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Q&A with Rachel Manos, General Counsel, BELFOR USA GROUP, Inc.

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What positions/jobs helped prepare you for your current role as the GC of the BELFOR USA Group?

On one hand, all of my prior jobs prepared me, but on the other hand, none of my jobs prepared me for this role. Working in a law firm helped me build solid legal knowledge, skills, and mentorship, while subsequent in-house roles allowed me to expand on those skills and work directly with business teams. However, BELFOR is a truly unique company. These experiences, while valuable, did not fully prepare me for the role of general counsel of the largest disaster recovery and property restoration company in the United States.

How have you changed/grown since you took over the role of GC?

In addition to experiencing tremendous personal growth, I have learned that it is not about me – it is about my team. I built our team in the legal department from the ground up. The success of my department rises and falls with my team members. Each team member's growth is vital, and I believe it to be my responsibility to ensure they develop and establish personal relationships not only within the legal department, but also within BELFOR's extended network. When building the team, it took me some time to figure out the right mix of legal skills needed to address BELFOR's legal needs. I am proud to say that we have an incredible group of people who are committed to each other and to BELFOR's mission.

What are the personality/character traits that have contributed the most to your success?

I would say (1) discipline, (2) creative thinking, (3) confident decision-making, and (4) effective delegating. I didn't always have these qualities; these are areas I have slowly built and worked on over the years to develop.

What is the best part of your job?

My team. We have built a tremendous team, and I am so proud of them. Everyone shows up and contributes. Our legal department is highly regarded at BELFOR because we are truly about teamwork – we all help each other and pitch in.

What part(s) of your job is/are the most difficult or challenging?

My biggest challenges are (1) delivering results and meeting demands with the resources I've been given and (2) helping team members get comfortable working within our existing framework without becoming overwhelmed or overcome by certain situations or limitations that are outside of our control.

What qualities/attributes do you look for when hiring in-house counsel for your team? Outside counsel?

My hiring criteria have changed over time. With a core contracts and core litigation team, I specifically look for great communication skills, creative thinking, good judgment, a basic knowledge of the law, strong work ethic, and the ability to work independently.

What is one thing you can't live without?

My husband and my three children.

How do you clear your mind/unwind after a bad/difficult day?

If I've had a hard day, I may go for a bike ride with my family or sit on the porch in a rocking chair and relax.