

Jason E. Friedrich, Head of U.S. Government & Regulatory Affairs, ARRIS

Interviewed by: Laura Phillips



On the heels of the federal government reopening for business, I had coffee with Jason E. Friedrich, who is currently Head of U.S. Government & Regulatory Affairs for ARRIS. I have known Jason for quite a while. We worked together at Dow Lohnes and for a couple of years at Drinker Biddle & Reath. For the last six years, Jason has been overseeing a range of government affairs matters for Motorola, then Motorola Mobility, then Google, and now ARRIS. Jason wryly observes that he's held the same job for six years, but it has been with four separate companies during that time span! In the last year ARRIS acquired the Motorola Home broadband and infrastructure business from Google, adding to its already established broadband video infrastructure and equipment portfolio. Jason follows communications and many other matters of interest for ARRIS on Capitol Hill, the FCC and beyond.

Q: What attracted you to the field of communications?

A: There were really two things that drew me to communications law and policy. First, my undergraduate degree at George Washington University was in political communications. That was an intense joint communications, journalism, and political science program. My senior thesis was about concentration of media ownership. Second, I started working for a boutique telecom law firm and I was struck by how much policy factored into very practical decisions about regulation in a number of areas. Given how much I knew about communications law and policy already, it just seemed like a natural evolution for me to delve into communications law.

Q: Has your career progressed the way you envisioned?

A: Yes, I would say my career progressed the way I envisioned because I've been able to build on the foundation of having excellent law firm experience, working away for many clients over a number of years where I learned the basics of research and writing and analysis, all very important skills. They prepared me to now function effectively in the role of addressing a range of issues that concern ARRIS, that of course include telecom

policy, but that can move beyond telecom policy as well.

Q: What is the most challenging part of your current position and why?

A: I would say the most challenging part of my current position is having constantly to calibrate and match available resources to company priorities. For example, I have to first identify the true priorities from among a diverse product portfolio and company concerns. Then I have to decide what to do and what not to do to advance those priorities. In DC it can be particularly tricky to develop an effective strategy because you often have to be guided by an educated guess as to how something will evolve. For example, out of nowhere there can emerge an unexpected political or factual change that modifies the dynamic of a particular issue and you have to be ready for that. But it's great to have a job that has those sorts of challenges. I would say that the best part of my current position is that there are lots of issues that come up that keep me interested and learning new things.

Q: What are you reading now?

A: I am reading "The End of Big: How the Internet Makes David the New

Goliath" by Nicco Mele. And I am not going to share the children's bedtime storybooks that are the big thing at home these days.

Q: What surprised or impressed you most about people you've worked with and why?

A: When I interned at the FCC, I saw firsthand the amazing dedication of the FCC staff to their mission. Later, working in law firms, I witnessed the keen intellect of many attorneys both in the firms I worked for and in companies. I've been gratified over the years that I've found willing and good mentors every step of the way. Really, I can't even begin to name all the people who've impressed me that I've worked with over the years, I'd be concerned that I would leave someone out if I started down that road. The final thing I'd say that has made a lasting impression is the skill and work ethic of the communications bar. It stands out in my mind.

Q: Can you share a perspective on pitfalls to avoid or other career advice for those who are just getting started in the communications field?

A: Sure. There are lots of very smart, very substantive people in the communications field and there is tremendous competition for some positions. While it's great to have or develop a specialty you should make it a priority to keep on top of general trends and interesting issues. Over time, what may at first look like an ancillary issue may turn into a very big deal later on. It's really hard to predict exactly what skills will be most in demand. The other thing I'd say is that relationships are key to developing and maintaining a career. You just never know how the personal and professional connections you make can later make a positive difference for you.

Q: What's something interesting about you that people are not generally aware of you are willing to share?

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Get to Know an FCBA MEMBER

JASON E. FRIEDRICH

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A: In addition to being a parent of two dynamic children both under the age of seven, and the role I play in DC for ARRIS, I alternate between teaching graduate and undergraduate courses on communications policy at the GW School of Media and Public Affairs. It's something I've done for a long time and I really enjoy getting to know the students and seeing their enthusiasm for the subject.

Q: How long have you been an FCBA member and what is the value of FCBA membership?

A: I've been an FCBA member since law school. In looking back, I would say the connections made through the FCBA and the Young Lawyers Committee, in particular, were a huge part of my career development. We all know it's very easy

to stay at your desk working, but your professional life is richer if you make the effort to know others in the field. A side benefit to doing that is that you often end up with a better, more well-rounded understanding of the issues and how they affect all players if you know them. Aside from the professional aspects of FCBA membership, I have also enjoyed taking my six year old son and helping along with the FCBA contingent on a Sunday morning Martha's Table food preparation every once and a while. The FCBA provides an unparalleled opportunity for friendship, mentoring and career development, and also provides a great outlet for giving back to the greater DC community.

Is there an FCBA member you'd like to see profiled in future columns? If so, please contact **Laura Phillips** at laura.phillips@dbr.com.