

Day in the Life: Larissa Meli

Interviews and Profiles



Larissa Meli

Vice President, General Counsel and Secretary

3:00 am

I start looking at emails on my Blackberry. **Much of my work is connected with our parent company in Italy**, so I try to glance at some messages as I wake up for a middle-of-the-night glass of water. People criticize me because I don't turn it off at night, but if I do I will have so many emails once I get to the office that my day will go nowhere just answering them.

6:00 am

I wake up. I have a long commute, but I still take my time to get ready for work, as **I know my day will be long** — they usually are.

7:30 am

I leave my house. I have to drive over 30 miles to get to my office, which takes me about an hour. I usually take the country roads. Being an Italian, one of the things I appreciate about the United States is all the open space, and the **Virginia scenery is a soothing experience that mentally prepares me for a long day**.

9:00 am

I get to my office, open the door, drop my purse and go to the communal kitchen to **have an espresso — the first one of four or five that I will have during the day**. I start checking the emails that I didn't respond to during the night. I follow up with colleagues in the main office and send back documents they requested overnight.

10:00 am

I start dealing with Italian operation affairs. My daily call with our New York City-based law firm covers certain contracts and litigation. **I serve as a liaison between the outside firm and my parent company** because there is documentation needed for the legal aspect of our US operations that only our Italian lawyers handle.

11:00 am

Although their day is about to end, I embark on a one-hour phone call with my corporate counsel colleagues in Italy to talk about transactions and military contracts. The main part of my job is to oversee procurement agreements and support all the procurement activities. We share action items, and discuss and draft contracts. **As an aeronautical firm, we do plenty of business with the military** and we have to be extra careful with these types of contracts and transactions.

12:00 pm

Our office in Crystal City is not centrally located, **so going out for lunch is not always an option**. Sometimes colleagues and I have another espresso, chit chat for a few minutes and then go back.

1:00 pm

I start dealing with US operation affairs, usually drafting contracts and other documents such as proprietary information agreements, letters of intent, etc. There is some technical information that goes into these documents, so I call our engineering departments in Italy or in other areas of the world.

3:00 pm

Throughout the day, coworkers knock on my door to ask me questions about different legal aspects of the business. Around this time of the day, I take the time to research and answer those requests.

4:00 pm

I meet with the general procurement department to touch base concerning our US suppliers and the negotiating of terms and conditions of our purchase agreements. We go through the documents line by line. Since I am the only in-house counsel, I have to be very careful with everything. **Sometimes I feel I am a solo law practitioner.**

6:00 pm

If I don't have anything holding me in the office, which happens often, **I try to indulge my passion for dancing and fitness.** I practice the Zumba fitness program, so I drive straight from the office to the gym. It is liberating and helps me clear my head of all the stress. I also practice twice a week a Brazilian style of Zumba called Chakaboom Fitness in Franconia, Virginia.

9:00 pm

I come home very tired, take a shower and have a bite to eat. **Every weekend I cook food for the entire week — mostly pasta,** sauces and beans — I only have to come home and warm it up. Plus I always have a glass of wine — I am Italian, I love my wine!

11:00 pm

I go to bed, exhausted but happy.

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