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The Pink Ladies: Mary Kay's Top Lawyer Keeps Makeup Mavens' Meeting Looking Good

The flashy pink Cadillac symbolizes ultimate success for Mary Kay Inc. beauty consultants. And for Mary Kay's top lawyer, working with those consultants is the best part of her job. Chief Counsel Laura Beitler — who joined the company in 2000 as a staff attorney — manages Mary Kay's 11-lawyer legal department and provides counsel to European subsidiaries.

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Chief Counsel Laura Beitler — who joined the company in 2000 as a staff attorney — manages Mary Kay's 11-lawyer legal department and provides counsel to European subsidiaries. Her legal department helps plan Mary Kay's annual event and teaches legal-oriented classes to new and veteran beauty consultants.

The coveted Cadillacs and other pink rides will grace the Dallas Convention Center from July 21 through Aug. 6, as Mary Kay's annual meeting attracts 30,000 beauty consultants to learn more about Addison-based Mary Kay and how to boost their independent businesses.

"It is like a big party with Cadillacs, makeup and a lot of women," says Mary Kay spokeswoman Kathrina McAfee. She describes the scene: "Thousands of women, perfectly clothed, sharing their success stories with other women, seeing the excitement in their eyes."

Texas Lawyer reporter Angela Morris sent Beitler some questions about the Mary Kay legal department's role in the seminar. Here are her e-mailed answers, edited for length and style.

Texas Lawyer: What is the role of Mary Kay's legal department in organizing the annual meeting?

Laura Beitler, chief counsel, Mary Kay Inc.: We primarily serve in a support function by assisting various departments in the company as they execute the plans for seminar. In addition to ensuring we have all of the appropriate third-party vendor contracts in place to support the event, the legal department assists by reviewing scripts, class outlines and other materials to help ensure the information the company shares is consistent with our direct sales

business model [and] the independent contractor relationship that our independent sales force members enjoy, as well as all other state and federal laws that may apply.

TL: What class(es) does the legal department teach during the meeting?

Beitler: We teach a class called "Principles and Excellence." The class is designed to help independent beauty consultants understand how to conduct their Mary Kay business in a way that complies with the terms of their independent beauty consultant agreement with the company. Among other things, the topics we cover are designed to help them ensure they are sharing accurate information about the Mary Kay opportunity and our products, understand company guidelines on advertising their Mary Kay business both in print and online, and where they can go if they have questions about the terms of their agreement with the company. We also host a booth in the Mary Kay expo area where we have legal department representatives on hand to answer any questions the independent sales force may have about how the terms of their independent beauty consultant agreement applies to their day-to-day activities.

TL: What are some legal issues that new beauty consultants need to know?

Beitler: The No. 1 thing that we want new independent beauty consultants to know is that there are many company resources available to them to help them ensure they are conducting their business in accordance with the terms of their independent beauty consultant agreement with the company. We know that navigating the "do's and don'ts" can be a bit tricky sometimes, so we want to make sure they know that the Mary Kay legal support team is here to help them navigate through the company guidelines if they have questions or need help.

TL: For Mary Kay Inc., what are some legal issues or risks the company faces in day-to-day business?

Beitler: We're very much like most other companies when it comes to this topic. Whether we're talking about our company, our products or the Mary Kay opportunity, we work to ensure that we are being truthful and accurate in the information that we publish and that we are a good corporate citizen, complying with the multitude of laws and regulations that apply to our business. We also work to ensure that our independent sales force knows and understands their obligations to conduct their Mary Kay businesses with the highest standards of ethics and integrity and that we have the right educational and compliance enforcement programs in place to help them do so.

TL: What are your favorite legal responsibilities as an in-house lawyer for Mary Kay?

Beitler: Working directly with the independent sales force is by far my favorite part of my job. They are extraordinary women, and they are the reason we get to come to work at this incredible company every day. We also take great pride in doing our part to help protect Mary Kay's dream for many generations to come.

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