

In-House Counsel File

Our Series Profiling In-house Litigation Counsel at the World's Leading Companies



KATINA THORNOCK
Director, Corporate
Counsel, Litigation
Starbucks Corporation

Education: 2001: J.D., Seattle University School of Law; 1996: B.A. (English and Political Science), University of Washington.

Career in Brief: 2009–present: Starbucks Corporation (2011–present: Director, Corporate Counsel, Litigation; 2009–2011: Corporate Counsel, Litigation); 2006–2009: Cozen O'Connor, Associate, Global Insurance Group; 2003–2006: Reed McClure, Associate; 2002–2003: King County and Pierce County Prosecuting Attorney's Offices, Deputy Prosecutor.

Location of Company HQ: Seattle, Washington.

Primary Industry Sector: Retail and Consumer Packaged Goods.

Revenues in the Last Financial Year: \$24.7 billion.

Number of Employees Worldwide: Approximately 291,000 as of the end of fiscal year 2018.

Law Department Locations: The legal department is primarily based in Seattle, Washington. However, we have attorneys and support staff who reside in multiple field offices in the US and abroad.

What is the total number of attorneys in the company, and how many focus on litigation? We have 76 attorneys worldwide. There are currently five full-time attorneys on the litigation team.

Where does litigation fall within the organizational structure? Litigation is one of several practice groups within the Starbucks Law and Corporate Affairs department that provide risk mitigation and legal support to various business units and internal functions. Each group reports up to the General Counsel.

How typical or unique is the scope of responsibilities for the company's litigation attorneys? The scope of responsibilities for our litigation team is not unusual, but we are extremely hands-on with respect to the day-to-day management of our matters. Our size and scale demand that we closely partner with a robust network of experienced outside counsel throughout the US and abroad to manage litigation. We work collaboratively with our business clients on litigated matters and proactively identify and mitigate risk.

What is keeping your company's litigation attorneys the busiest at the moment? Starbucks remains an incredibly entrepreneurial and ever-evolving organization. We continue to innovate and expand our beverage, food, product, and digital offerings, elevate our store design concepts, and reshape the role of a for-profit, public company.

To keep pace and stay nimble, our litigation team must stay abreast of the latest legal developments and trends to effectively advise our clients. We are keenly focused on the litigation and regulatory requirements and changes impacting our business lines, including, for example, European and domestic data privacy and protection issues, among others.

What types of issues will cause you to turn to outside counsel? Starbucks is a large, global organization. We face a wide variety of complex, multifaceted issues, as well as a significant volume of less complex general litigation primarily spread throughout the US and Canada. Because our litigation team runs lean, geography often requires us to work with outside counsel.

What types of issues will cause you to push for alternative fee arrangements with outside counsel? We consider alternative fee arrangements in various litigation scenarios, but especially if they

optimize value by virtue of the size and complexity of the matter or through volume-based discounts in a specific region.

What three things does a law firm need to do to impress you? Proactively keep us apprised of emerging trends in the law that are particularly relevant to our brand. Stay informed about the changes and developments of the business to anticipate our needs. Demonstrate a commitment to increasing and enhancing diversity and inclusion in the legal profession.

What is the best career advice you ever received? Relationships should not be merely transactional. Prioritize the development of meaningful connections with your clients and colleagues. Be curious and take time to learn about their objectives and challenges to become a better advisor and team member.

This advice has proven especially important to me as in-house litigation counsel. To be a more effective advisor, advocate, and representative, I have to possess a deep understanding of the business, values, and culture of the organization and how they converge to impact the brand. To develop that understanding, I have to invest the time and resources necessary to really get to know my client.

What one piece of advice would you give to new attorneys as they embark on their legal career? Based on learnings from my early days in the legal profession, I would encourage new attorneys to ask for help when needed even when that feels uncomfortable. Your organization wants you to succeed.

If not an attorney, what would you wish to be? A broadcast journalist.