Resilient: Confronting the COVID-19 crisis

Actionable insights to help businesses respond and recover

Episode 27: Legal leadership in the time of COVID-19

Host:

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Guest:

Debbie Majoras, chief legal officer (CLO) and secretary at Procter & Gamble

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Lori Lorenzo: Welcome to Resilient. I'm Lori Lorenzo, Deloitte's research and insights director for our Chief Legal Officer program, stepping in for Mike Kearney.

As you've heard from Mike, we've been diving into various aspects of the rapidly evolving environment. We're talking to leaders about tenacity, resolve, and resilience, and asking for their best advice.

This episode dives into the role of the chief legal officer and the legal function. And it's a story of perseverance and dedicated leadership.

Today we'll explore issues related to diversity and inclusion, and insights from a legal leader whose company is helping to keep many of the daily essentials in our lives available.

Debbie Majoras, chief legal officer and secretary at the Procter & Gamble Company, has served in many roles, including as the chair of the Federal Trade Commission, as deputy assistant attorney general at the US Department of Justice, as well as a big law partner. Today she's sharing her perspective across many topics. Let's hear what Debbie has to say.

Hey, Debbie. Thanks again for spending time with us today. I'm so excited to have this opportunity to get to chat with you. You know, we met, I feel like it was almost 10 years ago, and I was still very early in my career and landed this great position that allowed me to engage with you and other greats. In that role, I just really had the opportunity to watch and learn from you, and it was such a great experience to see that. And so having this time today to get to chat with you about your early experiences, the arc of your career, and some of the leadership lessons you've learned is probably going to be the highlight of my week. So, let's jump in. Will you tell us a

little bit about your early influences, kind of what shaped your interest in law and your career path.

Debbie Majoras: Well, sure. Thank you, Lori, for having me. Delighted to see you again. You've been terrific. And frankly, it's been a real treat to watch you in your career as someone who I know is constantly trying to learn more. And that's probably the most important thing for anyone to be successful. So, there's no question that when I look at really what's influenced my career, I wasn't a person who always knew I wanted to be a lawyer, not by a long shot. But, like a lot of people, my parents had an enormous influence on who I would eventually become and the paths that I would eventually choose, I think, really in a couple of ways. First of all, they're extremely hardworking people. We come from very humble roots, and we didn't have a lot in terms of material things, but we had a wonderful, loving family. And for my parents, work was really of a higher order. It was something to be proud of no matter what you were doing. And we were taught that it doesn't matter what you're doing and there shouldn't be hierarchy because work is something to take pride in. And so, that's something that I've always taken with me.

The other thing that my mother, I think, to some extent influenced by her faith, but she also has a worldview that she passed on to me and to my siblings that everything—nothing that you have is just your own and the gifts that you've been given as a human being, you've been given to use to better the world. But the way she did it was not through a huge amount of social activism or anything. I watched her do it one person at a time. My mother is tremendously caring and kind and respectful of all humans. And so, she really passed that on to us.

And then the final thing I would say from my parents is, it's really kind of funny, I was—no one really believes this today, anyone who knows me—but I was this really unbelievably painfully shy child, very scrawny, I was tiny, scared of the world, and my parents were afraid to send me to kindergarten, like they didn't know if I was going to make it. And so, I would be afraid to try new things. And my father, I would say, "I can't, I can't!" and I would cry. And my dad would turn the word can't into a noun and he would say, "What's a can't, Deborah? What's a can't? A can't never did anything! Now get on that bike and ride it!" And I would do it. It's not like my father was some modern-day feminist in the 60s, no. What my father knew is that life is hard. It's tough. You're going to face stuff. And by God, kid, you better get out there and face it. So, it's just funny, like of course at the time, you have no idea the influence that's having on you, but to this day, I have a huge difficulty in saying that I can't.

Lori Lorenzo: Yeah, that's so interesting. I don't think I've heard that story before, but I can definitely now see your parents in you because I recall one experience, I was in an audience and you were speaking to a group of diverse lawyers and you were telling a story about when Procter & Gamble was involved with sponsoring the Olympics and how the commercials came through you and your sense of whether or not it was a good commercial is if you cried or not and the connection that it had to people. So I definitely see that, and I honestly can't imagine you as a shy child because you've really been, in my experience, on the cutting edge of all things leadership, when it comes to the role of general counsel and being a woman in the practice, particularly some of the experiences you've had in your career.

Debbie Majoras: No, it really is amazing when you think back on the path, but people all along, I think really it was in college where I most started to gain in confidence, and I had some just wonderful professors at that time who had a huge influence on boosting my confidence so that by the time I got to law school at the University of Virginia, having gone to this small liberal arts school that enabled me to kind of spread my wings a little bit, but in a more protective environment. Then, by the time I got to the University of Virginia for law school, I think I was just in a much better position to be able to not only hold my own, but then really excel in ways that I never knew were possible.

Lori Lorenzo: Yeah, well, let's fast forward a little bit from there, because you went into private practice where you were focused on kind of an emerging area of law—technology. You also did some antitrust work and then moved into the Department of Justice in antitrust and ultimately became a presidential appointee for something called data privacy when data privacy was this kind of new and emerging field. I think probably most people didn't even know they needed data privacy. So, in your early career, are there moments that stood out as you followed that path?

Debbie Majoras: Yeah, there are so many when I think back over it. It's been 30 years, which is hard to imagine, but definitely a lot of things that stand out to me. I would say one story that, there's obviously milestones and firsts and great learning experiences and the leadership experiences are really so meaningful. So I'll just give you a quick story from Jones Day as a starter when, not surprisingly, what I've just told you a little bit about my background, I was a very hardworking associate at Jones Day and really loved being in a law firm. I know not all people do, but I found it to be a really rewarding experience, though I was working very hard, and at the time I was also going through some pretty difficult stuff in my personal life, and so that can be difficult. Work can help be a refuge, but you have to be careful not to overdo it. So, one late night, I ended up confiding in the paralegal I had been working with, and I just told her a little bit what was going on, that this was just very hard and very stressful. And the next day she came in and she said, "Can I tell you something, and you promise you won't get mad?" And I said, "Yeah, okay." And she said, "I love you so much more now that I know you're not perfect."

And the reason I tell you that story is because I think it—we talk a lot about authenticity today, authenticity and leadership and the importance of it. And what she was teaching me in that moment was exactly that. That when you can show up to your team as someone who is a true human being who is facing obstacles, who has faced them, and yet that person can still succeed, that tells your team that we can all do that. It doesn't put you, as a leader, in some kind of off to the side where people are looking at you thinking, "Well I can't live like that. I can't do that."

And it also reminded me that perfection is a myth. I've always been, you may have heard me say this, Lori, but I call myself a recovering control freak perfectionist. Because I think so many of us who have succeeded have this control freak instinct, we have this need for perfection. And in fact, it doesn't exist. And it's almost a disease, I think, to strive for it. And what you have to recognize, and I think the more you go through your life, particularly in leadership, you just realize, wow, there is nothing perfect, least of all me, and to try to keep striving for that is false and you'll never be satisfied. So those were really important lessons to learn because at that time I was truly climbing the ladder at Jones Day, wanting to make partner, which I eventually did. And so you really do think more about that and your individual kind of contribution, but in fact you're learning these leadership lessons along the way. And I've really tried to take particularly the authenticity lesson with me in all of the positions that I've had. Because I think if people can identify with you more at a human level, it just makes a huge difference in terms of cutting through some of the crap, so to speak, and just being able to roll up our sleeves together and get some things done. So that's one lesson that I look back on from my time at Jones Day.

Lori Lorenzo: Yeah, I love that story so much for a couple of reasons. One, because as you know, I spent a large part of my career focused on diversity and inclusion, and what I would see is, as we had success, people of color, women, LGBT lawyers moving into partnership roles or general counsel roles and then turning to invest in the generation behind them, it's so important that they remember that to someone who's just meeting you, you perhaps drive a nice car and wear a tailored suit and have a corner office, but you came from somewhere else. And helping people identify with your story does give them that there is a path and a vision forward.

Debbie Majoras: Can I just tell you one other inclusion story that is also a memorable moment for me and an inclusion story that I absolutely love? It doesn't matter where you get to in your career. You still want to be included, and there's just different types of groups and different hierarchies that emerge and so forth. So, when I was at the Federal Trade Commission as chairman, the president, together with China, established something called the US-China strategic dialogue, something like that. And the purpose of it was very prescient, saying we know we're going to face obstacles along the way in this relationship. Let's have regular dialogue, people in the cabinet, so that we know who to call, so that we have the basis for a relationship. And so anyway, they established this, but there was no cabinet-level person in the US doing competition and intellectual property. So, I was asked to join this team. So, you can imagine it was a huge honor for me to be able to go to these meetings. We'd meet once a year in China and once a year in the US.

And having the president of the nation and so on, it was a very, very great honor for me. But I remember when we were meeting once at the state department and what ends up happening is all the people in our cabinet know each other, but I don't know them very well. So, what did I do? I did what you did in high school, or whatever, I sort of hung back on the edge of the circle. And it was Dr. Condoleezza Rice, Secretary Rice at the time, one of my favorite people of all time, who I don't know well but have known a little over the years, who saw me there. She's the host. She's the secretary of state. She says, "Oh, hey, everybody. Do you all know Chairman Majoras from the Federal Trade Commission? Debbie, come on in here and make sure you know everybody." And that is such a simple gesture and yet it meant the world to me. I was part of the group. I was part of the team. And she made sure I knew it, and she made sure everyone else knew it. And that is just a wonderful lesson of inclusion, because we can have programs for inclusion, we can have mandates for inclusion, but that personal one to one—we all need to be thinking about it—that's what makes an inclusive environment. And I've always remembered that and been grateful to her for that.

Lori Lorenzo: Yeah, it just makes a difference. One small act can make such a huge difference. Well, let's talk for a minute, I mean, we just went from talking about the shy five-year-old, reluctant to go into kindergarten, to this confident woman who's entering the meeting side by side with Condoleezza Rice and the president of the United States and the highest level of Chinese government. What was that like? And then on a topic where really everything was groundbreaking. So, tell us more about that.

Debbie Majoras: It was very exciting, for sure, and it can be a little bit nerve wracking. So, what I found is that whenever something could be nerve wracking or make me nervous, I go back to my first principles, which have always been, no one will be more prepared than me on the topic. I will know all that I need to know on this topic. And I've always been very open, I mean, almost shameless in asking for help. I actually was at the Federal Trade Commission, I learned in doing press conferences that actually the three most confident words in the English language are "I don't know."

And when you don't, then say it and figure it out, or have somebody help you figure it out. And I think that's really, really important. So, I asked for help. I did my homework, I did my learning. And then even while we were doing it, I listened and watched a lot to see how people were handling themselves. And it really is so funny having traveled around the world so often and dealt with people in different cultures. It was so funny at the time because there was obviously some tension between these two countries, although not what it is today. And also there was public criticism of our president, George W. Bush, over things and so forth, and including foreign policy. And yet I remember one meeting when we got together in Washington and the Chinese delegation was headed by the vice chairman of the party, who was a woman at the time, a really powerful and dynamic woman in China, and she went over to the president and whispered something to him and he smiled and said, "Yeah, you know, sure." And what she was saying to him was, "Each person in my delegation would like to have his or her picture taken with you." And so, one by one, they went up and they all got their photos taken with President Bush. And

moments like that remind you that we're all really just people and we all think this is really cool. You're never like all that and a bag of chips. I mean, you're not too cool, it's, enjoy these moments and take these moments. And I was just really delighted to make a contribution. I think competition policy and intellectual property policy are extremely important in a market economy and certainly in a global one. So my dialogue was focused on that, but it was exciting and as super cool as you might imagine.

Lori Lorenzo: Was this before or after you were the presidential appointee, and I am going to get the name of that council wrong, but you served for a period of time on the first Data Privacy Commission for the president?

Debbie Majoras: Yes, I co-chaired, and I think you might be referring to the Identity Theft Task Force. Yeah, this was very interesting actually, because when I arrived at the Federal Trade Commission, I didn't have experience on the consumer protection side. My experience came from the antitrust side and you could say that agency is basically about half and half in its agenda. But clearly one of the very urgent topics on the FTC's agenda was identity theft. That's narrow, but that's what consumers were worried about. And that just was kind of the portal into this much broader issue that was just coming like a tsunami of the protection of data and the protection of information generally, and what we know today as information security.

And so, it was clear that, because there were no federal laws on the issue, but the FTC had a broad mandate to protect consumers, that we needed to show some leadership in this area. And so that was really very early in my tenure, we took that on. We brought some of the first cases against companies for having inadequate data protections. And really what it came down to, at that time, Lori, the way I looked at it is, I don't think the government should protect consumers from themselves, meaning we're all going to make some dumb mistakes and they may have some consequences, but what the government needs to protect consumers from is when they really can't protect themselves. So, the way I looked at it is if I go to a store and give my credit card or I go online today—we weren't doing that as much in the early 2000s, but we are now—I can't negotiate individually with you, vendor, to tell me that you'll protect my credit card number. I need to know. I need to have that trust in you. And so, what we were saying is companies need to have a baseline of security, and consumers need to be able to count on that. So that's really what we were doing. And it was new and different at the time. All along we were talking to Congress about possibly passing legislation, not only on how to protect, but on what happens when you don't and data breaches happen. That still hasn't happened, although states have legislated it.

So, what happened along that journey was that President Bush, who actually had a lot of populism in him, he really cared about people and wanted to make sure that they were safe and taken care of. He became very interested in the issue of identity theft, and he asked me to co-chair that committee that he set up. He wanted the attorney general to also co-chair it with me so we would have someone at cabinet level. And we did that together, and we kicked it off by going over to the White House and meeting with the president about identity theft and that—it was funny, originally we were going to meet in Crawford, Texas, one summer. And I remember one of the president's aides calling me and saying, "You're going to need to go to Crawford." And I said, "Well, I don't mind going to Crawford." And his response was, "That's because you've never been there."

But we never got to go to Crawford because tragically Hurricane Katrina hit and then Hurricane Rita. And that was a very difficult time of dealing with those tragic events in our country, but eventually we got back to it and we met at the White House. And even that one backfired on me a little bit because the president's aides told us, "Well, we want to have some victims of identity theft come to this meeting because we want the president to hear firsthand what this is like."

And so, my staff gathered some folks who had really been hit hard, and mind you, at that time we were receiving about 20,000 calls a week at the FTC on either fears of identity theft or people saying it had happened. And police departments locally were not used to dealing with this as real theft, so people just didn't know where to turn. So, this was a very big issue for us. So, we gather these people, we're all in the Roosevelt Room at the White House with the president. And they start telling their stories, and it completely backfires on me because he turns to me and he looks and he says, "Deb, aren't you supposed to be helping the situation? What are you doing?" I said, "Oh no! He thinks I'm not doing anything." So, I assured him that we were, and then when we finally left that meeting, all of those folks came up and said, "Oh, Chairman Majoras, we're so sorry we got you into trouble with your boss." I said, "Well, it's quite all right. We made our point that this is an important issue for the American people." And so, we were working very hard actually to protect them in the first instance, but then to be there to help them when in fact an incident did arise.

Lori Lorenzo: What a great story. I honestly don't know what I would do if the president of the United States turned to me and said, "What are you doing?" That's a tricky moment.

Debbie Majoras: It was a tricky moment and then the fun thing was that it's sort of interesting, when the president has meetings, of course, things are being recorded for history and so forth. And so, they allow the media to come in very briefly. So, you have your meeting and then they say, "Okay, bring them in." And in this frenzied, quick moment, all of these reporters come rushing into the room and they've got their cameras and whatever. And the president makes a statement and then, they go, and he talked about our meeting and my mother saw it on the news and she was just dumbfounded. She said, "The president of the United States just called my daughter 'Deb' on national TV!"

Lori Lorenzo: What a great moment for you and your mom.

Debbie Majoras: It was great.

Lori Lorenzo: Let's transition into your move from government/public service back into private practice and your role at Procter & Gamble. So, you've been there for some time now and have kind of grown in that role. You have a fairly large team.

Tell me a little bit about your role there, your team. Just kind of set the stage for us about Procter & Gamble.

Debbie Majoras: Sure. Well, it was an interesting entry to Procter & Gamble because Procter & Gamble is a promote-from-within company and rarely brought anybody senior in from the outside. And so even as I was interviewing, quite honestly, I'm not sure, I kind of felt this ambivalence, do we want to bring somebody in, and they certainly had a very good internal candidate as well. And so, when finally I was offered the job at Procter by the CEO, he said, "I have a job to offer you, but not the one you interviewed for." And I said, "Excuse me?" And he said, "I'm asking you to come in not as the chief legal officer, but at a vice president level in legal because, given our history as a promote-from-within company, we're just very worried about whether people will accept you. But we think that if you come in and work side by side with them, they will, and they'll see it and they'll see what we see." And so, it was sort of an interesting moment for me to decide, was I going to do that. Your friends and your family are always your greatest cheerleaders and they don't ever want you to sell yourself short or look like you're taking a step backward. But I also got some good advice from people about kind of searching within myself, what did I really want? Did I eventually, sure, I wanted to be the chief legal officer of Procter & Gamble, I had decided that, but you can work your way into things, and sometimes that's what you have to do. And I was influenced too by back when I'd been at the Justice Department when my boss there left and I was in the running to get the job to run the antitrust division at Justice, and I didn't get it. One of my colleagues did, and I was very hurt at the time. But the attorney general asked me to stay and I did. And it became one of the best years of my career. I had such a wonderful time working with my former peer, Hugh, who was now my boss, and to this day we are the closest of friends.

And so, I just learned a lot about how your resume on a graph may look like it's a straight line up, but it never is. And there's jagged lines underneath that straight one. And so, you just have to think about what's important to you and not just that next rung that you want to grab on to so desperately. So, I'd learned a lot about that. I got some good advice from some other people.

And I said, "Yes, I will do this. I will take this job and go in and work my way." Now mind you, there was no contract or anything. It was, I had to prove myself. So interesting entry, wonderful people on the legal team and the executive team at Procter, but a very lonely, kind of a lonely first year, it's just the way it is, the currency at P&G is relationships, just as it is in most places, frankly, but especially in a promote from within. And so, I had a lot of work to do in that regard, and frankly, I tell people this when they're doing new stuff. I say, "Hey, I don't care how old you are. You're going to walk in on the first day and you're going to get that feeling in your stomach that says, 'What if the other kids won't eat lunch with me?' You just own it, you know? We all feel that way."

And so, the first thing that happened when I got to Procter was, unfortunately, they had a Dawn Raid, which is the way that the antitrust authorities in Europe begin an investigation, they call it the Dawn Raid. So an antitrust case related to the laundry industry, and lo and behold, no one knew this was going to happen, but I was an antitrust expert.

So guess what? Talk about rolling up your sleeves in that first year. I did and was really able to, I'm happy to say, help the company work their way through that. And there's no question that when things are new and you're trying to make your way, that being able to do something that you know how to do feels a lot like putting on your old pair of jeans and that's a comfortable feeling. So I would never wish that on the company, but it was something that I was able to sink my teeth into.

I got promoted to chief legal officer about 18 months after that, and I have a global team of over 500 people, legal government relations and brand protection, which is our anticounterfeit group. It is a superb, world class team, I'm thrilled to say, all over the world. It's incredible. We have people on the ground in over 40 countries. And so, it's a lot to keep track of. But I can sleep at night because I have really a very talented team.

Lori Lorenzo: Well, thank you for sharing those kind of difficult stories, you know, the time you got passed over and stayed and this invitation to join Procter & Gamble but at a level that it sounds like some of your friends and colleagues felt was maybe not the right choice. Because I think so many of us have had those moments, whether it's the performance review that isn't what you hoped it would be, or the company makes a decision that is opposite of what you had hoped for your own career. And I feel like the normal first instinct is to say, "Well, I'm going to leave. I'm going to find something else. I'm not valued here." But I agree with you that if we can find a way to push through that and almost redefine our value in that moment, or what we can learn in the new situation, it just opens this door to all new possibilities and I think takes our relationships to the next level because people appreciate that we're supporting them and their successes.

Debbie Majoras: Without a doubt, and two things on that. One is that there is no question that I had built a pretty strong relationship with the career staff at the Department of Justice, but after that, because they knew, they watched it, they knew I wanted it, they knew I didn't get it. And sometimes in life, that's the most embarrassing thing, especially if you're in a public position. Everybody in antitrust bar knew I didn't get it, but nobody's ever looking at you as much as you think they are. But I do feel like my relationships with them were strengthened because they believed what was true, which is when I swallowed my pride and my hurt, I remembered how much I loved the job, how much I loved serving. And I loved the mission there, and we were doing it together. So that was definitely a strengthening.

And then the second thing I will tell you is that when the White House personnel office eventually, like two years later, went to the president to say, "We need a new chairman for the Federal Trade Commission," and they proposed my name, they told him that I had

been passed over at the Justice Department, but that I had dealt with it with grace and had agreed to stay and worked hard, which showed them, as they said to him, that I wasn't just in it for myself, but in fact, I really was a loyal member of the team who cared about the mission. And so that's a lesson too, which is every one of us is going to have disappointments, every one of us is going to have tough stuff in life. It is not whether you do or you don't, because you will, but how you handle it. That's what people are watching. That's what people see. Can you handle it with grace and dignity or do you go off in a huff and say forget it. And so, I'm not saying that I didn't think about going off in a huff and saying forget it. But the point is, and it was the same with Procter, what a wonderful 12 years I've had at Procter and to think that I would have missed out on that just because they asked me, frankly, to do what I think I do best, which is work my way to it, learning along the way.

Lori Lorenzo: Well, we have to practice the skill of handling difficult situations with grace because sometimes we know they're coming or we suspect they could come, if we're one of two good candidates, it could go either way. Sometimes they take us by surprise, like this global pandemic we're facing. So, I want to talk a little bit about that. I mean, Procter & Gamble makes products that people are in desperate need of, they want, and are really critical to the way people navigate through this health challenge. What has it been like to be a leader at Procter & Gamble right now?

Debbie Majoras: It's been another very intense time. I always say Procter & Gamble is really terrific in crisis. It's a bunch of very smart, creative people, and for most people that comes out in a time of crisis. And also a group of people with enormous passion for actually wanting to serve consumers around the world. And so, all those things just really, really came together, but it has been intense. I can't say was, we're still in it, and we may be for quite some time.

So one of the things that made it so intense for my team is, if you think about starting in the March-April time frame, you had, China had gotten through a good part of the pandemic from their part. And we frankly learned a lot from that because we have eight plants in China serving Chinese and other Asia consumers, and we learned how to keep employees safe during the pandemic. And we brought those learnings forward and to other countries as the virus started to spread. But the first order of business is protect your employees. Our second was keep making products because we're making soap and toilet paper and feminine care and diapers and things that people absolutely need during this time, and household cleaners, of course. And then, third, what do communities need. So that was the strategy. Those were the three pillars of what we immediately said were going to be our priorities.

Then for my team, particularly because I have government relations in addition to legal, if you think about it, every day it was, okay, the Philippines has just issued an order locking down the entire country. And then it was, okay, now Saudi. Okay, now the state of California. And so it was literally like running a control center where all of our people around the world are going in immediately to these governments and saying, "We need to keep operating. Here's why, because here's what we make, and here's what your people want, and we know how to do it and keep the employees safe."

Governments had no playbook for this. They didn't know. They don't have a regulation on the shelf that says, "Okay, during a pandemic, do the following things: temperature checks, masks, social distancing." But we had done it. So, we were helping them. We were saying, "Look, here's the playbook. Here's how we think we can do this, and we'll show you how we can do it." So it was just unbelievable in the beginning, in terms of trying to keep—but I think at any given time, we had at least 98 percent of our plants up and running. And so, the team did a phenomenal job. I mean, night and day working to keep that. So that has been really gratifying. The other thing that we really did focus on is what more can we do at Procter? And so, we worked very quickly and our R&D people are superb, the people in our plants, legal helped support them as well as other parts of the company. We started making masks. We'd never made masks before. We started to make hand sanitizer. We started to make plastic face shields on some of our lines. And that took some ingenuity, that took some good regulatory help, but it was kind of, okay, what does the world need that we can help supply, and so that was another terrific aspect of it. So it has been intense, it continues to be. And now as the world is hitting an economic downturn as a result of all this, there's still a lot of work to do.

Lori Lorenzo: Yeah, so I want to talk about that shift you just talked about. So, making face masks and hand sanitizers. Sometimes we hear from the business that legal gets in the way, legal moves too slow, they always want to talk about risk. As the head of this huge legal and government affairs function, how did you provide guidance to your team to help them get to move that fast on things that are so important?

Debbie Majoras: It's a great question. What's interesting is I think it actually began well before the pandemic in this sense. Just the analogy would be when we had governments that were willing to quickly trust us, that wasn't because of just what we said to them that day, that was because of what we had done for years and years in building our reputation with them and building relationships. And so that's your job, day in and day out.

Similarly, our job, day in and day out, has been to help our business understand that we're an enabler actually. People drive faster when they have guard rails around a curve, and it's our job to say, "What do you need? What do you want? And how can we help you get there? Which I think our team really does a terrific job on. So first and foremost, we already had some trust built that not everybody likes it when they hear legal coming, but our leaders and others, we've gotten them to a pretty good place there. But, yes, it was in part that I think our lawyers, together with our government relations folks, really are so smart, frankly, and come in and say, "Okay, here are the things we need to think about," and they're not strictly legal things, because most problems are not strictly legal or not, they're business problems with legal

implications and vice versa. So really coming in with creative solutions for how we could get things done and moving quickly and really being a true member of the team, as opposed to somebody who sits in the back of the room and waits for the discussion to end and then says, "Hey, hold on a second. You can't do this. You can't do that."

And then the final thing that I would say on this that also helps a lot, and I think this helps in any of the work that we try to do today as corporations when we're doing good works and what we call citizenship, our citizenship agenda at P&G is the closer you can stay to your own equity, the more powerful you will be.

We helped a small company, for example, try to figure out how to make ventilators and how to get their FDA approvals, or whatever, and we were able to help there. But we don't have the kind of lines that are going to make ventilators, but we can make plastic face shields. So, the analogy there is, what are you good at, what can you do? Help support others at what they're good at and what they can do. And if every corporation can make contributions based on their equity, then we will really have made very significant contributions to society.

So, because we have experience with trying to stick to our equity, that also helps the businesspeople and it helps legal to be able to support that and even our outside counsel in terms of which regulators we need to go to, and do they already know us.

Lori Lorenzo: Well, so we have this global pandemic that impacts your plants all over the globe. And you said a few minutes ago, you have folks on your team alone in 40 different countries. And then we're kind of struggling to deal with this and aligning on a way forward. And then in the United States, we also add to that a national movement around inequality and racial injustice. And I feel like that's been a sentiment that's been around, but all of a sudden it was amplified and people that maybe hadn't been part of that conversation were now part. And I feel like corporations, even those that had made some good progress or had strong statements on the topic, were moved to do even more, and Procter & Gamble's been a leader in this. For our listeners who haven't seen them, Procter & Gamble's put out a series of videos on the topic, and I definitely would recommend you look them up.

But, Debbie, they push the envelope a little bit. And so, as the head lawyer at the company, talk to me about what it's like to sit in the meetings that talk about how Procter & Gamble is going to address these issues of social unrest and injustice?

Debbie Majoras: It's really changed a lot in a very short period of time, in about a decade. And I think maybe coming out of the Great Recession and so forth, perhaps we were all changed by that. But really truly when I first got to Procter, there were still real debates around whether we would use our company name as getting out there on things, because we're a series of brands. Tide. Pampers. Olay. And whether that could be harmful because then you could hurt all your individual brands. Whereas if for one brand, something bad happens, it maybe doesn't affect all those. That debate was still going on when I first came to the company. So, this has all really happened very quickly and I think what helps, before we go into those individual meetings to decide what we're going to do, is that we've aligned on our shared values and our shared approach forward.

The fact of the matter is, what's happened in our society is that people demand that corporations be a pillar of society that is helping to push change, that is helping the world know here's how we do the right thing, here's how we treat employees. We are the employers of so many people. So, we should have a role and a strong role in society. And gone are the days when companies can just say, "We don't talk about social issues." We're in social issues. So now, that said, I come back to something I said a little while ago, which is, we believe that you can't do everything, that you can't be out there on every single issue. We still have to make soap and run the business, but the more that we decide on our citizenship platform, according to what equities are that we already have, the better we'll be at it. Whereas if we choose something that has nothing to do with who we are, then what do we know about it?

So, when it comes to the issues around equality and, in particular today, racial equality, look, we have people working for us that represent 140 nationalities around the world. We sell products into 180 countries. So, as we see it, we want to reflect our employees and we want to reflect the consumers to whom we are selling. So, for us, the issues around equality, that's a very easy match for us. We are very devoted to having a diverse employee population and to having a very inclusive environment and to help promoting that in society.

So all that said, when you have the discussions around, are we going to do these sorts of things, and doing those ads, I know you're referring to The Talk, The Look, and now The Choice, if you think about it, advertising is a huge platform for us. At any given time, we are either the largest or one of the largest advertisers in the world. And so that gives us a very large voice in advertising. So why wouldn't we use that? And that's one of the reasons why we have.

And then substantively as we talk about it, one of the things that we have to ask ourselves is, before you're out there taking a position, which could be perceived as somebody telling other people what to do, you better have your own house in order. And that's something that I in my job am constantly pushing on, just like I would in any other kind of advertising claim. We're not perfect, we're far from it in our own diversity and equality, but we're working toward being in a much better place. We're in a, I think, very good place now, but we're working toward more. We realize that we're not perfect, that we make mistakes. We're listening to our employees right now, just like I know a lot of other companies are, and trying to learn more about what we can do, because this is a moment. This is a moment in history when I think there's an opportunity and Procter & Gamble has decided, I don't know if you saw, we just sponsored the *John Lewis Tribute* on television the other night. We have decided that we are going to be a part of ensuring equality for everyone.

Lori Lorenzo: Yeah, thank you. I want to narrow the conversation to your legal department because when we first met, you were on the board of an organization, The Leadership Council on Legal Diversity, that was new at the time and really focused on the issue of diversity in the profession. And so, I want to just ask you what you've seen or done that's been successful because so many GCs are looking, and continue to look, for ways to build their own D&I efforts. And law firms, I think, look to leaders like you to help guide their steps with respect to diversity and inclusion. So, any thoughts or just things you've seen that work or you're excited about in that arena?

Debbie Majoras: Yeah. We often talk about it in the order of diversity and inclusion. I mean, it's more of a circle, I think, a virtuous circle, hopefully. But I really think it does start with building an inclusive environment. It's very hard to ask people of all different diverse backgrounds and experiences to come join you if the feeling they're getting is this is a closed-off environment. So for me, it really does start with setting the tone of an inclusive environment where people's views are welcome. And there are a lot of different ways to do that. I try to role model it as much as possible. For example, just even in meetings when you realize that the most junior person there is not saying anything, you call out that person specifically and say, "I know you know a lot about this topic. I would love to hear what you have to say."

Everything from that to small gestures that I make as a leader toward all of my people. And letting them know, it's just really funny, you never want to get too far away from remembering what it's like to get an email from the leader of the organization saying, Thank you," or "Wow, that was really special," or what have you. Those things really matter to people of all different experience levels and ages, so never forgetting that and knowing that your position of leadership has some power to it that you want to extend. So, I think it really starts with that. And then the thing that I think about, for example, on the hiring front and making sure that we're creating a team that is diverse that will add just such richness to our discussions and to our work, and to our company. You really have to make a strong effort to hire from diverse pools. People worry about—people are constantly having the debate about quotas, not quotas and, like most people I don't like that word. I think it can be offensive, depending on how it's used. But what I have found for sure is that when you insist that before you hire, before you promote whatever it is you're looking at, outside counsel, if you insist on a diverse pool, diverse in many different ways, in all different types of ways, if you insist on that, you'll get it. And if you get it, you will hire really great people. And so it's just a matter of sometimes it takes a little bit more work and looking in different places because we get in ruts about whether it's hiring from these schools, or looking here, or looking at—no, no, this is what we want. Let's insist on it. And when we have, we've had greater success. So that I think is just a really good lesson that I've learned and something that I take forward.

And then I think it's making sure that we're, as leaders, and I can't do it all alone, but I have great senior vice presidents too and others. This is a one-to-one endeavor. People don't leave companies, they leave managers. I mean, that's who their company is to them. And so, if we're not doing the job on a one-to-one constant basis, making sure that people understand this is your value in the organization, this is what you're doing that is really good for us. And in addition, letting them know quite candidly what's not making the mark. We hear that sometimes. I've heard that from people in minority status or from women—I'm afraid people aren't always telling me what I need to hear because they're afraid.

And I just thought about this the other day, because I got this beautiful note from a very talented African American lawyer who had worked with me earlier in her career and thanking me. It was just absolutely beautiful to hear in this time. And part of what she was saying was, "I never thought you were treating me differently," and among what she said was "You gave me constructive feedback. You were determined to make me better at what I do." And we have to be doing that. There's no—anytime anybody asks me, "What are you most proud of in this career?" without question, the answer is, "I'm proud of this person who's doing this now. And this person and that." I mean, it's not even a close call. So, if you know that, then don't wait till the end of your career and look back. Act on it now. So that means that a lot of my time should be spent on helping these people and developing these people so that they can be just the absolute best they can be.

So that is the job of leaders. And when you do that, that is inclusive, in and of itself, because you will recognize that certain people need certain types of discussions, and so on and so forth. And so that, to me, those are really, really important aspects of our diversity and inclusion. Just look around and make sure no one appears to be left behind.

Lori Lorenzo: Such good advice and your passion on the topic comes through loud and clear. And actually, I think it's probably good advice in general, and especially right now because what I'm hearing from many leaders is, "We're concerned about our people. I can't walk down the hall and check on someone by popping in the office or noticing them at the coffee pot or water cooler, or the lunchroom." So, in terms of having that leadership drive to have that one-on-one connection and invest, are you seeing it differently or what advice do you have for leaders in this virtual area, because it doesn't look like we're going to get back to the office anytime soon, really.

Debbie Majoras: It's tough, and it's tougher for some than for others. Obviously we're all individuals, but in addition, for example, in Latin America right now, things are very, very tough in terms of the conditions on the virus and also the lockdowns. So, I have people in Panama who live in high rises and the restrictions are very, very tight so they can't walk their dogs, they can't go running, they have to literally be in almost all the time, which, especially if you live alone, is a very, very tough thing to be doing for months on end. So I think it's really a couple of things. First, we just have to recognize it. I have been talking to my team about wellness for a long time because it's something I've learned over the years. I wasn't necessarily

good at it earlier in my career where it was just a work-work-work drive. But in terms of now, the way I look at it, oh my gosh, we're all just so much more effective, and as you get older, you just absolutely have to make sure you're looking after your own wellness. So, it's something we've really worked at already in our group in terms of giving people the tools. And I have a wellness committee. And so, for example, that committee has been running webinars and bringing in materials for people and that sort of thing. So, kind of formally, we've done some things. But then I think the most important thing is, it starts with our leaders of people, and they have to be checking in on their people on a one-to-one basis. Look, we're in a profession that loves to be kind of macho, truthfully, like, oh, we're all so tough and we all can work so hard. And, for crying out loud, that's why, unfortunately, in the legal profession we have way too much alcoholism and drug abuse and mental health issues, and we just have to get over it. Stop it. I mean, it's not about toughness. We're tough. It's about taking care of yourself and each other as a human being. And so, what I always say to my people is take care of each other. We have to take care of each other, and that's that. And so, I really am working with the leaders to make sure that they're checking in on their people and starting the kinds of conversations so that their people can open up, and they are. I mean, we have people breaking down because they're in tears when they have these conversations because they're just, it's just wrought with emotion over this. It's scary. It's weird to be locked up like this. Human beings need human contact. It's hard not to even be able to hug people when you see them. I mean, I'm a hugger and a lot of people are.

As humans, we don't even know exactly how it all impacts us to be living such a different life without warning very, very quickly. So, I think it starts with the one to one, but then it's also just making gestures. So, a couple of things that we've done. I told you about Latin America, so two weeks ago I said to my leadership team, "Hey, I think Latin America is really, really having a tough time. Why don't we make a video?" And so we each filmed ourselves with a message to our Latin American legal team. People were in tears and just so appreciative because, that's not the same as one to one, but what we're saying is, "All of your leaders in this organization are thinking of you and caring about you." And that goes a long way with people, and we should never forget that it does.

Oh, and by the way, I should just add before that, which is why I thought about doing the video, my LA general counsel made me do a [video] dance with him that he could use with the team to entertain them, so you never know what you're going to need to do for your team during these times.

Lori Lorenzo: Well, and I can't agree more, Debbie, because at the moment where we're kind of expecting people to live and operate and function under these immensely challenging circumstances, we're also saying, by the way, we need you to solve these company problems. And the lawyers in particular, I say lawyer, people call lawyers when the world is a mess, in the middle of divorces and bankruptcies and these horrible situations, and we turn to lawyers and we say, "Fix it and take care of this and make sure it's okay." And for the most part, lawyers rise to the challenge. But right now it's just a challenge from every direction—personal, professional, social—and it's heartening to know we have leaders, good leaders, sending videos and reminding everybody in all earnest to kind of connect one on one and remember that at the end of the day, we're all people trying to make the best of these situations.

Debbie Majoras: And looking for the silver linings as well. We did another video earlier on with the leadership team where we asked a series of questions and sent that to the whole team and the whole team loved it. But one of it was, "What are the things that you're enjoying right now?" For some people it's extremely difficult, but some people are really enjoying being with their family and like playing board games at night, which is something that their teenage or college-aged kids would never do with them. And I've just spent months on end with John, my husband, something that we had never ever in our entire lives done because we both travel so much, and so looking for the silver linings. It's hard to say to people, "Hey, it's not so bad. Look for the silver lining." But when you can talk together as a team about your own silver linings, then I do think it's helpful, and so communication is absolutely the key.

Lori Lorenzo: Yeah, I think you're right. Communication really is underlying it all. And I think there's no such thing as over communication when we're doing it with the intent of caring for and looking out for others. So, I have just one more question for you, kind of on this note of silver linings. What are you optimistic about? What gives you hope for your future and for the future of our profession.

Debbie Majoras: Wow. Big question. Do you want me to try to say this without crying?

Lori Lorenzo: I won't be mad at you if you cry, but I'll probably have to cry with you.

Debbie Majoras: Look, I'm optimistic for our country because it starts with "we the people." And we the people is such a powerful force. And if we just remember the power that we have and don't look to others, even people we've elected to take care of us all the time, and we come together and find solutions. That's what gives me hope. We have an incredibly resilient and smart and creative group of people, and that gives me a lot of hope. I think in my company and with my team, wow, it's just hard to know what their next act could be, because I'm so fortunate that every day I get to work with these people who not only are so creative and so smart and such great problem solvers for the company, but they're just tremendous human beings, and they teach me something every day about being that person that I want to show up as. And so, and then finally for myself, wow, what a blessing that I'm surrounded by those people, but also in my life, I'm surrounded, and when times have been really difficult, and I'm a very blessed person, but we all go through tough stuff. It's just one day at a time. Everything always looks better to me in the morning, and I think honestly once you go through as many things as so many of us have and you get that little—you don't have certain things that you had when you were

younger that you wish you still had but what you do have is some kind of perspective and judgment. And I think too during this time, if you read enough history and so forth, and you recognize cycles, I think recognizing that and knowing that things are going to change and they're changing rapidly, but there will always be a lot of good in that change as well. And we can make good happen in that change. And so, that does continue to give me optimism and hope, even when some of these days are seeming rather dark.

Lori Lorenzo: Yeah, thank you. I have great hope and optimism, because I think our profession has more folks like you leading the charge and investing in the group of lawyers coming up behind you. And of course, for my benefit, taking time to talk to me and I've always appreciated that you've never been too busy to answer my calls or emails and, of course, you've taken the time to be with us here today. So the leadership of our legal profession gives me great hope. And I agree, we the people are strong, and we have the opportunity to make good choices and set a path that's good for our communities. And really, that is, to me, the quintessential definition of a lawyer. We protect and defend and we serve.

Debbie Majoras: Really well said, Lori, really well said. We are so fortunate to have you in our midst, and your energy and passion are always contagious, and it's always just a great pleasure to be with you and around you, and I will look forward to doing it when it's not virtual.

Lori Lorenzo: Likewise. Thank you so much, Debbie. Again, I just can't tell you how much this means to me. I really appreciate your time. Thank you.

Thank you, Debbie. I'm deeply honored by your gift of time and insights. What I heard was a story of a leader who knows that can't isn't an option. A leader that deeply understands the need for human connection and the value of one-on-one engagement, and as a result, empowers others to make bold decisions. Debbie, the story you told about Condoleezza Rice's introduction really struck me as a pivotal moment, one where you learned firsthand how important sponsorship can be, and I've seen you take this lesson to heart and invest in others this way over the years. I can't thank you enough for sharing the moments of vulnerability and triumph.

I hope you enjoyed hearing this episode as much as I enjoyed interviewing Debbie. If you're curious about some of the topics discussed, such as the role of the CLO in times of crisis or otherwise, I encourage you to visit our Chief Legal Officer program site on Deloitte.com. You can also listen to the Resilient podcast on Apple podcast, SoundCloud, Stitcher, Google Play, and even Spotify. If there are other topics you'd like to hear from the chief legal officer's perspective, please reach out to me on LinkedIn. Until next time, stay safe and remain resilient.