



FROM INDIA TO SINGAPORE: DATA IS THE NEW OIL

Meet Mekhla Basu, Splunk's new Director and Corporate Counsel for APAC

Interview by Greta Baranowski, Senior Editor, Ethisphere

Ethisphere had the chance to catch up with Mekhla Basu, Director and Corporate Counsel, APAC, Splunk about her new role, career path and managing the growing risks of data and social issues across the region.

Greta Baranowski: What inspired you to move to Splunk?

MB: In my previous role as Intel's South East Asia compliance counsel, I had a fair visibility of the complex issues arising out of the Asia market/region and was handling this dynamic region based out of India. When the opportunity came up in Splunk, a few things inspired me:

- **First Splunk's business:** Splunk is a San Francisco head-quartered multinational company that turns data into doing with the Data-to-Everything Platform. Splunk technology is designed to investigate, monitor, analyse and act on data at any scale. Splunk has over 27 offices and over 5500 employees worldwide and growing exponentially in this region. Splunk is driven by a single important mission that is customer success and this very ingrained DNA has helped Splunk become one of the most prestigious software companies in the world, steeply and quickly. Data is the new oil, and most technology companies I have worked in the past were re-inventing themselves to become data companies. Enough said— the very business of Splunk was reason enough for me to be sold!
- **Second Splunk's values:** Splunk's vibrant yet disciplined culture. The focus of the company has been on building this network of customers by inspiring trust. Splunk lists its values as - Innovative, Passionate, Disruptive, Open and Fun. Sounds pretty simple, isn't it? But behind these very simple sounding values are a deep attempt by Splunk's global and regional management to create a world class company driven by customer success, having an open, transparent, ethical culture where the employees are its best assets.
- **Third - my role:** In this newly created role, I have been entrusted to uphold and amplify this existing culture and help Splunk's APAC management navigate a challenging and dynamic market- doing the right thing and heading towards customer success. In my role as Director and Corporate Counsel, I handle a bunch of interesting matters— ethics and compliance, employment, corporate commercial to name a few. Splunk's steep growth curve, added with the inspiring culture and the ability to be a part of this growth and success, made Splunk a natural choice as a coveted employer!

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GB: Can you talk more about your new role and expectations? What are looking forward to most in your role?

Mekhla Basu: As stated earlier, this is a newly created role—because Splunk very early recognised the need for transparency and ethical conduct along with steady growth in the region. Given, the company's 40% YoY global growth curve, it is all more important that Splunk continues to derive and add value through its enviable reputation, not just as a niche leader but also a company focused on innovation and passion. Innovation cannot happen without the right kind of culture and Splunk recognises this very fundamental. In my role, I will be responsible for upholding and exemplifying this culture and help APAC management navigate through choppy water of an unpredictable, fast changing regulatory sea-scape! Except for deals and transactions, my role which is unfolding every passing day, will include a host of different subject matters, in addition to ethics and compliance. As part of the APAC management team, I will work with the regional and country leaders (and their teams) closely and hopefully will be an enabler to business success through integrity and right conduct. I am highly excited about this partnership!

Personally, I moved to Singapore from India with Splunk's role and looking forward to immersing in the local cultural and business environment in my new home-country!

GB: Since you are based in Singapore and will be handling the whole APAC region including China and Australia, how do you plan to keep abreast of laws, regulations and business environment? What advise do you have for others in similar roles?

MB: This is indeed a vast region and the regulations are ever changing.

That said, in this age of information, there is a lot available and one needs to figure what is most applicable to one's

role, so reading and learning is objective and effective. After all, we also have a personal life!

I try to keep abreast of most of the political, socio economic changes and news to begin with, that provides much needed context to emerging laws and regulations. Followed by alerts and subscription to magazines, e-zines and law firm updates and carve out an hour every day to review and book-mark relevant updates. I would say, not just the region but even keeping oneself generally knowledgeable about what's happening in world really helps, because that perhaps, soon, will follow in the region.

My advice to my colleagues are simple—objective relevant and disciplined reading time, followed by in-person discussion with colleagues to do deep-dives.

GB: For Ethics and compliance Leaders, looking to expand their roles and profile in the regions, what career advice would you give?

MB: Here are my humble learnings from the last few years:

- Establish your credibility and expertise, even before you start networking. In this age of social media and easy reach to network, I have observed that there is a lot of focus on the same, without a realistic assessment of what value do "I" bring to my network even before I derive value out of it. I think, if we continue to self-actualise and focus on the value we bring to table, we get recognised in our organisations, by our peers and in the market about our expertise and credibility
- A balance of long-term and short-term goals- I always have suggested to the

The Five Forces Building the Next Data Wave

Technology has been changing the world since the wheel. But the acceleration that began with the Industrial Revolution has increased tremendously in the digital era. The pace of change in the first two decades of the 21st century has been breathtaking. Over the past decade, the world has increasingly understood the impact of intelligently leveraged data. Tackling the biggest challenges — improving healthcare and education, stewarding the climate and natural resources, fighting poverty, protecting privacy and managing the huge global population — will depend on effectively understanding and acting on data. While the message of constant change has been a familiar refrain since the dawn of the commercial internet, we are on the cusp of a significant increase in the rate of data creation and utilization. We are at the advent of new disruptions, new threats and new opportunities. Just as the union of 4G telecommunications and the smartphone unleashed dramatic changes in business and daily life, five intensifying forces are combining to bring a new level of transformation, and a powerful wave of opportunity for both global society and the well-prepared organization. A data wave.

Read the E-book: https://www.splunk.com/en_us/about-us/why-splunk.html

younger lot, that take up this role only if you continue to remain passionate about it. The passion for the role, silences the everyday stress we face. We need to in the end, as professionals balance out what is important to us— and not just aim for a promotion to a regional role, because that's natural progression.

- Be open to life: This has been my mantra and I am open to failures and success that life brings. We need to be open to failures too if we ever truly want to taste sweet success. Keeping our long-term goals in mind, let life flow and help meander its course by creating the right causes: help people, be there for your team, demonstrate empathy at every level, be hungry and be kind!

Expert Biography

 **Mekhla Basu** is a legal & compliance professional and senior executive with experience in advising top multinationals in the Greater Asia Region. In her current role, Mekhla serves as Director and Corporate Counsel – APAC for Splunk. Previously, Mekhla was heading Intel's compliance function in South East Asia, covering several high-risk jurisdictions. Mekhla has proficiently provided corporate consultancy to management & board of directors in top MNCs; has in-depth competence in anti-trust law, IP, e-commerce & privacy laws, labour & employment, corporate governance & ethical landscape, risk mitigation and other complex legal issues applicable to MNCs in industries like FMCG, Pharma and Tech. Mekhla has been one of India's youngest General Counsels, and widely known in the industry for her core competence.