

A LAWYER'S GUIDE TO LEADERSHIP

TEN WAYS TO BOOST YOUR

STRATEGIC CONTRIBUTION



Today, an organization needs far more than legal advice from its legal function. In a turbulent world, business needs its General Counsel/Chief Legal Officer and its teams of lawyers to be top-notch leaders.

QUICK GUIDE

1. STEP UP

Guide and inspire others to do the right thing.

- > Keep your eye on the horizon.
- > Anticipate and mitigate risks.
- > Safeguard your company's reputation.

2. ASK THE HARD QUESTIONS UP FRONT

Challenge decisions to ensure that what you do today will be seen as the right thing to do in the future.

3. EMBRACE CHANGE

Innovate and be agile. Bring stakeholders together to analyze problems with new perspectives and solve problems in new ways.

4. BE STRATEGIC

Be a fully functioning member of the senior executive team who just happens to view things through the eyes of a lawyer.

5. BE CURIOUS

Embrace curiosity to unlock great leadership.

- > Understand and embrace sources of strength.
- > Seek feedback and opportunities to improve.
- > Find ways to constantly develop yourself.

6. STAY IN TOUCH WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD

Be aware of political and social forces, technical innovations, and trends that could impact your organization.

7. BE SOLUTION-FOCUSED

Don't just identify the problem. Be the one who brings answers, options, and recommendations forward.

8. COLLABORATE ACROSS FUNCTIONS

Be ready and able to interact with a broad range of individuals across the organization and externally.

9. BE TECH-SAVVY

Stay current on the latest technology trends. Sees technology as a way to make your teams more efficient, effective, and focused.

10. COMMIT TO DEVELOPMENT

Go beyond the legal function. Invest in development to build your business savvy, agility, operational excellence, and leadership.

Egon Zehnder's Legal, Compliance and Risk Practice Group are deeply involved in executive search and advisory work with some of the world's most significant public, private and PE-backed organizations and law firms. Leveraging their global network, the team recently surveyed 120+ members of the business and legal community asking what business leaders really want and need from their General Counsel/Chief Legal Officers and their teams. What came back was clear: organizations need their lawyers to be active, strategic voices in the business, stepping up to manage the challenges presented by issues such as digital technology and reputation management in the broadest possible sense. And they need to deliver this in an evolving way - drawing on their connection, awareness and understanding of both the outside world and the business itself to help the organization get to the right answer. And the right answer? This is one that is judged not just from the perspective of people today but based on how society will judge these decisions tomorrow.

For many General Counsel and legal teams, this means re-evaluating the skills needed to perform at the highest levels. More than ever, organizations look to their legal teams for more than strictly legal advice. When that happens, the GC must be ready to deliver.



**HERE ARE TEN WAYS ON HOW TO BE A LEADER,
NOT JUST A LAWYER.**



1. STEP UP

A General Counsel and other legal professionals will be called upon to guide and inspire others to do the right thing – having an eye on the horizon, anticipating, and mitigating risks around the corner before they materialize. They are custodians of reputation. They must be willing to step up and make clear that answers can't simply be found by looking at the law.



2. ASK THE HARD QUESTIONS UP FRONT

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2024 ACC ANNUAL MEETING

Join your colleagues in Nashville, TN from October 6-9, 2024 for the ACC Annual Meeting.

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3. EMBRACE CHANGE

General Counsel and their legal teams must have that drive to innovate and be agile to evolving business needs, so they are the first point of contact the business makes, and not the last team brought to the table when things go wrong. “The future GC needs to be a complex problem solver,” agreed another survey respondent. “Industries are blending together – retail companies are technology companies, technology companies are services companies, every company is a data company, and so on. There are numerous changes in how business is being conducted that will require a GC to bring stakeholders together to analyze problems with new perspectives and ultimately solve problems in new ways.”



4. BE STRATEGIC

The lawyer that companies need is not a specialty player called in to handle a specific task. Instead, the lawyer is an embedded part of the leadership team, engaged in strategic challenges and opportunities the Chief Executive Officer (“CEO”) and business faces on a daily basis. “The successful General Counsel of today and tomorrow needs to be a fully functioning member of the senior executive team who just happens to view things through the eyes of a lawyer,” said one former NASDAQ General Counsel. “They have to be more than ‘just’ an attorney. They need to be strategic business executives, who understand the business, who balance risks and rewards and who have a strong understanding of the business, the strategy and the company’s overall goals.”

2024 CHIEF LEGAL OFFICERS SURVEY

ACC’s flagship study of insights from global chief legal officers and general counsel.

[DOWNLOAD THE KEY FINDINGS](#)



5. BE CURIOUS

Curiosity is what enables lawyers to dive into the emerging topics organizations face and to deeply understand the business priorities and risks. But most of all, curiosity is at the heart of the self-development that truly unlocks great leadership. A willingness to understand and embrace sources of strengths, seek feedback and opportunities to improve, and find ways to constantly improve oneself is what enables legal experts to take that next step – from being technical experts into fully-fledged leaders.



6. STAY IN TOUCH WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD

Legal leaders can't simply focus on the operations of the company. They must be in touch with the outside world in such a way that they are able to anticipate risks on the horizon and create ways to mitigate those. What are the political and social forces that might impact the organization? What are the technical innovations that may intersect with the organization in new and challenging ways? Understanding the trends and innovations of the world outside the organization is a primary way legal teams can provide guidance and counsel in a fast-moving world.

A PROFESSIONAL NETWORK: VALUE BEYOND THE OBVIOUS, VALUE THROUGHOUT YOUR CAREER

The value of a professional network cannot be overstated and is an essential part of career growth and assistance throughout one's career.

[VIEW THE FULL DOCKET ARTICLE](#)



7. BE SOLUTION-FOCUSED

Be the one who brings answers, options and recommended ways forward. Creating simplicity out of complexity, legal leaders are true partners who focus on solutions, not just identifying the problem.

“When I am sitting with the Board or CEO, they are looking more for my views on business and strategic perspective, rather than whether something is purely and technically legal,” said one international General Counsel who has worked across the technology and automotive sectors “The GC needs to be comfortable and able to play that role.”

8. COLLABORATE ACROSS FUNCTIONS

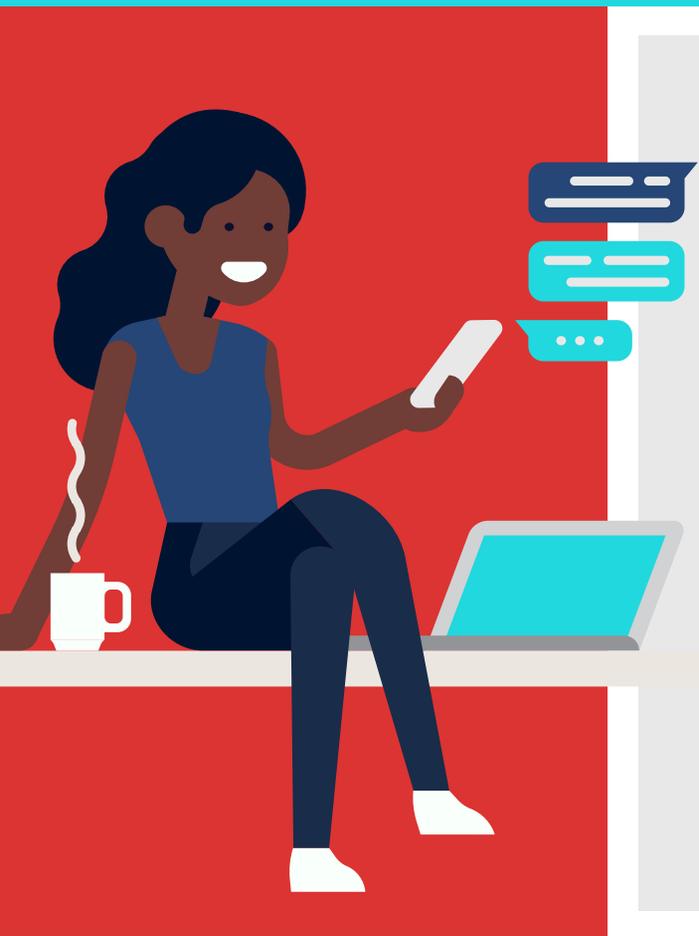
Today's complex business world demand more than a legal team that will "stay in their lane." Instead, legal leaders must be ready and able to reach out and interact with a broad range of specialist. This calls for a legal leader with excellent listening, verbal and written communication skills, who connects and works effectively with others across organizations and externally.

AGILE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY FOR LAW DEPARTMENT EXECUTIVES

Never has the role of a law department leader been more complex! Whether you are an experienced Chief Legal Officer, first-time General Counsel, or legal professionals contemplating your next leadership role, the challenges of leading in a fluid and evolving environment are innumerable.

As a result, agility is the new and required leadership currency for managing law departments that seem to face new and vexing challenges daily. That's why ACC has created this thought-provoking five-part Webcast series that provides expert voices combined with actionable techniques for showing you how to develop and gain mastery of the new leadership skill for the post-pandemic world: agility.

**WATCH THIS
WEBCAST
SERIES
ON-DEMAND**



9. BE TECH-SAVVY

Changes in technology impact every organization. Stay current on the latest technology trends and how they might affect the organization's product and also how they may affect the organization's security. Also, look for ways technology can improve the internal workings. A legal leader is focused on creating an agile and innovative ways of working, they constantly look for new and better ways of delivering. S/he sees technology as an enabler making their teams more efficient, effective, and focused on the things that matter.

ACC LAW DEPARTMENT MANAGEMENT NETWORK

The Law Department Management Network's mission is to advance the professional development of in-house corporate counsel by sharing information and resources, developing continuing legal educational programs, and creating ties to foster communication between corporate counsel practitioners.

**I WANT TO
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PEERS**

10. COMMIT TO DEVELOPMENT



Not everything a legal leader must know was taught in law school. To embrace the leadership role, step up and commit to development in your own work and in the larger workings of the legal function. Expecting more from the legal team has implications for the way in which organizations hire their General Counsel/Chief Legal Officer and legal teams. At the hiring stage, it requires a pivot from focusing on legal competencies and past experience to focusing on core leadership capabilities, growth orientation and assessing potential to grow and have impact as a leader beyond the legal function. For those lawyers already in the organization, and for the law firms where many junior lawyers start their careers, it also requires an investment in development and learning support that goes beyond ensuring lawyers are technically strong, and focusses on building the business-savvy, agility, operational excellence and leadership muscle.

If lawyers were once only consulted in times of trouble, today they're asked to be out front in the thick of decision-making. Companies now need their legal function to be an active part of the leadership team. General Counsel and legal teams must step up and embrace this expanded role. Turbulent times demand no less.

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