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Who often serves as the corporate secretary?



Another in the newbies series: In the United States, the general counsel—the top lawyer for a company—sometimes holds the title of corporate secretary, too. But in most cases, it's in name only. In other words, the GC doesn't really play that role within the company—it can be too demanding to be both the GC and the corporate secretary unless the company is pretty small (and can't afford to have more than one lawyer).

So, at those companies where the GC nominally holds the corporate secretary title, it's someone with the title of assistant or associate corporate secretary who really serves in the role of corporate secretary. Most companies have a team of people who support the person who plays the role of corporate secretary, each with their own set of responsibilities.

Note that most of the commentary in this section assumes we are talking about companies of a pretty significant size. At smaller companies, the bench is much smaller and there might not be a team behind the corporate secretary.

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