

May 5, 2011

## Uncovered: Hewlett-Packard Company's In-house Counsel Training Program

### **The Kick-off...**

*Posted on ACC's In-house ACCess Blog on May 5, 2011 by Susan Hackett, Senior Vice President and General Counsel, Association of Corporate Counsel*

The latest addition to our "value practice" blog series features a timely and provocative four-part discussion on training legal talent, all focusing on different aspects of Hewlett-Packard Company's innovative new legal talent development project. This series will provide an in-depth look into HP's post-law school training for new lawyers, with entries on how HP integrates their new hires into the legal team, how they plan to develop their new lawyers' client service focus and skill set, and will also feature the perspectives from their new-to-in-house counsel. This series will provide an exclusive look at a successful value-based staffing practice that focuses not just on the experienced counsel, but on the pipeline of talent that the company will rely on in future generations. It will provide a rare insider's look and a terrific model of how to prepare attorneys to meet the challenges of complex and sophisticated corporate practice and client service.

We are pleased to welcome, Amy Schuh as our first guest blogger. Amy is the Legal/GA Chief of Staff and Vice President of Operations for Hewlett-Packard, where she is responsible for driving operational excellence across the law department. She also serves as the Co-Chair to HP's Pro Bono Program. Amy will open up this series with an overview of the program.

Thank you to everyone at Hewlett-Packard, for your time and for offering to share your experiences with us. As always, any comments, questions, constructive criticisms, cries from the bewildered and notes of appreciation are welcome in the comment area at the end of the blog posts.

- Susan Hackett

**Lifting the Curtain:** The goal of this effort is to 'lift the curtain' in order to help you assess how you can learn from this example and apply value-based practical solutions. ***The voice, views and stories expressed by the authors below are their own and not ACC's.***

**Join in:** Please be sure to join in the conversation with your comments and observations, and enjoy.

Susan Hackett, Senior VP and General Counsel, Association of Corporate Counsel and the ACC Value Challenge ([hackett@acc.com](mailto:hackett@acc.com))

<p><b>PART 1:</b> Amy Schuh, <i>Legal/GA Chief of Staff and Vice President of Operations</i>, Hewlett-Packard <i>Posted May 5, 2011</i></p>
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It was the fall of 2009. Law firms were canceling summer programs and deferring start dates. We were staffing our cases with junior associates whose hourly rates seemed high, and worse, we had little prospect of retaining their work product after staffing an HP case. At the same time, we had a need for top talent, especially in the junior ranks, as we historically hired attorneys 5-7 years or more out of law school. We had a perfect storm. We knew there was a pool of law school students who were incredibly talented, smart and eager to find a job. This has rarely been done in-house,

but we also knew that we could be the pioneers — we could train new attorneys as well as, if not better than, any major law firm. Best of all, we could shape them in the ways of an HP attorney. Not only that, but we could develop them and provide them with enormous future opportunities by leveraging the many practice areas in our large, global, diverse law department.

And so started our [new graduate attorney program](#). That winter we met with students at the top law schools in the country, seeking three lawyers who would be interested in entry-level litigation, intellectual property, corporate and commercial law positions. We chose four (and it turns out we chose really, really well), who started at HP in the fall of 2010. Each attorney was assigned a buddy, someone experienced in the law department who could help orient each new graduate to the ways of HP and answer any questions. We also developed an awesome [onboarding website](#). Our GC and his direct staff personally selected four supervising managers to ensure that each new attorney received critically important mentoring and day-to-day oversight. We then created a two-year formal education and development program, which was kicked off by two training boot camp sessions. That program was so effective that we extended invitations to any new professional joining the legal department. Our new graduates receive a mix of core content, practical experience and targeted training for the area in which they are assigned. The training program was [well-received](#) and is evolving as we prepare to onboard a new class in the fall — five more in the United States and three in India — and are already recruiting in the fall for the class of 2012.

Initially, we selfishly sought to train lawyers who could be great, lifelong HP attorneys. But the reality is that we also freed up our more senior lawyers to do the complex work we are paying them to do, and exponentially increased the energy level in our teams just by adding four fresh faces, who were excited and proud to say that they are the inaugural class of this cool program HP Legal, concocted just a few short years ago.

## PART II: Integrating into the HP Legal Team

Susan Goodhue, *Vice President and Associate General Counsel, IP Transactions, Hewlett-Packard*  
*Posted June 2, 2011*

Rewind to September 1, 2010. Two weeks earlier I joined Hewlett-Packard as the Vice President & Associate General Counsel, Intellectual Property Transactions, to lead a team of IP transactional attorneys who provide IP counsel to HP's businesses. My team is one of the practice groups in the larger IP Group at HP. Joining my team in HP's inaugural [New Attorney Graduate Program](#) was Gail Su, a newly minted attorney right out of Harvard Law School.

I had, in the past, mentored and developed many new attorneys in both private practice and in-house. With Gail, I had been entrusted with both a tremendous responsibility to nurture an obviously smart and nascent talent, as well as an opportunity to develop an attorney who could learn to appreciate the critical nexus of law and business, while providing practical, solution focused legal counsel.

At HP, Gail benefitted from what previous companies had not afforded me—the framework and support of a new attorney program. New attorneys receive training about the company, including: what Investor Relations does; how HP analyzes its competition; the [structure of the legal department](#) (who does what); and about substantive legal areas, such as [antitrust and privacy](#). In addition, the program includes training in contract drafting; negotiation, speaking and presentation skills; and solution-focused counseling.

Because the new attorney program took care of much of Gail's foundational training in her early days at HP, it enabled her to hit the ground running; it also freed me and my team to focus on integrating her into our group. Included in the annual goals of each attorney on my team was a requirement to work with Gail on at least one project. This served two purposes. First, Gail became acquainted with the team members. Second, she observed the practice and negotiation styles of different attorneys—developing a personal legal style consistent with his or her personality is critical for any new attorney. Therefore, observing other attorneys and “trying on” different approaches helps.

The program also requires that new attorneys receive practical experience in research and writing, contract drafting, M&A due diligence and executive presentation. Within the first six months of joining our practice group Gail had completed all requirements. In addition, because Gail expressed an early interest in patent prosecution and is a member of the patent bar, she was able to spend a portion of her time learning to write patent applications.

Fast forward to June 2011: Gail is now a fully integrated, key contributor on my team and a member of a sub team that provides IP counsel to the Personal Systems Group (PSG). PSG develops and markets business and consumer computers and mobile computing devices, [including Palm® products](#). Supporting PSG provides Gail direct contact with business clients and their real world issues where she can, with the ongoing support of my team and I, continue to develop as a pragmatic, business-oriented attorney. Gail is off to a great start to what we hope will be a long career with the HP Legal department.

### **PART III: In-school to In-house: Who Says Your Law Career Must Begin in a Firm?**

Dargie Bowersock, *Corporate, Securities, Mergers & Acquisitions Practice Group*, Hewlett-Packard  
Posted July 7, 2011

*There will be no start dates in 2010.*

It was the summer of 2009, and all of the associates at the law firm where I was spending my second summer were told the same thing. That simple sentence forced me to completely alter my [career path](#). I would graduate from law school in May 2010, and I didn't want to spend up to 18 months waiting to start my new career. I had spent seven years working before I went back to law school, and when I made the decision to go back, it was based on a straightforward, three-years-and-you're-employed calculus. The economic melt down forced me to look at job prospects in a whole new light. Luckily for me, my future employer was [recruiting in-house counsel in a whole new way](#).

When I saw the on-campus interview posting for Hewlett-Packard (HP) in October of my 3L year, I knew I had to apply. I wanted to do business transactional law, and I figured working inside an exciting company with a strong legal department would be a way to start getting great experience right away.

And it has been. I joined HP in October 2010 in the Corporate, Securities, [M&A](#) group. I work as a junior attorney on many aspects of corporate transactional law, especially [acquisitions](#). I also work on sophisticated matters as part of a talented team with extensive big law experience. This opportunity has allowed me to [work closely with other HP lawyers](#), who have exposed me to a variety of practice styles and strategies. Further, I've been able to take on projects from a range of practice areas. HP provides extensive training, covering everything from the business units within the company, to pro bono opportunities in the legal department, to sharpening [negotiation](#) skills.

In some ways, my role mimics that of a first-year firm associate: I do diligence; turn documents; prepare schedules. However, I also sit in on meetings with company leaders about how a prospective acquisition fits in to HP's strategy; get a sense for how a public company answers to its investors; and experience how a Fortune 11 company operates from the inside. Although I don't work in the same array of industries I would at a firm, I have my foot in the door at a company that operates in more than 170 countries around the world. Working in HP's legal department exposes me to multiple business and go-to-market models, allowing me to feel like a part of a highly competent team that faces exciting and ambitious goals.

It's been a great opportunity so far, and I wouldn't change a thing. HP's visionary recruitment and training model can impact the way the legal industry hones a lawyer's skills. I hope that other legal departments consider adding this type of program to their strategic plan.

## **PART IV: Who Says Attorneys Can't be Trained In-house?**

Gail Su, *Counsel, Intellectual Property Transactions*, Hewlett-Packard

*Posted August 4, 2011*

When I first started at HP, I was excited but nervous. I wasn't sure what to expect, but much to my relief, HP had it all sorted out.

My training has come primarily from two sources: a set curriculum that all new attorneys are asked to complete and my on-the-job experiences. The set curriculum is composed of classes (that I attend both online and in person) and practical experiences. The training was designed to give me broad exposure to the workings of a large company and to help me develop certain skills. It has given me the opportunity to attend classes on core legal topics such as [antitrust](#) and [contract law](#); I have had the chance to present a legal recommendation to a company executive; and later this year, I will spend a week at a legal outsourcing site negotiating sales agreements. In addition, I've attended a customer meeting with an HP executive as well as a negotiation workshop, and participated in a business simulation where I helped a fictitious company evaluate business options.

In my day-to-day training, I am fortunate to be under the instruction of managers who are committed to my development as an attorney. I am also fortunate that the [entire IP Transactions team](#) has joined together to mentor me. I have been exposed to a wide range of matters and have learned from lawyers with different styles of practice. Sometimes I work on projects by myself. Other times, I work on projects with other attorneys. In all cases, I am encouraged to take on as much responsibility as I believe I am ready for. There are no rules as to what I am capable of, and there are no rules as to which projects are too complicated for me.

Additionally, my manager encourages me to take ownership of my career, including choosing experiences that will benefit me professionally. One of my professional aspirations is to work on cross-border transactions, especially in Asia. Upon hearing that I would be interested in spending time in HP's [Shanghai office](#), my manager's words to me were, "Let's try to make that happen." I am pleased that it worked out and I will leave for Shanghai in October.

Finally, I am encouraged to participate in [pro bono activities](#). In fact, each HP attorney is asked to complete 20 hours of pro bono service a year. In the short time that I have been at HP, I have worked on a VAWA immigration self-petition, advised non-English speaking clients at a legal clinic for small businesses, and instructed middle school students on the law.

Ten months ago, I couldn't have imagined that my career would be off to such a fast-paced and exciting start. Thank you, HP, and I look forward to experiencing all that you have to offer.