

Karima Noren

SPEAKING IN LEGAL TERMS



Formerly Google's head of legal emerging markets, Karima Noren is the co-founder of The Legal Pod and The Privacy Compliance Hub. Passionate about taking the complicated and making it simpler, she believes in taking on challenges head-on – and winning every time.

A MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY OF COMPUTERS & THE LAW SUB-COMMITTEE ON DATA PROTECTION, LONDON-BASED KARIMA NOREN, THE FORMER HEAD OF LEGAL FOR GOOGLE IN EMERGING MARKETS, HAS EXTENSIVE, HANDS ON EXPERIENCE IN IMPLEMENTING COMPLIANCE PROGRAMMES FOR MULTIPLE COMPANIES.

With her business partner, Nigel Jones (former head of legal at Google in Europe), Karima, 44, has co-founded The Privacy Compliance Hub, a comprehensive privacy, data protection, and GDPR solution which tells organisations what to do, how to do, who should do it, and when to do.

"I started in the City at Ashursts, moved to work for technology companies, spent eight years at Google with two as head of legal emerging markets," she says.

After eight years at the US search engine giant, Karima started yearning to work with start-ups, leading to the founding of K Legal in 2012. A boutique consultancy, the firm specialised in providing personal, pragmatic advice to technology companies on data protection and commercial agreements.

Later, in 2014, The Legal Pod was born. An alliance of highly-experienced lawyers and consultants, each with their own boutique consultancy, it focused on giving pragmatic legal and data protection advice to tech companies. "We take away the legal hassle. You get your own personal lawyer or data protection consultant plus a team to fall back on if you need something more."

The team's love for innovation, eventually led to the launch of The Privacy Compliance Hub in 2017. "The Privacy Compliance Hub is a comprehensive privacy, data protection and GDPR solution which tells organisations what to do, how to do it, who should do it and when. The Hub provides organisations with their own private, secure online platform from

which organisations can manage privacy, data protection and GDPR compliance and demonstrate that compliance to customers and regulators," says Karima.

"Our vision is to create a simple, easy to use solution for companies to establish and maintain data protection compliance. We believe strongly that companies themselves and not outside consultants or lawyers are best placed to achieve that compliance. Nobody knows a company's business and the data it processes more than the people that work within it."

"At The Privacy Compliance Hub, we are passionate about building a platform which makes it easy or easier for organisations to do data protection for real. We will continue to make it better by being innovative, thinking outside the box and listening to what our customers need, to be successful on their privacy compliance journey," she adds. The Hub's clients include Channel 4, Freightliner, and GoCardless.

Taking on new challenges such as the one of creating the Hub and making it work has always motivated Karima. "Doing something new, scary and challenging as often as I can. And, as long as I am still learning and I keep meeting inspiring people, I am motivated."

Karima should be in a good position to know this considering she's had to deal with challenging situation from a very young age. Having lived in several countries in her formative years has left a deep impression on the entrepreneur from an adjustment and connecting with people perspective.

"I moved around quite a bit when I was young. I lived in Egypt, Cyprus, Wisconsin in the US, and later France. My primary education was in the French system. I then went to an American school for a few years and finished my secondary education in the English school system.

"Moving around, changing environments frequently, having to make new friends, learn

a different language, this all makes you more open-minded and resilient. You have no choice but to adapt and adapt fast. And you have to be that bit more flexible. I feel that the best way to learn is to meet as many different people as you can in different environments. It is people and places that will inspire you and enable you to be successful."

A graduate of King's College London, where she studied French and English Law, Karima did her training contract at a large City law firm. "At that time, my definition of success was joining such a law firm, but as it turned out this was not for me at all and I remember feeling quite disappointed. This could not be it, especially after all the hard work put in."

Despite getting a 2:1 in her law degree and speaking three languages, she got rejected by 50 law firms when she applied for her training contract. She did eventually get a job in a City law firm, but, as luck would have it, the environment did not suit her and she left.

"My answer to this challenge was to move. I did not try to "stick it out" and elbow my way up. Instead, I jumped ship and joined a working environment that would value me for my ideas, my work ethics, my energy, my alternative ways of approaching a situation.

"My golden rule is: if you are not happy – be brave and move. Don't follow the herd. Be who you want to be, be the best you can be – always. There are things you won't be able to change but there are many things that you can change or at least influence."

Her 'big break' happened when she landed the job at Google as the second Google Lawyer in Europe in March 2004. "At that time, Google in Europe was small and edgy. There were only 50 of us in the UK. Finally, work was challenging and fun. We had to think fast and be innovative. The focus was not on following the status quo, but on not being afraid to stretch the boundaries." ●