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FROM CRAFTY CORPORATE LAWYER / TO DIY LAWYER

## SARAH FEINGOLD

FORMER LIFE Raised by artist parents, Feingold took her first metalsmithing class at age 12 and fell in love with creating her own necklaces and earrings. She pursued metalwork in college, but decided that as a vocation, it wasn't for her (long hours of making jewelry "made my back hurt and hands bleed," she says) and pursued a legal career instead. At Syracuse law school, she tackled her curriculum and honed her craft on the side, enrolling in every advanced metalsmithing class the university offered. After she graduated in 2005, her routine was similar, working as an associate at a midsize law firm in Rochester, New York, and making jewelry on the side. When the online DIY marketplace Etsy came along that year, Feingold used the site to sell the copper enamel pendants and sterling silver earrings and necklaces she made in her small apartment.

WAKE-UP CALL "I'd always hoped to help artists in my legal career," Feingold says. "And although I'd written an e-book, Copyright for Artists, and was speaking at conferences on artists' rights, I wasn't passionate about my law firm job and felt it was time for a change." One day in 2007, Feingold was browsing Etsy and noticed the company didn't have in-house counsel. With her jeweler background, she knew she'd be perfect for the job.

SECOND ACT Since she had no contacts at the company, Feingold blindly e-mailed customer support, introduced herself, and suggested that she could provide legal services in trademarks and copyrights. Much to her surprise, Etsy CEO Rob Kalin responded to her query. "My timing was right," Feingold says. "They had been getting all kinds of legal questions they couldn't answer."

Though the two exchanged e-mails and phone calls, a job offer never came. So Feingold made the bold move of flying herself to New York City and requesting an in-person meeting with Kalin. "When we met, I said, 'Rob, you need in-house counsel, and you need it to be me," she recalls. "He hired me on the spot. I had already proven I was in a unique position to help his company grow." Early on in her tenure as general counsel, Feingold drafted and published Etsy's first trademark guidelines. "Combining law and art—I have a dream job," she says.

Feingold still sells jewelry on Etsy, and she gets lots of queries from burned-out law school friends searching for more meaningful work. "Successful attorneys making a ridiculous amount of money ask me, 'How'd you do it?'" she says. "My advice is to do something nobody else is doing. Find a niche. And don't be afraid of the word no." —Lisa Richmon

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