

# Megan Muir: Senior Vice President of Corporate Development and General Counsel for RadioFrame Networks

GCC Profile

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## Megan Muir: Senior Vice President of Corporate Development and General Counsel for RadioFrame Networks

By Kenneth Davis

After working at two law firms, Megan Muir became interested in working in-house because she wanted to "learn more about the business and operational side of my client."

"As outside counsel, or 'outhouse' counsel, as some would have it, I saw a snapshot view of many different clients," Muir said. "In-house, I have gained a much deeper understanding and have a much deeper involvement in the running of the company."



Megan Muir

Muir joined RadioFrame Networks, which designs and makes wireless telecommunications equipment, as general counsel in 2001. As general counsel, Muir handles a broad range of matters, including corporate partnerships, securities, intellectual property rights, contracts, and employment.

"Just about everything we do as a business comes across my desk or that of the

tennisc lawyer working with me, she said. I also get help from our outside counsel, Craig Sherman of Wilson Sonsini, when needed."

Muir discussed the operations of RadioFrame (headquartered in Redmond, WA) in more detail:

"A non-technical way to think about our products is as miniature cell towers," she explained. "We make cellular-base stations that are very small, allowing a wireless carrier to improve coverage and increase capacity and, soon, the ability to have a mini-cell site in your business or home. No more dropped calls!"

She said RadioFrame's investors include cellular pioneer Craig McCaw and venture capitalist funds VantagePoint Venture Partners and Ignition Partners.

Muir said some of the more prominent issues she's handled at RadioFrame include the company's partnership deal with Nokia, the world's largest manufacturer of mobile telephones, and its commercial agreements with Sprint Nextel, one of the largest telecommunications companies in the world.

She said dealing with employment matters is one of the more challenging aspects of her job.

"These can be some of the most challenging issues, not due to the legal complexity but because the issues are so personal for the people involved," she said. "I've had success in resolving such problems in a way that I believe left everyone involved feeling respected and satisfied."

She said the challenge she faces on a daily basis is balancing her workload:

"Prioritizing the many different things on my plate at any given time," Muir said. "Each group within the company has its own hottest issue to be addressed. I think hard about how best to accomplish the goals of the company overall while juggling immediate needs of each area of the company."

Muir discussed what she enjoys most about her job:

"I love the fact that I am constantly learning something new," she said. "For example, I often will need to understand a new technology in order to structure a potential partnering deal, and I need to have a sense of the market dynamics to know what type of leverage we might have in a given circumstance. I've learned about, and continue to learn about, all aspects of our business, from the design phase to manufacturing, purchasing, finance and accounting—too much learning there!"

Muir studied cultural anthropology at Pitzer College, a small, private liberal arts college in Claremont, CA. After graduating from Pitzer in 1988, she received a grant from the Thomas B. Watson Foundation that enabled her to travel around parts of Latin America doing anthropological field work.

Muir entered Harvard Law School a few years later and graduated in 1993. She explained what motivated her to go into law:

"I worked in a nonprofit legal services organization helping homeless and low-income individuals," she said. "In that work, I became aware of how great a difference I could make with even a little legal knowledge and experience. I

work in the private sector now, but my approach is the same: what can I do to help achieve your goals? How can I help to resolve or avoid problems? Now I ask these same questions of the CEO, who is my boss, of my fellow executives, and of our investors."

After earning her law degree from Harvard, Muir clerked for Judge Barbara Jacobs Rothstein, a U.S. District Court Judge for the Western District of Washington. Judge Rothstein currently serves as Director of the Federal Judicial Center in addition to serving as a federal judge.

Upon completing her clerkship, Muir joined law firm Heller Ehrman in its Seattle office. There, she did intellectual property and commercial litigation work.

"That has benefited me since the threat of litigation doesn't frighten me," Muir said.

In 1997, Muir joined Venture Law Group, where she worked with high-tech and bio-tech companies.

"That included everything from corporate and employment work as well as licensing to M&A, IPOs, and many venture capital financings," she said.

From there, she joined RadioFrame as general counsel in late 2001. She discussed why she chose to work at RadioFrame:

"My background was working with growing technology companies," Muir said. "I like being around smart, energetic people. I was working with RadioFrame as an outside lawyer and saw it as a place with bright people who wanted to do

new things but who also thought humor and personality matter.

She believes that to become a successful general counsel, an attorney should have the following qualities:

"The ability to respond quickly to changing circumstances is a big help," Muir said. "If you enjoy the variety and lack of predictability, you can have fun when change occurs. Genuine curiosity about your company's product or field will make your job more interesting and fulfilling to you. A sense of humor is a must."

She said the person she admires most in her profession is Roberta Katz, Netscape's former general counsel. Like Muir, Katz studied cultural anthropology prior to becoming a lawyer.

**Q. Do you have any hobbies or interests?**

A. I am nearly done restoring my second Craftsman-style home. This one is a 1913 house with all of its original woodwork intact and its structure unchanged. I previously restored a 1913 Craftsman, returning much of its original look and feel and removing all traces of the 1970s, which had not been kind to it.

**Q. What CD was most recently in your CD player?**

A. Something by Wilco or Golden Smog.

**Q. What's the last magazine you read?**

A. Last night, I read parts of the latest *Sports Illustrated*, as well as a good article in *The New Yorker*.

**Q. What's your favorite TV show?**

A. I'm a diehard *Seinfeld* fan. I will occasionally watch one of its reruns.

**Q. Who's your role model?**

A. My parents. They started out with nothing, they worked hard, and they loved their families.

She preceded me at Heller Ehrman in Seattle, but I heard good things about her from my colleagues there," Muir said. "She also worked for another Craig McCaw-funded company, McCaw Cellular. As a result, many of the people involved with RadioFrame know her and have spoken highly of her to me."

Muir had the following advice for law students who are interested in pursuing in-house careers:

"I think that spending at least a couple of years in a law firm first is very helpful to an in-house career," she said. "You will get exposed to a variety of clients and may get a sense of the type of company that would be the best fit for you. You will also have the chance to learn how to effectively manage outside counsel by experiencing being on the other side of that equation while you are in a firm."

Muir said when she was very young, her family moved around a bit.

"As a small child, my family moved a few times," she said. "And I lived in Indiana, California, and Japan until I was five. We settled down in the Seattle area, and I stayed there until I went to college. I returned in 1993 after law school, after being gone for about 10 years."

Muir lives with her partner, Jeff, and their "two ridiculous and amusing pug dogs."

## On the Net

RadioFrame Networks

[www.radioframe.com](http://www.radioframe.com)

Nokia Corporation

[www.nokia.com](http://www.nokia.com)

Harvard Law School

[www.law.harvard.edu](http://www.law.harvard.edu)