MEMBER SINCE 2006

The 2015 Engaging Your Network Campaign is an opportunity for you to deepen your connections with in-house friends and coworkers by inviting them to become ACC members. When your in-house peers join ACC, you create more opportunities to engage with colleagues to share ideas and expertise. You also provide them with all of the value of ACC: access to the association's wide array of in-house resources, discounts for world-class programs and a network of over 40,000 in-house professionals from around the world.

In this series, we introduce you to ACC members who have become active in ACC and encouraged their friends and coworkers to join. They will explain, in their own words, why they encouraged others to become ACC members and offer tips for what you can do to recruit peers.

We will celebrate the success of our 2015 Engage Your Network campaign by recognizing our Top Recruiters in the ACC Docket and at the 2015 ACC Annual Meeting.

In this issue we introduce you to ACC Member Shaka Johnson, legal director for Sony Electronics. Johnson is the lead attorney in the United States for direct sales, including retail stores, online sales and field sales, as well as corporate security, facilities and procurement groups, while also serving as the lead attorney for Sony Creative Software. He also manages litigation and product liability matters nationwide.

What value does ACC provide to you?

I have a wife and a one-year-old daughter. As I have scaled back my involvement in other outside organizations, I've ramped up my involvement in ACC. It's that important to me. For my professional growth, network and sanity, I think it's critical to be involved in ACC. I tell my colleagues, "when you go in-house, you must sign up for ACC."

What value does ACC provide to your company?

ACC really stands out because it is designed exclusively to serve in-house counsel. Other bar organizations are good but they support a general practice. There are any number of organizations that offer continuing education for a broad legal market. ACC is one of the only places one can go and know that the information they will receive is tailored to the needs of in-house counsel.

Beyond that, the online resources provided by ACC are a central, one-stop-shop that in-house lawyers can rely on to address the myriad issues that arise every day. Many times we're able to see how other leading companies deal with the issue we're facing so that we don't have to reinvent the wheel.

Finally, ACC provides the opportunity to network and socialize with other in-house counsel that you simply can't get elsewhere — and that is critically important for personal and professional growth.

What advice do you have for members who want to engage their network?

Sony has a departmental membership in ACC, so our lawyers are able to get involved with ACC easily and are encouraged to take advantage of ACC resources.

I am vice president of membership for my local ACC chapter (San Diego). As an organization, we're focusing on involving existing members in ACC programs and recruiting new members to join.

I've found that the best way to explain the value of ACC to someone is to speak with the individual directly, through a phone call, meeting or lunch. The personal touch means a lot. If I'm speaking to an existing member, I personally ask them to get involved and help them understand that the value of ACC grows exponentially as they get more involved in the organization.

When I'm speaking with in-house counsel who aren't ACC members, I'll often invite them to join me at an ACC event. That way they get to see the value of the information and professional connections they'll receive from the association.

This personal approach allows me to respond to any questions they have and personally explain why I am active in ACC. Beyond that, it has given me an invaluable opportunity to develop relationships with other in-house counsel — both locally and nationally.

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