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2021 ACC Top 10 30-Something: Joanne Flack

**Interviews and Profiles** 



The ACC Top 10 30-Somethings awards recognize in-house counsel between the ages of 30 and 39 for their innovation, global perspectives, proactive practice, advocacy efforts, and pro bono and community service work.



Growing up in the economically depressed Midlands of the United Kingdom, where class status is entrenched, becoming a lawyer wasn't on Joanne Flack's radar. She was fortunate to have a

mentor, a kickboxing coach, who encouraged her to believe she could do whatever she put her mind to, starting with obtaining her black belt at 12 years of age. Joanne saw the potential of law for a curious mind, and decided she wanted to be at the vanguard of law and technology.

Joanne is now senior director of legal for Rackspace Technology, a company that constantly reinvents itself to suit the needs of its customers, an approach that dovetails perfectly with her desire to explore different legal issues. Rackspace Technology developed the world's first open-source cloud alongside NASA. It has evolved into an industry-leading end-to-end multicloud technology services company.

"Our company is fundamentally about technology transformation," Joanne explains. "We ask, 'What are you trying to achieve?' and work backward from there." Rackspace Technology designs, builds, and operates its customers' cloud environments across all major technology platforms; and partners with customers at every stage of their cloud journey to enable them to modernize applications, build new products, and adopt innovative technologies.

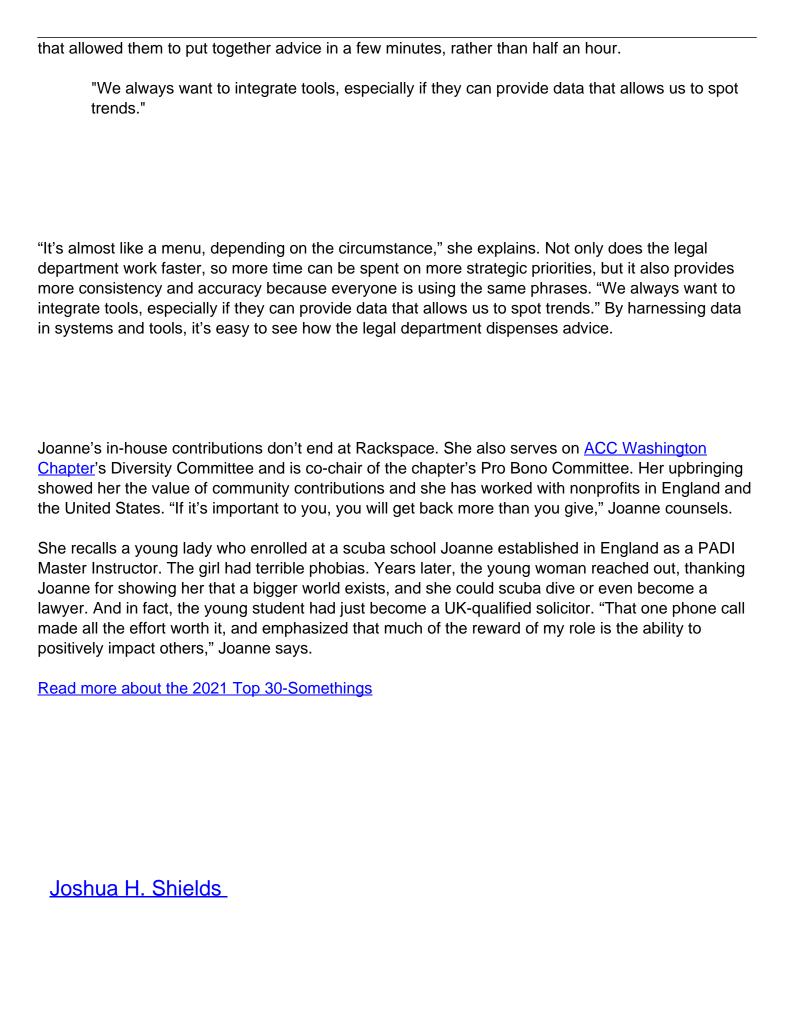
She oversees a team of 12 legal professionals that support all procurement and supply chain work, advises on the development of all solutions and services, and handles all customer success legal matters. Joanne describes her role as "lovely" because her team gets to see the nuts-and-bolts of what the customer experiences. "It's a wonderful structure for continuous improvement in such a customer obsessed business," she adds.

In order to facilitate learning across five locations across three regions — the United States, EMEA, and APJ — Joanne started a learning and development program that addresses core in-house skills and commercial grounding, regardless of region. Joanne is herself completing an MBA at Imperial College London's renowned program where she is a Dean's Excellence Award scholar. "All inhouse lawyers need to listen, think strategically and with commerciality, and challenge assumptions," she notes.

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Being an expert in technology solutions naturally makes her want to implement them in the legal function. Like any legal department, Rackspace deals with routine tasks, high-value strategic decisions, and gray areas that follow formulaic patterns but have upside risk. The team noticed that they were giving certain fragments of legal advice again and again.

For situations that require in-house analysis, and unfold in predictable ways, such as onboarding a new customer or a standard contract negotiation, Joanne implemented text automation in her team





Editor

Association of Corporate Counsel