

## Member Spotlight: Mendi Sossamon

# Digital Native: Why Mendi Sossamon swapped bricks and mortar for the virtual world



Mendi Sossamon is a Partner with 22 years in-house and law firm experience whose practice focuses on complex corporate transactions and general counsel services. With specialized expertise counseling businesses that monetize intellectual property, Ms. Sossamon structures and negotiates licensing, research, development, promotion, supply, distribution and service agreements, strategic alliances and joint ventures.

Often, she serves as a legal advisor on the operations of new or acquired businesses, products and services. In particular, Ms. Sossamon is highly skilled in navigating the territory between legal risk and business objectives to craft practical solutions that fuel growth.

As Deputy General Counsel of a publicly traded intellectual property, online content and professional services company, Ms. Sossamon previously served as the lead legal executive for a \$750m+ global business segment.

The majority of Mendi's practice involves working with companies in the \$10m to \$200m annual revenue band that either don't have a full time in-house General Counsel or may have in-house lawyers but don't have a senior strategic counsel. Flexible, remote working and a cost-effective business model first attracted Mendi Sossamon to Potomac Law Group.

As a virtual firm, Potomac Law has limited physical offices – Mendi's work is largely carried out with remote working resources. While the firm is headquartered in Washington DC, she lives and works from her home in Los Angeles, traveling as needed to meet clients in person.

"You are 100% in control of your practice, who you work with, how you work and what clients you want to engage with," Mendi says. "When you don't physically have to show up to an office, your day is dictated by the needs of your clients and your own preferences. I tend to be a night owl, so I will start my day a little bit later and work into the night."

Given Potomac Law's history of offering its attorneys flexible and remote working, the firm has a habit of attracting new talent – even at the height of the recent pandemic.

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"I think we're at 120 lawyers right now," Mendi adds. "We took on 10 more partners during Covid. A good half of our lawyers are focused on the DC metro area, including Maryland and Virginia, but the rest live and work across the United States."

### What's not to love?

In addition to limited physical offices, the firm is comprised entirely of Partners and Senior Counsel – no associates. The cost effective and low overhead model leads to more reasonable legal fees: "I was really drawn to the business model. With low expenses overhead and no need to recruit and train associates, our fees tend to be lower than those typically charged for similar legal services."

"Most of our attorneys have at least 15 years' experience and many came to us from big law firms. We offer clients big law firm expertise and sophistication at a fair price point. What's not to love about that?"

### General Counsel services

On joining the firm, Mendi was keen to set up a formal General Counsel Services practice group. Mendi's proposal was to offer General Counsel services as a distinct legal practice with its members having experience in senior in-house roles. "There were a few people providing outsourced General Counsel Services within the firm, but it was not really a formal practice group. And that's one of the things that I've done since I joined the firm."

Elsewhere, one of Potomac Law's corporate areas of expertise is M&A work, generally around the mid-market level: "Our sweet spot is a deal around

\$150 million and below and we do them all across the US. It's not that our lawyers aren't sophisticated enough to do a billion-dollar merger, we just don't maintain a sitting pool of idle lawyers to throw at huge deals. Our practices tend to run at reasonably full capacity, and we don't have 10 associates sitting on the sidelines that can easily be deployed on a deal of that size."

### International work and travel

As well as the obvious benefits of flexible work, Mendi is able to follow her somewhat peripatetic lifestyle, traveling and working at the same time. With Covid-19 starting to tail off, she intends to pick up where she left off before the pandemic struck.

"I have clients in the UK and Europe with US operations, and I spend a fair bit of time in London," she says. "I love London and would live there in a heartbeat. I also spend time in other places across Europe, stopping for a few weeks in each place. Prior to Covid, I was in Copenhagen, Budapest, Amsterdam...whenever I get the opportunity. I was in New Zealand for a month a while back."

**"I have UK clients and spend a lot of time in London, I love London and would live there in a heartbeat"**

Many of Mendi's international clients are referrals through her professional networks; she became Potomac's representative to IR Global in 2018. Typically, these networks help her generate busi-

ness with clients eager to set up business in the US. Mendi and the firm as a whole provide a wide range of services that allow foreign based clients to navigate complex federal and state legal issues. Mendi also provides her clients a senior strategic voice, counseling them on the various aspects of US law and what they should consider when expanding operations into the US.

"The international experience that I have is not common within General Counsel Services. For instance, I've worked in a multinational where I've supervised legal services across a number of countries." Her impression is that many international companies in her target market have not used outsourced General Counsel services specializing in the US, nor is it immediately clear to an international client that many US lawyers operate across a number of states.

"Much of the work I perform is operational. For example, I assist companies with their legal arrangements when they launch a business in the US and provide counsel specific to their expansion: Is a US entity needed? Are customer contracts in order? What laws apply to their products and services?"

With her work/life balance based on a solitary yet roving nature, when Mendi isn't working as a General Counsel, she's a prodigious reader of fiction and loves taking her dog for long walks.

When I ask Mendi if she could see herself working 9-5 in an office ever again? The answer is a resounding "no!"

"I definitely would never go back to a place where I have to be in an office every day," she laughs.

"Never! I'm just not interested in the culture of a required face-to-face workplace."

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After working at Potomac Law, I would never go back to that kind of environment again."

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## Mendi Sossamon

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**Our attorneys have outstanding academic credentials and impressive professional experience, with an average of fifteen years at top national firms and/or in-house at major corporations. Clients recognize our attorneys' skills and creative strategies, as well as their common sense and practical solutions.**