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CURRICULUM VITAE
Maria E. Fernandez, Esq.
Advisory Consultant

EDUCATION

J.D., Cornell Law School
Ithaca, NY 1992

B.A., City University of New York - Lehman College
Bronx, NY 1989

Major in Psychology and Minor in Political Science

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Employment Practices Solutions, Inc. 2022 - present
Advisory Consultant
June 2022-Present

Conduct investigations into complaints of workplace misconduct. Provide guidance to employers concerning sound personnel practices, policies and procedures. Facilitate training programs on a broad range of employment laws and issues, including investigation procedures, harassment and discrimination prevention, leave management, DE&I, effective hiring, disciplinary action, and other workforce policies and practices. Provide one-on-one coaching to employees and leaders following investigations. Consult on building and expanding EPS' Environmental and Social Governance (ESG) and Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) practices.

Fordham Law School 2022 - Present
Adjunct Professor of Law, Master of Studies in Law (M.S.L.) in Corporate Compliance Program
April 2022 - Present

Serve as an adjunct professor delivering the Compliance Risk Assessment course, a required course in the M.S.L, Corporate Compliance program curriculum. Given the growth of regulatory compliance requirements, the course provides students with an overview of the elements of the compliance risk assessment, key compliance risks across various industries, developing and conducting a compliance risk assessment, and how the assessment role functions within an overall compliance program.

Direct Energy | Houston, TX 2017 - 2021
VP - Head, Ethics & Compliance

Managed team of 21 lawyers and compliance professionals; led all aspects of compliance program, including hotline, conflicts of interest, code of conduct, and training. Increased focus on fraud, privacy, anti-corruption (FCPA and U.K. Bribery Act), and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) risks. Maintained oversight of wholesale trading surveillance and training, policy development, regulatory assurance reviews, compliance advisory, and investigations.

Senior Counsel - Power Systems and OpenPOWER Foundation Group (2015-2017): Oversaw, with various global lawyers, all legal and compliance aspects of Power Systems, including product development, sale negotiations, vendor contracts, antitrust concerns, and regulatory/compliance issues. Played leadership role in strategic focus on business growth in China; guided intellectual property licensing and protection concerns and contributed to creating essential partnerships with Chinese technology companies and government officials.

Lead Division Counsel - Microelectronics Division (2012-2015): Managed all legal issues for division and guided patent and technology licensing efforts to industry partners. Oversaw team of 7 lawyers and contract professionals in structuring, drafting, and negotiating global technology-related agreements and joint ventures. Delivered legal support to global IBM manufacturing locations focusing on supply chain and sales function.

Senior Counsel | Corporate Trust & Compliance Officer (2010-2012): Selected to conduct 1-year compliance risk review of Business Partner end-to-end process spanning recruitment, due diligence, onboarding, marketing, special bids, violations, and termination of existing relationships and transitioned to lead overall global compliance operations, including training, metrics, and compliance-related investigations.

Associate General Counsel, Sales Americas (2008-2009): Directed seven lawyers and contract negotiation professionals, supporting North America sales teams. Participated in large, complex software deals, including IBM's first \$1B enterprise software licensing transaction. Supported insurance group globally with special offerings and product development.

Senior Regional Counsel, IBM Latin America (2001-2008): Oversaw legal and compliance matters for 21 countries while managing 55 lawyers and contract professionals, including three country general counsels. Directed Latin America Security Manager and 200+ security professionals. Administered multimillion-dollar budget while overseeing contract drafting and negotiation, M&A, and legal governance issues.

Additional roles include Northeast Counsel (IBM Northeast Sales Division – Insurance and Telco customers), Staff Attorney (IBM North America Sales Division), and Co-Chair of Hispanic Diversity Initiatives (seconded part-time to IBM Human Resources).

LANGUAGES

Fluent in Spanish and Proficient in Brazilian Portuguese

LICENSE/CERTIFICATIONS

Licensed attorney in New York and California since 1993; admitted to the Supreme Court Bar.

MEMBERSHIPS

Association of Corporate Counsel, Member of the Leadership of Environmental and Sustainability Network Membership Chair, President's Council of Cornell Women and Member, Cornell University Council Member, Society of Corporate Compliance and Ethics