

Mel Scott

Senior Legal Counsel (Global) at Megaport

Nicola McLaughlin, solicitor at Kay & Hughes Art and Entertainment Lawyers, sits down with **Mel Scott**, Senior Legal Counsel (Global) at Megaport to discuss what it's like to work for a global technology company. Mel has practised as a lawyer for 10 years and has previously been awarded the Lawyers Weekly Corporate Counsel 30 Under 30 Award. In April 2020, Mel launched her very own podcast entitled "Counsel", where she discusses all things about being an in-house lawyer.

NICOLA MCLAUGHLIN: What does a typical day look like for you?

MEL SCOTT: Wake at 5:15, off to the gym or Pilates to hunt for endorphins, reply to social media messages over coffee, film a quick TikTok OOTD before the main hustle begins.

Life in-house for a tech company is ever changing. No two days are the same. My mornings are full of meetings with my US colleagues, including my General Counsel, who works remotely from Los Angeles. I can work from home or the office and design each day around what is in my calendar. I then check Ironclad (our contract lifecycle management software) for new matters assigned to me or updates on existing matters that require my review.

It's always a mixed bag: commercial contract review, advice to the Procurement team, check over a bespoke clause in a new Employment Agreement, review a Data Processing Addendum, chat over training requirements with our Information Security team, work with local external counsel in Mexico – the most recent country that we've launched in. Lunch and meditate away from my desk. Reset for the afternoon. Meetings with the APAC team before our EU colleagues come online and need a little legal love.

Most evenings I am working on my passion project, the Counsel podcast – a podcast for in-house lawyers, creating content for social media and scheduling content for the coming days. Or I'll be binge watching 'Succession'.... again...

NICOLA: Did you always want this job? If so, what did you do to position yourself to get it? If not, how did your career path lead you here?

MEL: Right now, March 2022, I am living my best legal life.

I have an incredibly fulfilling job, in a great team, led by an awesome human that is also a kind and inspiring leader. I get to travel internationally for work (pre-covid and again, in July this year) and learn new things every day as we expand into new countries and develop new products.

I also have scope to bring my side hustle to life and the full support of my employer.

To be honest, I have worked hard to manifest this life into reality. I began working with a mindset coach in 2017 to help me with my career vision and purpose. Since then, I've been very deliberately taking steps to make it a reality – asking for opportunities that interest me, putting myself outside of my comfort zone and following my curiosity and that brings me joy.

NICOLA: What's the best work-related advice you've ever received?

MEL: Work consistently to be known as a safe pair of hands: reliable and accountable, known for doing what you said you would. This applies to every stage of your career but is an especially valuable trait in early career lawyers.

NICOLA: What's the greatest risk you've taken as a professional?

MEL: Transitioning from top tier private practice to in-house at 3 years PAE. Traditional thinking at the time was that this was "too soon" and I would "regret it". It wasn't and I don't. But going against the grain and being the subject of judgement in that environment was hard at a young age. I worried that maybe I was leaving Big Law too soon. I'm forever grateful that I stuck to my guns and followed the little voice inside of me that led me down the path less travelled.

NICOLA: How do you unplug from work?

MEL: Quick meditation reset during the day is crucial. Focussing on breathing and refocussing my mind is the best way I know to unplug. Even 5 minutes makes a difference. I use the free app, Insight Timer.

NICOLA: If you could have dinner with any woman – living or passed, real or fictional, who would it be and why?

MEL: My maternal great-grandmother, Dorothy. I have so many questions about her young adult years working as a lady's maid and travel companion for wealthy



widows. She was living it up in Sydney before her mother died suddenly and she had to return to outback NSW to raise her siblings and then she had seven children of her own.

NICOLA: The 2022 International Women's Day campaign theme is #BreakTheBias. What does this mean to you and how would you suggest this is implemented in our readers' work and personal lives?

MEL: We always have work to do to break down our own internalised bias as to what we are capable of and what we can achieve. Constantly question self-limiting beliefs and push yourself to break the barriers imposed on you by society, family and other conditioning.

You cannot be what you cannot see so look for the brave women around you, in the home, at work and in the media – the trailblazers and the truth tellers. They will often be labelled as "too much" or "too loud". That is how you know they are agitating for real change and should be admired.

NICOLA: What advice would you give to the generation of female leaders in the industry?

MEL: When it comes to sexual harassment in the workplace, enough is enough. Speak up and call it out. When a lewd joke is made, ask "what do you mean by that?" and make them explain themselves. We are more powerful than we know. It is our time to reset the rules of acceptable workplace behaviour.

NICOLA: Thanks so much Mel! On behalf of CAMLA and all of our readers, I'd like to extend a special thank you for taking the time to chat to us. Looking forward to listening to your podcast!