

2012 Top 10 30-Something: Andy Gaunce

Interviews and Profiles



Associate Counsel

Age: 33

Proudest achievement: “Marrying up. My wife is the person I want to be. She’s kind-hearted, beautiful, thoughtful, creative. She wrote a book. She’s a lawyer. I think I really lucked out there.”

Drawing on diverse experiences

Andy Gaunce comes from a family of entrepreneurial small business owners who look at him strangely for his choice to enter corporate law. He served in the Marine Corps infantry from 1997-2001. When he got out of the military, Gaunce earned his bachelor’s degree in two and a half years, because he had his sights set on law school. After law school, he worked for a Savannah, Ga.-based firm, where he gained broad corporate experience and was also exposed to IT and outsourcing work. Gaunce is not your average in-house counsel, and his wide-range of experiences have inspired and polished his in-house practice.

Despite veering from the family tradition, Gaunce applies lessons from his father, grandfather, aunts and uncles to his work each day: “In a small family-owned business, you have to focus on cost-effective and practical solutions to big problems, and kind of ignore the rest,” he says. It’s a big-picture approach he used to successfully negotiate a software development agreement related to a multimillion dollar sales contract with one of Tech Data’s key retailers. “Coming in-house, I’ve learned you have to choose your battles,” he says. “Some contractual risk can be managed via business processes and internal controls; you don’t have to eliminate all risk from a contract to make it the best agreement for your company.”

Gaunce uses a risk list, which he shares and edits in discussions with business partners, to inform his negotiations. He also communicates with coworkers frequently on Tech Data’s ethics and compliance strategy, to which he devotes about half of his time. Gaunce is the day-to-day project manager for the company’s initiative to modernize its compliance program to align with the current company culture, which has evolved over the years due to geographic expansion and new business lines. He says planning his undergraduate schedule to finish early and executing that plan helped prepare him to meet the challenge of creating a strategic compliance direction at Tech Data. His prowess, “working with teams in a highly structured organization,” however, was developed while in the Marines. Gaunce says his military background taught him a number of skills that contribute to his success as an attorney.

Projects he leads that involve teamwork include collaborating with his counterpart in Germany to develop a data privacy strategy and drafting an anti-bribery and corruption policy, harmonizing guidelines for compliance with both the FCPA and the UK Bribery Act. To create Tech Data’s updated code of conduct, he worked with the company’s nearly 100 Ethics Advisors — globally located, appointed employees at the manager level who serve as local “ambassadors” for Tech Data’s ethics and compliance program. Gaunce is responsible for managing the Ethics Advisors throughout the Americas, and relied on their input regarding cultural issues to create “an all-encompassing code of conduct that resonates with people across the world,” he says.

Gaunce says in his work with others, “Spreading praise and accepting responsibility is important to me.”

He applies this priority outside of Tech Data, to his pro bono and volunteer work. As the programming co-chair for ACC's West Central Florida Chapter, Gaunce helps spearhead its pro bono involvement with nonprofits that serve underprivileged communities. Gaunce and his wife also have a longstanding history of volunteering at the Humane Society and the Ronald McDonald House. This year, they invited Gaunce's colleagues to come and cook with them at the Ronald McDonald House as part of the legal department holiday party. "I feel very privileged, and with privilege comes a responsibility to give back to your community," he says. "I consider it my duty to do that."

Last, Gaunce finds inspiration in music. Having grown up in a musical household, Gaunce began playing piano as a child and has continued to play guitar and piano throughout his life.

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