

## Career Sheet: Lawyer Associate



### Martina Piantoni, Lawyer Associate – Grimaldi Studio Legale

I am a Lawyer Associate. I graduated in Law after a quite international educational journey between Italy, France, and the US. Right after graduating, I had a short experience in a top-notch corporate Law Firm in Italy, but as much I performed good and was blessed by a very supportive environment, I realised that it was not the career I was looking forward to. I hence moved to Brussels, where I had the opportunity to work for two years at the EU Parliament, first in the Legal Service and then in the Policy sector. Later, I decided to try the private sector and joined Grimaldi Studio Legale, an Italian Law Firm in Brussels that mostly works for the EU Institutions and international projects.



### OVERVIEW OF THE JOB

My job is indirectly linked to STEM. Being a lawyer, I mostly deal with legal advice, analysis, and interpretation of texts in order to find solutions to practical challenges that people may face in their everyday life. However, I specialised in digital/IT law, which means I usually counsel private clients, such as companies, who want to develop new technologies or apps and need to understand what they can and cannot do to abide by the existing legal rules in their country, or in other countries they want to expand to or to understand what risks they may face, for example, if their product causes harm to someone or damages something. I also assist public clients, such as governments and lawmakers, who wish to develop new rules for the development of technology, for instance, to help citizens control their data, to allow the uptake of new services such as self-driving cars or automated vessels, to digitalize existing services, etc. In this context, I study the issue at hand and recommend what I consider the best solution to obtain the desired results for the benefit of citizens, including proposed drafting of the legal texts that, once discussed, and approved by the Parliaments, will end up governing people's life.



### WHAT INSPIRED YOU

My parents, who are both in the legal field, inspired me to undertake a law career. My Law School Professor, Jane Ginsburg, inspired me in terms of legal specialisation linked with STEM. I initially specialised in Copyright, and then working in IT Law came naturally from that.



## TYPICAL WORKING DAY

I usually check my emails as soon as I arrive at work and reply to all the emails. Then I can have very different working days depending on the period/project(s) I am working on. I usually participate in several meetings to arrange the work with other team members or present some work results to clients; I read, study, and write a lot. Sometimes I conduct interviews as part of my research process (to gather opinions/information from other expert persons in the sector).



## STUDY & CAREER PATH

I graduated in Law from the Sapienza University of Rome. After having started my studies in Italy, I did an Erasmus in France (Aix-en-Provence), where I first learnt about New Technologies Law. I then enrolled on some scholarship programs, which I was lucky enough to be awarded, namely, a Double Degree Exchange Programme at Columbia Law School of New York and a Thesis Research Programme in France, focusing on comparative law. During my year in New York, I followed in the footsteps of my American Professor and specialised in Copyright, and then IT Law. What has helped me most in building my current career is studying in different countries and different languages. This allowed me to get in touch with diverse environments and subject matters, to figure out about legal fields and professions I had never heard about, and to question myself and change plans (my initial idea was to specialise in International Peace Law). Ultimately, to explore alternative ways of reasoning and problem solving and enhance my flexibility, which is key when your job is straddling two dissimilar fields (as tech and law).



## KEY SKILLS

Professional and personal key skills needed to do my job, in my opinion, are:

- Analytical: Consulting, Critical thinking, Problem-solving, Research, Time Management
- Business: Administrative skills
- Communication: Editing, Newsletters, Translation, Writing
- Management: Leadership, Negotiation, People Management, Project Management
- Personal and Social: Adaptability, Commitment, Flexibility, Initiative, Personal responsibility, Productivity



## CAREER PROSPECT

I could use my skills for any job in the Legal or Policy sectors, such as an in-house counsellor, judge,

arbitrator, public officer, policy advisor, consultant, or others. Some of these positions, although they are accessible with my skills, require passing a public competition.



## CHALLENGES

Having to cope with many different tasks and projects at the same time; keeping myself always updated; putting together legal and technical worlds, which means working with people with extremely different backgrounds and adapt to them, as well as understanding the technical implications of projects from tech experts and translate them into understandable pieces of information for colleagues/clients in the policy or legal domain.



## YOUR ADVICE TO STUDENTS

My advice to students would be to be curious and creative, explore, push your limits. Don't worry if you still don't know what you want to become. Lifestyles and careers are always transforming, think of the increased easiness to travel and automation which are putting forward jobs and ways of living vastly different from those we have known so far. If you don't see your "perfect job" out there, you might always create it! Also, communication is key, so focus on learning new languages.



## YOUR ADVICE TO TEACHERS AND PARENTS

My advice to teachers and parents would be - listen to your kids and encourage their passions without limiting them to what you know or have personally experienced. Make sure they travel, so they can receive diverse inputs and stimuli and see different things/persons from what they experience in their daily routine.



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