

Women in IP Leadership

Celebrating achievements and continuing
the empowerment of women



This segment is dedicated to women working in the IP industry, providing a platform to share real accounts from rising women around the globe. In these interviews we will be discussing experiences, celebrating milestones and achievements, and putting forward ideas for advancing equality and diversity.

By providing a platform to share personal experiences we aim to continue the empowerment of women in the world of IP.



If you would like the opportunity to share your experiences with *Women in IP Leadership*, would like to nominate an individual to be involved, or would like to learn more about sponsorship, please contact our Editor.

Lara Dorigo: Partner, PESTALOZZI

An interview: inspirations, experiences, and ideas for equality.



Lara is a partner of the Swiss law firm PESTALOZZI, where she heads the IP & TMT group. She advises clients in every field of intellectual property law, but has a particular affinity for technology-related issues. Lara is a passionate IP litigator and licensing specialist. She has extensive experience with pharmaceutical and biologics patent litigation before courts and arbitral tribunals, and also handles cases in the fields of MedTech, high-tech, electronics, chemistry, and mechanics. In addition, she provides transactional and legal support to her clients on all sorts of technology transfer arrangements and advises on parallel imports and regulatory issues.

Lara is the author of many publications and a frequent speaker on IP and licensing topics. She is also a non-permanent judge of the Swiss Federal Patent Court.¹

What inspired your career?

Well, it was not Ally McBeal, even though my best friend would probably say so (but I have to admit that Ally has given a friendly face to female lawyers, a factor not to be underestimated).

Initially, I really had no idea in what direction I wanted to go. I was broadly interested in

practically all topics, and law appeared a rather dull option compared to many others. I particularly loved creative subjects, was totally into architecture and product design, loved literature, but was also curious about technologies and considered mathematic problems to be entertaining brain games. I was professionally advised that because of my analytical skills, I should study mathematics, or as I wanted something more hands-on, maybe agronomy or law. I immediately excluded agronomy and finally went for law.

Once at university, I started really appreciating the subject. I soon found out that law reflects all areas of life; it impacts the application of all technologies, shapes our values, but also evolves with new technologies and changing mindsets. I particularly liked economic law. An important inspiration for my career was the privilege of being a student of Prof. Dr. Carl Baudenbacher, the later president of the EFTA Court, whose lectures awakened in me a fascination for the interface between IP and competition law – a topic that I've remained interested in ever since. I also particularly liked the international dimension of IP law, the wide harmonization through international treaties, the balance of interests, and the fact that it deals with creativity, technology, and even psychology.

How have you found the pathway to your current position? And can you offer advice from your experience?

My pathway was not the most straightforward one. After the bar exam, I started in the IP team of a large business law firm where I had the chance to work on fantastic mandates. I had initially planned to stay for two years, but left *only* 18 years later! In between, I went to New York for LL.M. studies at New York University School of Law, where I dived into IP and competition subjects more deeply. I also had the privilege of working in the patent litigation department of a magic circle firm in London, following high-tech cases which would never reach the courtrooms of a small market like Switzerland – a truly great experience for which

¹ For more information see <https://pestalozzilaw.com/en/lawyers/lara-dorigo/>

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I am very grateful. Both international stays showed how harmonized IP laws are, but also taught me about the subtle differences, which are important to know when you advise international clients apparently speaking “the same language.”

I never had a career plan, never aspired for titles. I simply enjoyed working for interesting clients and on challenging matters; the more complex the issues, the more I enjoyed them. When partnership and GC opportunities started coming up, I declined them, both for a mix of lack of self-confidence and fear that I would be an even less available mother if I were to climb the ladder.

However, with time, I was missing entrepreneurship. When I was offered to head PESTALOZZI's IP & TMT team, I saw the opportunity to fill this gap, and this time the time was ripe for a new challenge. I joined PESTALOZZI in January 2022, where I have the privilege to work with a fantastic team.

Looking back, I would advise, especially younger women, to show more self-confidence and not to feel guilty if they take a career step. More generally, young lawyers should work on building their reputation in the market by publishing on emerging topics, speaking at conferences, and engaging in professional networks. This should be a personal motivation, not something done only for the employer. I had the chance to work on several IP books quite early in my career, and not only did I immensely profit intellectually and from the increased visibility in the IP market, but these projects were also rewarding cooperations with peers.

What challenges have you faced? And how have you overcome them?

I would not say that I faced particular challenges. I have been very lucky to work in firms where I am appreciated as a lawyer and person without feeling disadvantaged because of my gender. During my earlier years, it happened that clients in meetings would automatically address the male junior lawyer I had brought with me instead of talking to me. Or elderly gentlemen would make friendly remarks about my dresses. Such situations were frustrating, of course, but could be overcome by a demonstration of competence, and I always felt respected in the end. Something that also struck me was that, in the first years after becoming a mother, I was constantly asked by colleagues – fathers – how I coped with the double burden. I used to return the question and their astonished faces still amuse me when I think about it.

Probably, the biggest challenge was that when I started, there were practically no women in leading positions, not in law firms, and also

not elsewhere. My former boss was a devoted father of three and I always admired him for the way he managed the balancing act between career and family, but still he was a man. I totally lacked female role models. This has improved today, but we are certainly not where we need to be, and the impact of this on young women's career choices and aspirations should not be underestimated.

What would you consider to be your greatest achievement in your career so far?

There is no particular achievement I would want to stress. Every positive outcome on a challenging case and every happy client is a great reward. I am a passionate litigator, and when we settle cases, I always feel two hearts beating in me: I am sad not to be able to continue arguing juicy issues, but I am also very happy to achieve a result for a client that brings them peace of mind. In fact, I love the arguments, the tactics, and the psychology used in disputes, but I equally enjoy switching psychology in negotiations to achieve optimal results.

Maybe it could be considered an “achievement” that a few years ago (and long before I held a partner title), I was the first Swiss lawyer to be listed in Managing IP's TOP 250 Women in IP list and have also been listed as one of IAM's Global Leaders in patents. However, the fact that I am still the only Swiss woman on the latter list in 2023 shows that there is still a long way to go.

What are your future career aspirations? And how will you work to achieve them?

Since I have joined PESTALOZZI quite recently, one of my goals is to continue building a top-notch IP and TMT team in both disputes and transactions and to further expand the team's reach. This is a collaborative effort, and I am very fortunate to be teaming up with fantastic partners and bright and motivated associates and paralegals.

I also want to broaden my personal horizons by learning about new technologies and tackling emerging legal issues.

One aspect of my work that I particularly enjoy is interacting with people, whether within our firm or with clients, patent attorneys, foreign colleagues with whom we work on multinational disputes and transactions, or opposing counsel. I like to maintain good personal relationships with these people and to continue to expand my network.

What changes would you like to see in the IP industry regarding equality and diversity in the next five years?

In the field of soft IP, I think the IP industry is quite diverse, at least compared to most other

practice areas. For patents, the picture is quite different. Therefore, I would like to see a more diverse group in charge of technical issues, be it as lawyers or as patent attorneys. Furthermore, focusing on law firms, I would like to see more diversity at the partnership level. And last but not least, I would hope that we will never have to hear that unbearable excuse again that allegedly no suitable women can be found for executive and board positions! To use borrowed words: "There are none so blind as those who will not see" (Jonathan Swift, Polite Conversation).

How do you think the empowerment of women can be continued and expanded in the IP sector?

Still, a lot needs to be done, and not only in the IP sector. As part of those measures, we need to promote more women to leading positions in order to provide role models for younger generations. Meanwhile, in order to make more women want to seriously consider leadership options, mentorship programs and soft skills trainings are certainly helpful. Also, men in executive positions should be trained to become more inclusive leaders. These are tasks every firm should take seriously, and by that I do not mean putting women and LGBTQ+ members in the foreground just whenever it makes sense from a marketing perspective. Actual measures are needed, including fair promotional programs that are based on merits. To reach those goals, our firm, for instance, established an internal mentorship program and is partnering with an organization that helps advance female talents and sensitize men.

In addition, some social and structural changes are needed that cannot be achieved overnight, but that should be addressed with urgency by our politicians. In Switzerland, day schools are still an exception, which puts an enormous organizational and financial burden on working parents. Mandatory day schools would not only lower these burdens, but they would also help "working moms" become less stigmatized, as is still the case in some, especially more rural, regions of Switzerland. And we finally need to get rid of the bias about maternity leave. This can be achieved either by introducing parental leave, as already successfully established in several countries and by large companies, or by at least stopping penalizing women for taking time out to have a family. In Switzerland, men have to serve in the army for at least 36 weeks and nobody complains about this; women get 14 weeks of maternity leave remunerated under the same conditions but often get discriminated against because of this. How come nobody considers this unfair?

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Ronda Majure: Vice President of Segment Sales, Clarivate

An interview: inspirations, experiences, and ideas for equality.

Ronda Majure is the Vice President of Sales for Clarivate. She has over 25 years of experience in the information industry, with a focus on intellectual property and brand protection. She leads the Americas Sales Team and oversees the strategy and execution of regional sales initiatives.

Ronda has a proven track record of growing businesses and delivering value to customers. She is also an active member of several International Trademark Association (INTA) committees, such as the Internet Committee and The Unreal Campaign.

Ronda is a recognized expert and thought leader in her field. She has received several awards for her sales excellence and innovation. In 2019, she founded the Women in Sales Leadership for Clarivate, a group that aims to increase the number of women in sales leadership roles across Intellectual Property at Clarivate.

What inspired your career?

I was inspired by the power of relationships. Sales is a partnership. If you approach it that way, you will be successful in building strong relationships with clients. If you treat it as a transaction, your success will be short-lived.

How have you found the pathway to your current position? And can you offer advice from your experience?

My success in sales led to my first management position and I have held several leadership roles since then. When I became VP of Sales, there were few women in sales, let alone leading revenue teams. Being part of the IP community allowed me to work closely with strong, driven women. I learned a lot from those women and was fortunate to have a few mentors along the way. It may sound like a cliché, but your career will have ebbs and flows, ups and downs, and it is in those moments that you discover what you are made of and the true value of a strong support group.



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In my experience, I would advise not to be afraid to take on a new role. It is an opportunity to gain more skills and knowledge that will make you more marketable inside your current company as well as outside the organization.

One key to being a successful leader is learning to excel at change management. I have learned to embrace change, instead of resisting it. By stepping outside my comfort zone, I have advanced both my career and the careers of many others at Clarivate. The lesson to be learned is: enjoy the journey, whatever it brings you.

What challenges have you faced? And how have you overcome them?

The challenges are too many to address, but I overcame each of them the same way. I leaned on the people I trusted within the organization. I went to my mentors for advice, and I sought counsel from my peers outside the organization. It is always good to get perspective from a variety of people. When I am in doubt, I have learned to trust myself and do what feels right. I encourage women not to shy away from their own intuitive power – honor your inner voice.

What would you consider to be your greatest achievement in your career so far?

I have had many achievements in my career. I have had the opportunity to lead multiple domestic and global departments that have provided me the extraordinary opportunity to witness firsthand the value of team diversity. Some of the best moments of my career, the ones I look back on with the most pride, are not the big sales, the promotions, or the rewards, the best moments were those filled with laughter and levity, working with successful, promising, and accomplished individuals.

My greatest achievement in my career is the trust I have earned over the years. If you do not have the trust of your teams or of other leaders, you can achieve nothing. This trust allowed me

to create the Women in Sales Leadership Council, with the mission to increase the number of women in sales leadership across our Intellectual Property business by developing existing talent, creating visibility, and advancing women via a support network of alliances and mentorships. Women bring a unique set of experiences and perspectives to the table, which allow businesses to make better decisions.

When women are in leadership positions, they can ensure that the organization is more representative of the population it serves. It leads to innovation and unique solutions to the problems that plague the business. The members of the Women in Sales Council work to create an environment where women can thrive by implementing initiatives that support, advance, retain, and reward our internal network of extraordinary women.

What are your future career aspirations? And how will you work to achieve them?

I would like to keep moving forward without losing perspective. I would like to continue to lead even if it's in different ways that I don't know yet. The best thing is to be open to opportunity, without being confined to a particular idea of what should be my next step or career move. The joy of working with successful, promising and accomplished individuals continues to drive me. I take being a role model very seriously and will continue to use my platform to increase the exposure of women across the company. Over the years, my goals have shifted from my personal success to the accomplishments of those on my team and those that I mentor. Their success is important to me. I invest my time in helping them accomplish their goals. It gives me a great deal of fulfillment to see their achievements and victories.

What changes would you like to see in the IP industry regarding equality and diversity in the next five years?

The trademark world has been predominately female. Recent law school enrollment statistics show greater female enrollment than male. While I hope that will result in more women in IP, I do not have a crystal ball.

What I do know is that more women in law firms are choosing to leave private practice in the prime of their careers while their male counterparts are gaining leadership roles and earning power. That is something that needs to be addressed because losing intellectual capital like that is unsustainable for law firms. Moreover, forward-thinking companies now ask firms for metrics around Diversity and Inclusion. The law firms that figure it out first will be the ones to benefit financially.

I encourage women not to shy away from their own intuitive power – honor your inner voice.

How do you think the empowerment of women can be continued and expanded in the IP sector?

I think that there are many things we can do to continue to empower women in the IP sector. First, we have to make sure that women are valued and note their contributions. Second, we have to make sure that they have a place at the table so that they have a say in decisions that not only impact them but those that come after them. Lastly, we need to make sure that they have the support they need to stay in the profession. Women want to lead and they are much more likely to do so if they have the support of others around them. This means mentorships, training, networking opportunities, advocating for policies that promote work-life balance, and addressing unconscious bias.

I am often asked when I believe we will see real measurable change in the industry. It may not be until those in charge of making decisions are more gender-balanced. In a recent conference, when the audience was asked how many had reported to a female leader, less than 20% of the men in the room indicated they reported to a female boss. That spoke volumes to me. However, we can change that. If we work together, the IP sector can be at the forefront of this much needed change and ensure that women have equal opportunities to thrive in their careers.

