In her final year at NYU School of Law, Janelle Wrigley took a course on antitrust law. “I thought it was fascinating,” she says. As an associate at Simpson Thacher & Bartlett, she handled a wide variety of complex litigation “but as time went on, I was doing more and more antitrust.”

Then in 2010, she moved to the other side of the street—she joined the Federal Trade Commission (‘FTC’), reviewing mergers for potential competitive problems. In her group at the FTC, she focused on healthcare. That sector was a hotbed of activity in the early 2010s, with a number of hospital mergers being challenged for potential antitrust violations. “I got a lot of great experience in court, which is relatively rare for an antitrust lawyer,” Wrigley says. And in 2015, she joined Practical Law, where she now leads the antitrust team.

Her experience as a litigator and a regulator gives her a wide perspective as to how antitrust regulation is developing, and the challenges that in-house counsel face in keeping their companies compliant. The Practical Law antitrust group focuses on serving both antitrust specialists and in-house lawyers who have to handle antitrust issues along with a host of other concerns.

The latter, in particular, may not realize that they could benefit from the array of Practical Law antitrust resources. In-house lawyers “may not be antitrust specialists, but any company can find itself in antitrust trouble,” she said. “We have a lot of content for non-specialists who need to learn the basics of antitrust law and how it might apply to their companies.”

Keeping compliant means examining interactions with competitors, whether it’s avoiding inadvertent price-fixing or managing strategic projects with competitors. In fact, antitrust issues may arise simply because your company participates in a trade association or engages in cross-industry activities with its competitors. “If you’re talking to your competitor and you exchange the ‘wrong’ type of information, that could raise antitrust concerns,” Wrigley says.

In addition, counsel must also review any type of deal or contractual arrangement – from forming joint ventures to undertaking acquisitions – for potential horizontal or vertical competition issues. “If you have an exclusive dealing arrangement with a supplier, you have to make sure you’re not freezing out competition in a way that could raise concerns,” Wrigley says.

Practical Law offers a standard document on antitrust compliance, which is really helpful “if you’re starting out and need to have a compliance policy that addresses antitrust risk,” she says. There are also PowerPoint presentations that in-house counsel can use to educate partners across the business on how to identify and address antitrust risk. “We have checklists to use when, for example, you’re reviewing a distribution agreement—what to keep an eye out for. We have resources geared towards helping in-house counsel identify potential antitrust problems. And if you find one – whether it’s potential price-fixing or concerns about potentially being a monopolist – to help decide if you need to bring in outside counsel to address it.”

For those outside counsel, Wrigley’s team also offers an array of resources covering everything from merger control to class action litigation. As an example, Wrigley notes her team’s database that tracks federal merger enforcement, “a really powerful tool to be able to see how the FTC and DOJ are approaching specific types of deals or enforcement in a certain industry.”

It isn’t only federal antitrust enforcement that counsel need to track. State attorneys general are becoming more ambitious, particularly at a time when federal antitrust agencies could be pulling back on enforcement to reflect the Trump administration’s priorities. “It’s something else that companies have to think about,” Wrigley says, especially activity from states like California and New York, whose AGs have been very active in the pharmaceutical sector, for instance. “The New York AG’s office has been successful in bringing enforcement actions in areas where the federal government hasn’t taken action.”

There’s also the international angle. The Chinese and European Union antitrust regimes are becoming a more critical factor when it comes to cross-border acquisitions. “It’s a very specialized challenge if you’re a company whose deal will involve Chinese merger review,” she says. “And the EU is increasingly an area in which companies may have bigger antitrust concerns than in the U.S.”

Given her experience as both litigator and regulator, Wrigley believes there’s good communication and mutual respect between the regulatory bodies and antitrust lawyers, particularly as there’s still a great deal of back-and-forth movement between the two worlds. “That’s not to say it’s always the case—there are things that the government does that frustrates the private bar. Investigations can be expensive, and there’s often not as much transparency as they’d like.”

She keeps in regular contact with her former colleagues at the FTC and in the legal industry to stay up to speed on potential changes, and what antitrust topics would be most beneficial to cover. This led Wrigley and her team to develop new resources providing antitrust advice for financial investors such as hedge funds. “It’s intended to help attorneys navigate antitrust risk to help clients understand the merger review process and the antitrust risk of their day-to-day conduct.” Through the Practical Law ‘what are you working on’ feature and regular subscriber touch points, Wrigley aims to deepen her interactions with Practical Law subscribers to enhance the value of new resources. For Wrigley, it’s a way of continuing and expanding a conversation that started back in law school.