

Loni A. Mahanta

Executive & Thought Leader

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Loni Mahanta is a strategic legal and policy executive whose leadership helps businesses remain agile and resilient in the face of sweeping, industry-altering change. She previously served as the Vice President of Policy Development and Research at Lyft where she translated Lyft's business objectives into actionable legislation at the local, state, and national levels. Loni's scope of work expanded swiftly over her nearly 6 years at the company as a result of both her unique ability to envision how regulation will change the face of the business and her reputation for working cross-functionally to insulate the business from risk and drive business objectives. Loni specializes in building trust and strengthening internal collaboration with product, engineering, science, ops, and finance teams while using her background in law and politics to craft relationships with elected officials, employees, community groups, and the media. As Lyft's principal strategist on worker issues, she can simplify the intricacies of the company's industry-leading workforce challenges for any audience—at a dinner party or in D.C.—and managed its keystone "Future of Work" initiative, which leads industry thought leadership around the gig economy and the changing American workforce.

Experience

Ringleap Consulting, Larkspur, CA
Principal

Dec. 2020 - present

Crafts comprehensive policy strategy for clients that achieves offensive and defensive business objectives, and helps clients navigate the legal, regulatory, and policy landscapes in which they operate.

Lyft, Inc., San Francisco, CA

Jan. 2015 - Nov. 2020

Vice President, Policy Development & Research

Feb. 2019 - Nov. 2020

Recruited by Chief Policy Officer Anthony Foxx to craft strategic solutions for the business's core policy issues and drive operational and programmatic priorities. Manage experts in sustainability, safety, privacy, future of work, labor policy, legislative analysis, policy research, and analytics, combining data analysis and legal acumen to create effective political strategy and drive high-value business outcomes across verticals. In addition to the duties of this role, Loni also continues to lead Lyft's keystone "Future of Work" initiative, serving as the principal strategist on worker issues at Lyft and the gig economy at-large.

- **Business and Political Leadership:** Serve as the Lead negotiator with the California Governor's office, the California Legislature, and the Labor Movement on AB5, an industry-defining bill addressing worker classification. The first to envision and articulate the effects of this change on Lyft's business and to drive awareness of driver misclassification as the main external challenge facing the company and the U.S. workforce at-large. Also the primary driver of company-wide preparations for adapting the entire ridesharing business model to varying regulatory structures. Integral to the creation of Lyft's first ESG report.
- **Policy Considerations for Product, Business Operations, and Comms:** Guide integration of Policy objectives at Lyft, quantifying business opportunities and risk presented by policy changes and negotiating in favor of Lyft's strategic priorities. Drive the integration of Policy considerations into proactive Product strategy and long-term planning. Advise around comms and policy implications of

action and inaction regarding external affairs. Create and drive “rapid response” decision-making processes across Lyft, addressing complex, multi-department issues. Drive privacy policy initiatives, such as reconciling data sharing practices across teams and understanding the implications of new privacy legislation. Integral player in crisis communication responses to pressing Legal and Policy matters.

- **Safety Policy Prioritization:** Work closely with Product (Safety) and VPs of Comms, Legal, Operations, Product, Engineering, Compliance, and Science to deliver a comprehensive, rigorous, high-quality, and impactful safety strategy for Lyft across multiple lines of business and modes of transportation. Develop Lyft’s strategies and practices across road and traffic safety, interpersonal safety, health safety and women’s safety. Work closely with Policy, Communications, and Marketing teams to develop Lyft’s safety policy positions, support research plans, and build impactful programs with external partners and balance limited product resources to create the safest possible platform.
- **Sustainability:** Drove buy-in and adoption of Lyft’s industry-leading environmental pivot from carbon offsets to 100% electric vehicles (EVs) by 2030. Led internal cross-functional efforts to build a plan for compliance with commitment. Externally, secured endorsements from 3rd-party validators and identified and neutralized potential criticism to build public trust, resulting in over 100 media placements with “exceptionally positive headlines.”
- **Policy Research:** Lead team of research scientists in solving business problems with “big data” at Lyft. Work cross-functionally to establish public-facing reportable metrics, including driver hourly earnings, carbon emissions, and all the data included in the annual [Lyft Economic Impact Report](#). Direct team in designing large operational datasets for use by academics and governments with the goal of building trust between Lyft and the general public and exhibiting the major economic impacts of the ridesharing industry at-large.
- **Legislative Analysis:** Review, evaluate, edit, and draft federal, state, and local legislation, identify legislative trends, develop strategies, and craft sample policy language to further Lyft’s interests. Work with Lyft’s Compliance, Legal, and Operations teams as new regulatory frameworks are implemented and collaborate with Lyft’s Public Policy team members on market-specific legislative efforts.

Vice President, Future of Work

Oct. 2018 – Feb. 2019

Pitched and architected this industry-leading initiative focused on policy and thought leadership in the “future of work” space. Reported to co-founder John Zimmer and drove innovations in labor policy, portable benefits, the creation of a modern, flexible safety net, worker voice, and addressing worker displacement due to automation. Leadership of this initiative led to promotion to Vice President of Policy Development & Research after just 5 months.

*Vice President, Associate General Counsel
Managing Counsel, Employment & Litigation*

Jan. 2015 – Oct. 2018

Reporting to the General Counsel, responsible for all labor and employment-related issues facing Lyft, internally (employees) and externally (drivers).

- **Labor and Employment Litigation:** Oversaw all aspects of employment-related litigation and claims, including civil lawsuits (including those alleging employment misclassification of drivers), and audits by city, state, and federal agencies. Led strategy on all labor issues arising from driver contractor status, including actions before the National Labor Relations Board and the Internal Revenue Service and novel city efforts to permit collective bargaining by independent contractors. Led settlement of *Cotter v. Lyft*, a California employment misclassification suit with exposure in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

- **Product Counseling:** Led all product counseling related to the independent contractor status of drivers. Created training for product managers to understand do's and don'ts of employment law and drove proactive changes with product to mitigate Legal risk.
- **Public Market Readiness:** Deeply involved in preparing the company to go public. Helped draft the employment and litigation section of Lyft's S-1.
- **Management:** Managed and oversaw outside counsel, including development of litigation strategies across multiple jurisdictions and management of legal budget of \$10M. Managed seven in-house attorneys and three paralegals.
- **Executive Advising:** Advising the executive team on high-impact litigation, audits, strategic partnerships, and acquisitions. Advised on high profile on-boarding of executives, executive compensation, and high profile investigations and terminations. Partnered with the People team on the full breadth of internal employment matters.

Folger Levin LLP

Associate, Litigation, Labor, and Employment

San Francisco, CA

2011 – 2014

Crowell & Moring LLP

Associate, Litigation

San Francisco, CA

2009 – 2011

Folger Levin & Kahn LLP

Associate, Litigation

San Francisco, CA

2007 – 2009

Education

University of California, Hastings College of the Law, Juris Doctor, *magna cum laude*

2007

Membership: Order of the Coif, Thurston Society

Admissions: State Bar of California, December 2007

Stanford University, Bachelor of Arts, International Relations

2003

Board Service

Family Violence Appellate Project

2018

Member, Board of Directors

Speaking & Thought Leadership

Automobility 3.0: The Future Is Now, VerdeExchange Conference

2020

Future of Work Roundtable, TechNet & Democratic Governors Association

2019

When the Government Calls: From Responding to Regulatory Fires to Articulating Your Policy Vision, Marketplace Risk Conference

2019

A New Gig for Financial Services: Delivering Financial Stability to a Changing Workforce, Lendit Fintech Conference

2019

The Gig Economy & The Evolution of Employment, SXSW

2019

The Gig Economy, Foundation for California's Technology and Innovation Economy Summit

2019

The Nat'l Conversation about Diversity & Inclusion and Tech, Global TEC Forum

2019