

CARMEN M. TORRES GONZÁLEZ



Hi Carmen M., how has your work-life balance changed over time?

When we talk about starting a business, we have the mistaken idea that we will acquire more free time for ourselves and finally have a balance in our lives. Wrong! Starting a business takes many work hours (perhaps more than the time you worked for your former employer). It requires sacrifice, consistency, perseverance, and faith in ourselves, among many other things. Even when our business is stable, there will always be new challenges and situations to face, urgent things to attend to, and clients who cannot wait. However, to be successful in everything we do, we cannot neglect our mental and physical health or our family, nor can we stop doing things that fill us with happiness and remind us why we decided to undertake.

Therefore, for me, the acclaimed work-life balance is achieved by forcing you to plan your weeks and set aside space to:

1. Doing something that helps your mental health, whether reading a book chapter, watching an episode of your favorite series, or meditating, among others.
2. Doing something that leads you to continue improving your physical health, including exercising (even 15 minutes), eating healthy, taking your vitamins, sleeping the correct hours, and resting, among others.
3. Family time, whether it's eating together or just a phone call.
4. Including more things in the month that make you happy, such as planning your next trip and seeing your friends, among others.
5. Including space to reflect and self-evaluate. For me, these things are not optional. After all, a person with an unbalanced life will not be able to be productive and consistent enough and will eventually lose focus, passion, and love for what they do.

Can you give our readers an introduction to your business? Maybe you can share a bit about what you do and what sets you apart from others?

Being a military spouse entails sacrifices. For example, I am subject to constant transfers from the state or country. Furthermore, I need

complete flexibility to deal with any emergency or situation with my children in a place where I do not have a close family. Therefore, having a job where I can grow professionally and be promoted while having the flexibility to take care of my family is pretty tricky. However, one of the things that the pandemic taught us was to learn about the technology benefits and how to reduce costs for our businesses and customers. As a result, most of the courts and agencies switched their hearings to virtual subpoenas and/or optimized their systems so that the vast majority of transactions could be done remotely. Because



of the above, I had to think of a business idea that wouldn't stop me from continuing to develop and grow professionally and allow me to have the necessary flexibility to take care of my family.

Hence arises Accessible Legal Services, LLC ("ALS"). ALS is a virtual legal office through which we offer legal guidance and services on United States immigration law to businesses and the Hispanic community inside and outside the country. Furthermore, according to Texas and Puerto Rico laws, we offer consultation and perform legal services in corporate law, business or professional licenses and permits, collections, and labor law. Also, we assist other law firms in handling their cases, preparing their clients, accompanying them to hearings and interviews, drafting dispositive motions, appeals, legal memoranda, bylaws, and letters, and performing legal research.

One of the biggest concerns I had was

community acceptance and trust that you don't need to meet a lawyer face to face to trust their services. To my surprise, I haven't even had to convince them. ALS has come to fill the community's needs.

We specialize in bringing our services to the comfort of our clients. Primarily, we serve our clients through phone calls, videoconferences, emails, or other technological means to minimize face-to-face meetings and avoid wasting additional time driving to our office, requesting time off from work, or canceling family vacations or activities to have a face-to-face meeting with us. In addition, our clients can find us through our Website, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, WhatsApp, and other social media.

If you had a friend visiting you, what are some of the local spots you'd want to take them around to?

The most exciting things for me are connecting with nature, visiting places I have never been to, getting into their cultures through food and music, doing new activities, and meeting new people. In other words, it is the search that this first-time moment. Therefore, if I have a friend visiting me, I would love to take them to do things they have never done before.

Shoutout is all about shouting out others who you feel deserve additional recognition and exposure. Who would you like to shoutout?

I have had many people who, in one way or another, have supported me, have been my mentors, and contributed to my achievements. But mainly, I would like to acknowledge my husband (Luis R. Santiago), my children (Cris Lewis Santiago and Karelys Zoé Santiago), my parents (Doña Eneida and Don Cristóbal), my mother-in-law (Marilyn), and my sister (Leyda) for supporting me in all my projects and adventures.

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Mom, Military Wife, Adventurous, Attorney at Law & CEO of Accessible Legal Services, LLC