

ATTORNEY SPOTLIGHT SERIES

Attorney C.J. Gomes Discovers Her Own Path to Partnership



In just a matter of weeks, COVID-19 changed the way much of the world works.

But for Florida law firm [Boyd & Jenerette](#), the shift to remote work options started well before the first trace of COVID showed up in the news.

For this civil litigation defense firm, adding more flexibility to their employees' work options was motivated by their goal of working more efficiently and cost-effectively for their insurance company and self-insured clients.

And for Attorney C.J. Gomes, the transition couldn't have come at a better time: just as her children were old enough for her to consider returning to life as a full-time attorney.

“I wanted to practice law, but not the way it’s always been done.”

Gomes wanted flexibility. She wanted to be a lawyer and a present parent.

She discussed this with one of the firm's progressive shareholders, who told her she didn't need to be in an office every day. “Not with technology the way it is now,” she said.

Even before COVID, Gomes' entire team transitioned to working remotely.

While many traditionalists would have scoffed at the very idea, Gomes made it work for her firm, her clients, *and* her family.

“Working remotely, I had the most profitable year yet.”

Having two young children will change anyone's life, but especially someone in a demanding profession like the law.

Even though her working hours are far from traditional, it seems that everything has changed for the better for C.J. Gomes.

It's no longer impossible to be a present parent *and* a working professional. Gomes schedules her children's schedules and working hours around each other.

“No one’s micromanaging me and saying I have to do things a certain way.”

“I think giving people that kind of autonomy is a wonderful thing. It allows them to set their own schedule, the schedule that works for them.”

Working remotely, Gomes saw her most profitable billing year, brought a new client to the firm, and was offered a partner position. She credits the firm’s progressiveness for providing her with a customized path to success.

Working remotely also brought benefits to her clients. The firm can now retain the most skilled professionals, regardless of location or personal schedule preference or needs. “Our clients are reaping the benefits of flexibility, talent and representation from attorneys with a better work/life balance.”

“Flexibility is huge for diversity in our profession.”

While Gomes and her clients have benefitted greatly from her firm’s progressive outlook, she’s even more excited about what it means for the profession, and for those who might have never considered becoming lawyers before.

“We’ve definitely seen an uptick in female lawyers because of it,” she said. “It’s more inclusive. It’s bringing in people who maybe wouldn’t do this otherwise.”

“I hope other firms will recognize this, implement changes and give similar options to their employees.”

“If you have a plan and you work hard at it, you don’t have to do it the way the generation before did. It’s completely different now, and COVID only sped that up.”

Of course, COVID and changing attitudes alone couldn’t make such a dramatic change in working arrangements possible. For Boyd & Jenerette, success with the flexible working model can be at least partially attributed to the technology investment they made even before COVID came along.

“I pull up cases while I’m sitting in school car line, with one of my kids asleep in the back seat.”

Thanks to the Lexis® app on her phone, Gomes doesn’t have to choose between taking care of her children and being available to her clients when they need help.

She takes client calls while sitting in car line at her children’s school. “Most of the time, my clients don’t know I’m picking up my kids at school.” Gomes said. She’s even pulled case law from the Lexis® app while in the grocery store.

“I’m on Lexis every day. I think the app is a huge resource and very user-friendly.”

“It adds to how efficiently I can work and how much I can get done in a day for my clients.”

That’s high praise coming from someone who’s experienced the level of success C.J. Gomes has.

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