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Day in the Life: Meyling Ly Ortiz

Interviews and Profiles





Meyling "Mey"
Ly Ortiz

Managing Counsel, Labor and Employment

Toyota Motor North America, Inc.

Plano, TX

6:50 am

My kids, five-year-old Olivia and three-year-old Orion, haven't woken me up yet, so the alarm on my phone goes off — it always feels too soon.

I instinctively reach for my work phone on my nightstand and skim messages for anything urgent that popped up overnight (an old habit I can't shake from Big Law).

Although not urgent, I can't resist immediately responding to an easy question from a client about when our annual non-harassment training will launch. The satisfaction of deleting the email afterward starts my day with a little bit of dopamine.

7:05 am

If my husband Jason hasn't beat me to it (and because I married well, he usually does), I make breakfast for the kids while they watch TV. While they are preoccupied, I get myself ready and dress them after they're done eating (a parenting tip I live by).

7:30 am

Out the door. We're winning if it's been without a sibling fight, without someone crying, without searching frantically for a missing shoe, without me repeating "put your shoes on" more than three times, and without going back into the house for something we have forgotten.

First, we drop Orion off at daycare, and then Olivia at Kinder. I eye the actual drop-off line with envy, as I park and walk her in, as she insists *every day*. I tell myself that she'll be embarrassed of me soon enough, so I should savor her still wanting to hold hands in public.

"I tell myself that she'll be embarrassed of me soon enough, so I should savor her still

wanting to hold hands in public."

8:15 am	I usually start my first work call from the parked car two days a week because we didn't get out the door by 7:30 am. Today, I get home and get on my Peloton bike for a 20-30 min workout, followed by stretching, meditation, or prayer.
8:45 am	Quick freshen up post-workout, refill my water and make hot tea, write in my Five Minute Journal, and skim the to-do/priority list that I made the night before while skeptically eyeing my schedule of lots of calls.
9:00 am	Call with the employment law team to share updates and need-to-knows and discuss items that need a consensus or brainstorming. I multitask by posting to my LinkedIn and responding to comments.
10:00 am	Oooh! Thirty minutes of unscheduled time — I knock "prepare retention agreement" off my to-do list.
10:30 am	Call with HR to discuss a performance improvement plan. I make a mental note to create a checklist of considerations to send to clients before they set up a call.
11:00 am	Join the litigation call where the team and outside counsel review the statuses of all our matters, brainstorm strategies, and discuss lessons learned from cases resolved. Multitasking, I post an article to DEI, ESQ's LinkedIn page, which I manage.
12:00 pm	Lunch (which is usually either microwavable or ordered from Door Dash) is reserved for catching up on emails, calls (mentoring, networking, pro bono, or nonprofit board work), or CLEs. Today, I'm catching up with a mentee who just started a new job. We discuss strategies for building relationships despite being remote and how to build credibility quickly.

1:00 pm	Call with the training team to share updates. Super-excited about creating bite-size training videos that are two minutes or less. I may have missed my calling as a scriptwriter.
1:50 pm	A chance to take a break, refill water, and review and flag emails for later response.
2:00 pm	A collaboration call with a cross-functional team of D&I and HR on social justice initiatives.
2:30 pm	Unscheduled time, at last! Time to review the summary judgment outside counsel sent me… but I get a ping on Microsoft Teams from a client asking me to jump on a call about a team member's attendance issues.
3:00 pm	My head hurts. The call was complex — involving leave, workers' compensation, and reasonable accommodation. Although I should pick up the summary judgment, the 100-plus emails in my inbox beg for my attention (and feel easier). I give in to their siren's call.

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4:00 pm	I take a break to pick up the kids and take them to their after-school activities — KidStrong or Tae Kwon Do. I do my best to be present and take pictures… while skimming and responding to emails and indulging in social media while they are busy.
5:00 pm	This is also prime time for me to take care of personal to-dos. I order birthday presents for their friends' upcoming parties, make grocery lists, upload photos for grandparents, and respond to personal text messages I have ignored all day.
6:00 pm	As soon as we get home, take shoes off, and empty backpacks, I hand the kids their iPads and get started on making dinner. I shoo them away from the pantry filled with snacks.
7:00 pm	I breathe a sigh of relief when Jason gets home and pass him the baton so I can tackle a bit more work before bedtime. He handles the rest of dinner, bath, brush, and books. I join for flossing, prayers, and bed. Jason takes Orion to his room, as Olivia and I

	share girl time with a rose, bud, and thorn reflection exercise and light chit chat before our goodnights.
8:30 pm	This is my time to wash away the day. I soak in the tub and either read one of my piles of Real Simple or Parenting magazines, practice Spanish on Duolingo, or skim social media.

"This is my time to wash away the day."

9:00 pm	I call this my “second” shift. I have uninterrupted time (no pings, emails, text messages, calls) where I can tackle what was left on my to-do list, like that summary judgment or mandatory company training. This is also my time to blog or create a to-do list for the next day.
11:00 pm	Jason brings me hot tea in bed and a heated pad for my back (the joys of being pregnant). I read a chapter or two of fiction before lights out with a mediation from my Peloton app or rain sounds on Headspace. It helps me drift to sleep and keep the to-dos at bay until tomorrow.

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Meyling "Mey" Ly Ortiz is managing counsel of employment at Toyota Motor North America, Inc. Her passions include mentoring, championing diversity and inclusion and a personal blog: TheMeybe.com. At home, you can find her doing her best to be a "fun" mom to a toddler and a preschooler and chasing her best self on her Peloton. You can follow her on LinkedIn. And you knew this was coming: her opinions are hers alone.