

Rising Star: Gibson Dunn's Cassandra Gaedt-Sheckter

By Joyce Hanson

Law360 (July 16, 2024, 2:03 PM EDT) -- Cassandra Gaedt-Sheckter of Gibson Dunn & Crutcher LLP served as lead counsel for DoorDash in settling allegations of California Consumer Privacy Act violations and also advises Workday on artificial intelligence programs, placing her among the cybersecurity and privacy law practitioners under age 40 honored by Law360 as Rising Stars.

Her biggest achievement:



Gaedt-Sheckter points to her work serving as lead counsel for food delivery service DoorDash in a high-profile settlement with the California attorney general over alleged California Consumer Privacy Act violations as one of her major achievements.

DoorDash agreed to pay \$375,000 to resolve Attorney General Rob Bonta's claims that the company violated the state's landmark consumer privacy law by failing to clearly inform users of their ability to opt out of the sale of their personal information to a marketing vendor, the agency announced in February.

As lead counsel, Gaedt-Sheckter and her team achieved a low final figure after they replaced existing counsel to respond to the CCPA settlement demand and negotiated "a highly successful" resolution payment of just \$375,000, she said. This second-ever settlement under the CCPA was significantly less than the first one — and it streamlined compliance reporting for DoorDash, according to Gaedt-Sheckter.

"Given that this is a new area, there is very little precedence," she said. "There was only one prior settlement, and working with the regulator and our client on this new area of law and going through the facts that were at issue in the first months of the law's enforcement was quite interesting. It brought a challenge that I really enjoyed."

Other notable matters:



Cassandra Gaedt-Sheckter
Gibson Dunn

Age: 37
Home base: Palo Alto, California
Position: Partner
Law school: UCLA School of Law
First job after law school: Associate at Gibson Dunn

Gaedt-Sheckter, who lives in San Jose, California, is a partner at Gibson Dunn's Palo Alto office, where she co-chairs the global artificial intelligence practice; is a key member of the privacy, cybersecurity and data innovation practice; and heads the law firm's state privacy law task force.

In this year alone, she said she has worked on more than 250 matters, and much of what she works on from a regulatory advisory enforcement perspective is confidential. Those matters include advising clients on AI, data privacy and cybersecurity issues, and extend to strategic product counseling and global program development.

For example, Gaedt-Sheckter said that on a recent trip to Paris, she participated in client meetings related both to regulatory enforcement matters and to providing counsel about new privacy and AI laws on an international scale.

"Whether it's European-focused laws or whether it's the new California automated decision-making technology regulations that are in draft form, our clients are focused on this from a global level," she said. "I work closely with Paris partners Robert Spano, Ahmed Baladi and Vera Ludic, which shows the global perspective of our practice."

She said she advises clients in industries that run the gamut from technology, energy and transportation to retail, luxury fashion and the gig economy.

Recently, she advised Workday on state law and regulatory compliance, serving as lead counsel to the cloud-based finance and human resources platform's privacy teams while reviewing its privacy program and AI features. Also, she is a core member of the Gibson Dunn team advising Zoom on implementing a global privacy and security program following a settlement with the Federal Trade Commission.

Why she's a cybersecurity and privacy attorney:

To be sure, Gaedt-Sheckter has plenty to keep her busy in Palo Alto, considering the expertise she has developed on the California Consumer Privacy Act.

She traces her interest in the CCPA to a broader interest in the hard sciences and technology when she was in college. Gaedt-Sheckter said she received a bachelor of science at the University of California, Los Angeles, went to law school there, and became a licensed patent attorney.

In addition, she kept an eye on cybersecurity and privacy laws, including the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation, and started tracking the CCPA online in the act's earliest days. She notes that the GDPR took effect in 2018 and the CCPA was introduced the same year.

"I'm a dual citizen with Germany, and I talked about the concept of privacy with my family," she said. "When the GDPR took effect, the idea of privacy laws was not that foreign to me."

Gaedt-Sheckter joined Gibson Dunn after receiving her law degree in 2011, and she set to work crafting privacy policies and offering product counseling to various tech companies. So when the CCPA was first introduced, she naturally thought it was something she should review.

"I set Google alerts for everything relating to the CCPA and also everything related to AI at the time when that was still a sane idea, because now it would be impossible to read through everything that came up," she said. "I read everything I could, including reading the CCPA from cover to cover, and monitored every single edit that was made. I kept really close tabs on it, which made me a de facto

expert at the time. No one could have been more of an expert than me, because no one else had been doing this work and it was new."

What motivates her:

Gaedt-Sheckter said her parents taught her the value of hard work and that it runs in her family. She said she and her physician husband now pass on that principle to their twin 8-year-old sons.

"I definitely learned a good work ethic from my mom and dad. Grit is something that I value, and I hope to instill that in my kids — not having a sense of entitlement, but rather, grit," she said.

She also puts a great emphasis on learning in her practice, saying she's kept up with such issues as the "incredible" applications of AI and best practices for protecting individuals' data privacy.

"Being at the forefront of working on legal matters that are defining moments for companies is such a blue ocean," she said. "The work is always the culmination of a team effort, by my partners and associates, but also the in-house attorneys that I'm working with. I think maybe there's a sense of pride coming from being a part of that team."

How her practice will change in the next 10 years:

Although Gaedt-Sheckter has a wide view of what's on the horizon for AI, data privacy and cybersecurity, she believes that what lies ahead for technology in the next 10 years is "unfathomable," since change comes so fast.

"So much remains to be seen," she said. "If we look at what's happened in the past five to 10 years and then try to extrapolate that out five to 10 years, it's just unfathomable. Anything could happen given the explosion of AI over the last 18 months. It's really hard to predict what my practice will look like, or how the legal practice generally might change and be streamlined with AI."

--As told to Joyce Hanson. Editing by Michael Watanabe..

Law360's Rising Stars are attorneys under 40 whose legal accomplishments belie their age. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2024 Rising Stars winners after reviewing nearly 1,200 submissions. Attorneys had to be under 40 as of April 30, 2024, to be eligible for this year's award. This interview has been edited and condensed.