

CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

Rebecca Bracewell Planted the Seeds for Growth Early

Rebecca Bracewell is a pioneer in the trademark industry preparing herself, her team, and her firm to remote work and when the pandemic hit, Perkins Coie was well prepared. She has been with Perkins Coie for 20 years and is currently their Trademark Docketing Supervisor. Perkins Coie has been using Anaqua's PATTSY WAVE software for almost a decade. Rebecca's extensive experience in the software has supported her team's smooth transition to working remotely.

Work-life balance can be a struggle for many working from home. It is essential for intellectual property firms struggling to adapt to remote work challenges and find that balance so they can retain top talent. Despite the demands of working in this field of IP law, Rebecca has found time to run a flower farm which is a testament to both her strong management skills and the efficiency of her remote team that allows her personal life to thrive. In her discussion with Anaqua, Rebecca reveals how she is building lasting remote team relationships in a virtual environment.

Can you give us a sense of where your team is and how big your team is?

I have a fully remote team based in Seattle, Portland, and a few individuals are in California. I'm the only one on the East Coast. One of the great things about having a nationwide remote team is I can hire the best individuals no matter where they're based since I'm not tied to an office.

There are six specialists on my team and an assistant on my team who manages mail. She'll look at who the paralegal is on the mail and give the documents to that specialist depending on who it is assigned to. This system works well because you get to know the clients, you get to know the paralegals, and you work more as a team - more than just processing documents. That's just on the trademark side—we have a separate patent department.

What are the challenges or benefits that you have encountered working remotely as a team?

The biggest challenge now is that I have not met most of my team in person. I interviewed my team remotely, they were brought on board remotely, and we work remotely. Video calls really help so I require that the team be on video calls, which can be difficult.



It's uncomfortable when you're first sitting there on the camera and you're trying not to stare at yourself in the camera and interact with people.

Video calls are so important though. I tell my team members I want to know if I passed you on the street that I would recognize you. It's easier to chat with people to get to know their personalities and not have those misunderstandings because emails or texts are easy to misinterpret. We have casual meetings—we call it a coffee break—every couple of weeks so that if you want to talk about work that's fine, but you can talk about your kids, pets, and hobbies too. It's important to me that we get to know each other on a personal level like you would in the office passing someone in the hall. You don't get that if you're in your own house 24/7.

Have the people you hired recently on your team used PATTSY WAVE before? If not, was it hard to train them?

I think we had one person who had PATTSY WAVE experience. I look more for trademark experience because if you know trademark law you can use the database. If you learn the database, but not the why behind it, you're going to be stuck. PATTSY WAVE experience is a bonus, not a requirement.

I think training goes quickly in PATTSY WAVE. When we converted to PATTSY WAVE, we also tested Inprotech, FoundationIP, and IP Manager because we had IP Master at the time. It can be overwhelming to people that there's all these things that you can do in those. I like that PATTSY WAVE has everything you need on one-screen—it's all right there and straightforward.

Were there any new steps in your docketing processes that you put in place when your team went fully remote?

When I was in the office, we had our assistant printing everything out that would come in electronically, and then we'd re-scan it. It was incredibly inefficient, so we changed that a long time ago. I was looking ahead to being able to work remotely—if it comes in electronically, you process and archive it electronically—it makes the most sense.

We do have a central DMS archive that we put everything in so everyone can access what everybody else has done. If somebody's out of the office, I don't have to get into somebody's email and see what they sent, it's all archived in one repository. I set up folders on a specific drive that everybody else can access so everybody's inbox is not their email.

What do you enjoy about working at Perkins Coie? What are you proud or excited about in your work today?

The managers at Perkins Coie are supportive, help ensure I can bring in the best talent, and care about you as a person. We keep track of active cases which I report to my manager every month. If we can see that our active cases are steadily climbing, and we need additional help, I'm very much listened to. The culture and the people at the firm make all the difference.

I am really proud of my team. They work together, they're very self-sufficient, and they get things done which is what you need in docketing.

What aspects of PATTSY WAVE do you enjoy the most? What new functionality do you hope to use in the future?

Currently, we use the remote DMS archive the most so we can all access it. In the future, we look forward to accommodating growing requests for client access. We're also working on upgrading to the new version of PATTSY WAVE so we can integrate it with our DMS. This will relieve the burden on our assistant who currently spends up to an hour a day backing up records.