

## Sara M. Antol Corporate & Commercial Attorney

**What brought you to Babst Calland?** When I graduated law school in 1990, Babst Calland was seen as the new, hip alternative to the big firms in Pittsburgh. I had worked for a few years before going to law school so had some business experience, and the firm's culture just appealed to me. I spent several years in the corporate group before taking a general counsel role with a client. It was really hard to leave, but this was a great opportunity for me at that time in my life. When I came back to Babst Calland 14 years later, it was for the same reasons I initially joined. At this firm, there still is a genuine belief that as much as we can, within the confines of being a service provider to others, we want the people who work here to have lives, be happy, and thrive. It's really the personal relationships that keep me here, in addition to firm management's openness to speaking up about questions and differences of opinion. I feel like I can really practice with a lot of integrity here.

**How does your background as general counsel influence your practice today?** It totally changed my perspective. I understand that it's our job to fulfill the role a general counsel simply does not have time to do. It may be a matter of expertise, but it's also about time. So I am militant about deadlines. If the client doesn't give one, I ask. And if I have a deadline, I always meet it and give the client the best work I can in the time I have. In addition, I will always give an actual answer when a client asks for my recommendation, and I will never pretend I can do something that I can't. I also know not to take offense when the client takes a different path. They have many other considerations—analyst expectations, trading factors, etc.—than just the one we offer them.

**What is the key to balance?** I think the key is that you have to learn to be as effective as you can with the time that you have, recognizing you will never have as much time as you want. You have to live with the constant challenge of feeling that you could always do more. I know I can only do so much, and in that moment, I give it my all, and then accept that I did the best that I could do. You gain confidence over the years and can say, hey, clients are looking for efficiency and cost-effectiveness along with a good work product, and so giving them both is good client service.

**What quality do you most like to see in the associates that you work with?** Feeling a comradery, so that we can laugh and talk together and have fun when we're working. I know that can be hard for younger associates who may feel intimidated. But I like associates who are proactive, who are not afraid to come to me and ask questions or ask how to help. I can forgive a lot while an associate is learning and training, if I have someone who cares and is really trying to do a good job.

**What would you say to young women hesitant to enter what has historically been a male-dominated profession?** It is. It still is. But it's so much less so now, and that really makes me happy. There were plenty of times in my career where I was completely alone as a woman. That makes it really hard. There are enough women in the profession now that you usually won't feel as alone. You might still get an occasional situation outside the firm where you see implicit bias, but the needle is moving the right way.

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**SARA M. ANTOL**  
[santol@babstcalland.com](mailto:santol@babstcalland.com)  
412.394.5412

**Pittsburgh, PA**  
Two Gateway Center  
603 Stanwix Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222  
412.394.5400

[BABSTCALLAND.COM](http://BABSTCALLAND.COM)

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