

Alumni Spotlight — Anup Shah

Deputy General Counsel, Cerence, Inc.

Tell us about your role at Cerence. What do you enjoy most about the work you do, and what sparked your interest in working there?

I joined Cerence in 2023 as Deputy General Counsel and Chief IP Counsel, reuniting with our General Counsel and Chief Administrative Officer, Jennifer Salinas, who I first met at legacy firm Troutman Sanders. Cerence is a publicly-traded, global leader in conversational AI-powered user experiences, whose solutions have shipped in more than 525 million cars to date. I was drawn to and am lucky to be in a role where I get to do it all — managing our worldwide litigation, IP portfolio, privacy function, and labor and employment issues, while also getting experience with SEC reporting and M&A activities. To do this in the rapidly growing and evolving AI space has been an added bonus.

What are some skills you gained from your time at the firm that benefited you the most for an in-house role?

Two areas come to mind: First, the firm gave me the opportunity and encouragement to expand outside of litigation, so it was the first time in my career I started doing transactional work. Being able to successfully pivot into a new area gave me the confidence to know that I could expand into some of the areas I see now — M&A, HR, privacy, etc. — which is important to being an effective in-house counsel. Second, the firm helped me focus on client development and relationships. Being an in-house attorney is equal parts legal work and internal client management, so my experience at the firm prepared me for both.

Did you always want to work as a lawyer? What drew you to practicing law?

No, I received an Electrical Engineering degree in college and planned to be an engineer. But while in school, I realized that I wanted to be involved in more than the innovation/engineering piece of the puzzle. I recognized that the law plays a critical role in shaping how those innovations are developed, protected, and brought to market and felt that getting a law degree would help fill in the business and strategy pieces. Lawyers can have a meaningful impact not just by advising on legal issues, but by helping organizations achieve their broader goals.

The firm's 2026 class of entry-level associates has arrived! Reflecting on your own early days of practice, what piece of advice do you wish you had received? Any additional advice or insights you'd like to share with our newest colleagues as they begin their practice?

Work outside of your comfort zone. It's never a bad thing to learn new areas of the law and expand your reach. And treat every interaction — whether it

is with your internal colleagues or even opposing counsel — as if it were a client.

How do you maintain long-term, meaningful connections, especially with those you don't interact with regularly?

I try to be intentional and authentic in maintaining these relationships, but that doesn't require constant contact. My former firm colleagues are all great at this, and it's led to us staying close despite not working together in nearly a decade. Justin Barnes, a former partner in the San Diego office, is great at this. Despite not seeing each other in years, Justin regularly checks in and sends a quick note if he sees an article that reminds him of a case we worked on. Those little touch points go a long way in maintaining meaningful connections.

What are your favorite ways to spend time outside of work? What are you most looking forward to this fall?

The vast majority of our time "outside of work" is spent shuttling our two boys (10 and 14) to their various activities. Since NC State's football season is effectively over despite it being the beginning of October, I am most looking forward to several trips we have planned to see family and friends in Chicago and Austin.

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