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75 Tips for Saving MONEY In-house



For years during my in-house practice, I kept a copy of a cartoon in my desk depicting a smiling supervisor advising his obviously beleaguered subordinate: “Jones, last year you did so much more with less that this year we are going to have you do more with nothing!” I used to take it out and look at it when I needed a laugh in light of the most recent budget cut or hiring freeze. Such economic slashes were inevitably joined with the introduction of a new product, the simultaneous filing of a lawsuit or the issuance of a new regulation; all of which required a step-up in legal services. I love situational irony.

But enough whining. As the old saw goes, “when the going gets tough, the tough get going!” And no one knows better than in-house counsel how to tighten that proverbial belt and get the job done in the face of economic calamity.

Nonetheless, we all can use some creative suggestions, especially those that save your most valuable in-house resource — you! Thus the beauty of the ACC network, as it allows us to turn to all of our colleagues and ask them to supply a few of their best cost-saving measures. And they did. So we have compiled, sometimes combined, and edited them. And we have thrown in a few ourselves. Hope they help!

1. **First, be grateful!** The best piece of advice I have for my corporate counsel colleagues in this kind of belt-tightening landscape (I’m here all the time so I’m very good at this) is: *Smile and be grateful every day that you actually have a job!*
2. **Have expertise, will travel.** Offer on-site CLE training using your network of law firms or local mediation/arbitration organizations as presenters to avoid the expense of costly CLE course registration and travel. Most law firms have prepared presentations and will have a subject matter specialist come onsite to present. The added benefit is the opportunity to ask specific questions and offer consistent training on the subject for everyone in the department. Subject ideas include: document retention, litigation holds, antitrust, subpoenas, arbitration rules, mediation best tips, various employment law topics (ADA, FMLA, WARN Act), and intellectual property basics. Offer the CLE during

the lunch hour and have it catered by a local company or brown bag it.

3. **Use your ACC resources.** When forced to “do more with less,” being proactive is especially difficult. I rely on updates in my practice areas from the *ACC Newsstand*, along with updates to the selection of Practice Profiles and InfoPAKS,SM to help me offer proactive legal support to my clients.
4. **Rise to the (ACC Value) Challenge.** We were not surprised how many tips relate to the use of outside counsel — a real money sponge. It is just for this reason that we introduced the ACC Value Challenge, seeking to reconnect value to costs for legal services. Among other things the Value Challenge provides many tools for better — and more economical — use of outside counsel. They are available at www.acc.com/advocacy/valuechallenge/toolkit/index.cfm.
5. **Prohibit the pile on.** When I am working with outside counsel, at the beginning of the project I come to an agreement as to who in the law firm will staff the project. If there is a need to add anyone else, they cannot be brought in without a justification and my written consent (which is provided via email). When the bill comes in, if there are “unapproved” counsel working on the project, the cost for their services is deducted. This not only controls the staffing, but keeps additional associates from creating memos I don’t want or answering questions I don’t have. It also causes my outside counsel to think carefully about what services are really needed. This requirement is documented in the retainer letter and it really keeps my bills down.
6. **ACC listservs provide assistance.** When I need a form, I send out a request to my colleagues on one of the various ACC listservs to which I belong. Even if the document needs some tweaking, it saves me time since I don’t have to write it from scratch, and money because I am not going to outside counsel. And my time is worth money!
7. **Postmortems produce results.** The single greatest tool inside counsel can use to reduce costs is to do a rigorous after action or lessons learned at the conclusion of each matter. That process should focus on two

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elements: First, what could your team have done more effectively and more efficiently? Second, what could your company do to avoid repeating a negative situation or recreating a good process? The first component essentially focuses on legal team process; the second on company substance and execution. Both are key elements of a learning enterprise and continuous improvement. A real world example might be the following tautology: The best way to reduce ediscovery costs is to not have litigation, and the best way to not have litigation is to make sure that you learn from past cases and eliminate the cause of the claim.

8. Tighten the reins on outside counsel.

Typically, outside counsel's involvement is limited to an advisory role, informing me of any applicable local rules, providing general background on local procedures, proposing any necessary revisions to the pleadings, accepting local service of pleadings, sending copies of such pleadings to me and appearing at any hearings unless advised to the contrary. Outside counsel is required to calendar all motions and deadlines and communicate with me to provide additional protection in such matters. I handle any and all drafting, settlement negotiations and research, unless I request otherwise in writing.

9. Clearly identify terms of compensation.

From the beginning, I put outside counsel on notice that we are not going to reimburse them for items such as upcharges, intercounsel communications, time spent organizing and drafting memos to the file or other such matters that are not within the scope of, or are tangential to, their employment.

10. Watch out for those outrageous reimbursables.

Be clear with outside counsel — and put it in your retainer letter — that you don't pay for copying or faxes (except at a cost), first-class travel, secretarial assistance or billable travel time unless counsel is actually working on that plane. Consider banning payment for late night meals or taxis home unless approved in advance or under a restriction (e.g., the user has to have been working on your materials for a certain

period of time before incurring the charge). *ACC Note: Many of our tip contributors cited variations of this one. It is a real cost saver!*

11. Establish a budget.

I make it clear to our outside counsel that any additional tasks or suggested courses of action must be approved prior to incurring any fees or costs, or outside counsel will not be compensated. That said, we try to set out a realistic budget. The uncertainties attending any litigation, however, make it subject to revision. There are numerous budgetary factors to consider, not the least of which is the level of resistance to the relief requested and the extent to which I request that the local counsel handle any additional issues which may arise.

12. Create a format for bills.

I require that time be entered in tenths of the hour showing the attorney's initials, date and substantive narrative that allows me to understand fully what is being worked on, number of units and amount for each time entry. At the end of the billing statement I require a summary showing initials, hours worked, rate and amount. This allows me to more easily analyze how time is being spent, by who, when, how and on what project, and determine whether it is appropriate. It also avoids those frequently encountered situations where the mislabeling of a matter (e.g., one number off on a code) means that I have been charged for another client's work.

13. Hire outside the box outside counsel.

Developing ongoing direct relationships with one or two contract (aka per diem) lawyers on a 1099 basis has been a great cost saver for us. Lawyers who have retired, stepped out for family reasons or work much of their time for nonprofits, can be found who have or are willing to develop expertise in the fields you need. Moreover, they are happy with the \$75-\$125 per hour rates we offer. Similarly, solo practitioners are happy to get corporate work at reduced rates. We use them to fill in temporarily for vacations or leave, and include them in legal department activities. The work is usually much more interesting than the document review projects generally offered by temp lawyer agencies. The arrangement then becomes a

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win-win for everyone involved. The pay rate and the opportunity to deal with lawyers who understand our business and corporate culture are attractive incentives for outside counsel, while the department gets greater flexibility in dealing with rush assignments, mundane projects and overflow work.

Using contract counsel is a great way to find a new hire, too. By the time you bring them on board, they are tested and true and know your business. The costs saved in time and money are immeasurable.

14. **Get temps at a discount without the hiring headache.** Notwithstanding these tough economic times when in-house legal departments are operating “lean and mean,” sometimes that overwhelming discovery request or massive due diligence project requires outside help. If you use ACC’s Alliance partner Robert Half when you hire temporary legal assistance, you will get a member discount.
15. **Think personally, act corporately.** I would ask everyone to think about spending company money as if it were your own. If that’s not incentive enough, remember that creative ideas that save money, save jobs.
16. **Avoid the discovery monster.** Discovery is the most costly and time-consuming part of litigation. I schedule a telephone conference within a few days of receiving a new claim to discuss business solutions and other alternative dispute resolutions like mediation, arbitration or even a negotiation between management one level higher than those in the dispute. With a little extra effort, business people can resolve conflict before they ever get to discovery. I also insist that outside law firms explore ADR alternatives before starting discovery.
17. **And if the worst happens...** If despite your best efforts you can’t avoid that discovery, be prepared for it. ACC’s Alliance partner Fios focuses on understanding your organization’s ediscovery business challenges in the context of current and anticipated litigation. ACC members can receive a complimentary Situation Analysis and are also eligible for a five percent discount on coinciding formal ediscovery readiness consulting services.
18. **Save a tree, save some coins — Part 1.** *ACC Docket* readers tell us that they frequently save and file articles or forward them to a colleague. Don’t do it on paper — do it electronically! When you are reading an article in the *ACC Digital Docket*, simply click “download” on the top toolbar and choose the pages you want to save. You can also send the article you made a pdf of to a colleague or client. How cool is that?
19. **Save a tree, save some coins — Part 2.** I review and edit all documents electronically, embedding explanations for proposed changes and questions to my internal clients. This saves on paper, ink, physical file space and administrative support. Agreed upon modifications just have to be accepted, not retyped (speeding up turnaround time and reducing errors) and the document becomes a negotiation summary. Comments from others can be merged and revisions can be compared to quickly find differences, also saving time and errors.
20. **Save a tree, save some coins — Part 3.** Given the plethora of large documents we deal with each day, paper usage can really add up. If you’re going to print any documents at all, print double-sided whenever possible: It’s a green way to save some greenbacks and cut back on clutter.
21. **Save a tree, save some coins — Part 4.** Check out weekly Green-house Counsel tips at www.acc.com/gogreen.
22. **Keep it in-house.** I try to identify and take on specific tasks on a case such as drafting the answer, preparing or responding to discovery requests and writing part or all of the briefs and motions, when they can be done cost-efficiently by in-house counsel. I am also generally listed as co-counsel on my cases. This allows me to not only work in partnership with my outside lawyers, but easily step in and take a more active role when I am able to effectively do so. I just started defending depositions for minor witnesses in some expensive litigation that’s otherwise being handled by a large firm. I’m admitted in the state and have tried more cases than most partners, so why not?
23. **Attend ACC Chapter CLE Courses.** Take your required CLE courses through your

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local ACC chapters — they offer many topic-specific, low-cost and convenient courses (both in terms of time and location). Compared to PLI and others, they offer huge cost savings! www.acc.com/chapters/index.cfm

24. Use the ACC Network. When I receive a shareholder proposal, I reach out to other colleagues and see if they have received something similar. Oftentimes, one proponent is sending out the same proposal to many companies. This allows me to pinpoint where work has already been done on researching an issue rather than recreating the wheel every single time. I also get a sense of how willing a proponent is to engage in a dialogue with the company.
ACC Note: We see efforts like this taking place on our listservs all the time as well as via networks created through ACC committees and chapters. ACC Annual Meeting sessions that address new topics and trends may also be useful in this regard.

25. Regis, I think I'll phone a friend. In the few rare instances when I need something very specific that I can't easily find online, I call the law librarian for my outside counsel's firm. I'm happy to pay a fee for that expert help on a case-by-case basis.

26. The internet is your ally. Stop paying for onsite legal research sites! I use findlaw.com and other free research sites to answer my questions. It is really amazing what you can find out there.

27. Access instant information! I use several free tools to conduct regular business intelligence or to spot issues/trends/risk. One of my favorites is "Google Alerts," an email system that pushes content that you're interested in (e.g., online references to your company or competitors) directly to your inbox daily.

Delivered via email every day, *ACC Newsstand* is also a quick, free way to keep up with developments and trends in different substantive areas of the law. You can customize your subscription so that you receive an *ACC Newsstand* that consists of certain topic areas, such as corporate & securities and employment & labor, among others. You can also custom-

ize according to jurisdiction, whether you practice in the United Kingdom, France, Australia or the United States. The articles are brief and topical. There is also an "email to colleague" function, so you can send helpful articles to your clients.

ACC Note: ACC Newsstand is not only free and has a database that allows you to search back publications, but it covers so many topics in a timely fashion that you can eliminate those other costly subscriptions you have. Another saving!

28. Beware the billable hour — Part 1. Consider trying to negotiate flat or commission fees if you outsource a lot of a certain type of work to outside counsel. My old law firm did a lot of collections and slip and fall litigation for a few corporate clients. When pressed, the firm agreed to do the work on an alternate fee structure that saved a lot of money for the corporate clients. In these times, many law firms are also counting pennies and may be willing to cut you a break.

29. Beware the billable hour — Part 2. For antitrust claims we use a small firm that gets paid out of class settlements. Because of this relationship, this firm also files proof of claims and gives us antitrust advice without charging us.

30. Beware the billable hour — Part 3. Over the past six months we have taken a new step in giving some of our litigation work to contingency fee attorneys. This is cost effective for us when we want to recover money, but don't want to spend a lot on monthly attorney fees. We structure a fee agreement in tiers with the contingency fee counsel: an hourly billing rate if the case is resolved at any time up to mediation, a set percentage of any amounts recovered after completion of discovery and a higher amount if recovered after the first day of trial.

31. Limit conversations with the insurer. I agree with outside counsel at the outset that he/she may not communicate with the insurer without first bringing me into the loop. This not only helps to protect the attorney-client privilege, it prevents legal expenses being driven up by unnecessary or overly lengthy communications with an insurer. In one engagement where I did

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not do this, an associate billed two hours of time to preparing a memo regarding a question about our organization's corporate structure. She never asked me if I knew the answer to the question and what's worse, she herself got it wrong. (FYI: That time was removed from the bill.)

- 32. And while we are on the subject of insurance...** You may save your company (and even yourself!) big bucks if you have professional liability insurance coverage as an officer and/or in-house counsel from ACC's Alliance partner Chubb. Who knows more about the outrageous cost of outside counsel in litigation than you? Make sure you and your company are covered should your own deposition be noticed.
- 33. Tighten that belt and watch the results.** We have recently implemented additional billing guidelines. We continue to require monthly billing, but outside counsel must also obtain authorization to exceed \$4,000 in a monthly billing period. I expect to see positive results as we hold outside counsel accountable for being aware of what and how much is being billed to the company.
- 34. Spend money to save money.** I am taking additional classes to cut costs. It is much cheaper to take a class on point than outsource the question to outside counsel. *ACC Note: In these challenging times, it is not enough just to have legal skills. You literally — and figuratively — have to understand your company's bottom line. If you don't even know how to locate that bottom line on the corporate balance sheet, then how can you help? One good example of spending money to save money is taking ACC's Mini MBA Program for In-house Counsel. Offered in conjunction with Boston University, it teaches you what you need to know about your company's marketing, finance and accounting.*
- 35. Share the pain.** In the past I have negotiated fee reduction agreements with outside counsel to help my employer through difficult patches. The reduction would be a fixed percentage off the actual bill. Outside counsel with whom the company has had a longstanding relationship were happy to comply to assist a client in difficult times.

- 36. Divide and conquer.** On all my bills, I require law firms to show the amount of time spent and dollars billed for *each entry* rather than just a description of the work done and a total at the bottom. It sounds obvious, but it's surprising how many firms will try to avoid showing how much time and money was spent on each entry. I know from my own experience that law firms often cut time from the bill when they realize the description does not justify the dollar figure sitting next to it. It also helps you to see which attorneys are efficient and which are not.
- 37. Fee not to exceed.** When I have a project where I need outside counsel, I first work with my client to establish a budget or determine the cost myself if it is within my budget. Once that limit is established, I work with outside counsel at the beginning of the project to set a "fee not to exceed" limit (or fee cap) for the project. If there is a need to go over that amount, the firm must seek my written consent, which I provide via email (after reasonable justification is given). If the bill for the project comes in above the set fee, the charges are cut to the set amount and the balance deducted. This causes my outside counsel to think carefully about how best to staff the project and provide a quality product. Outside counsel may not like this procedure, but if they work with us to implement it and if their services are good, it guarantees that they will get additional work.
- 38. Objection! Question asked and answered.** Establish keenly-honed departmental "already asked and answered" email subfolders and local drive file folders for each business unit in the corporation. This effectively saves much time in attempting to research and respond to questions that come more than once from the same units on a periodic basis.
- 39. Try this.** ACC members get special benefits when contracting with our Alliance partner Bridgeway that, among other things, provides matter management systems. This is just the type of system you may need to keep track of documents such as those created for the "already asked and answered" questions, or for the multitude of email invoices you could receive from outside counsel.

"I am taking additional classes to cut costs. It is much cheaper to take a class on point than outsource the question to outside counsel."

“By creating templates, which the paralegal can use to redline third party contracts, and checklists to review changes made to standard documents, in-house counsel can significantly reduce the need for attorney and outside counsel time.”

- 40. Put your clients to work — Part 1.** In these challenging economic conditions for companies, I think it is worthwhile to explore efficiencies that might arise from redistributing the workload. Are there tasks that the legal department is performing that can be pushed out to the business units, for example? Some in-house counsel may be reluctant to relinquish control and some business units might be hesitant to take on additional work. But if a better balance of interests can be achieved, the legal department will be free to focus on critical issues without hiring staff or engaging outside counsel, creating a more efficient organization.
- 41. Put your clients to work — Part 2.** When writing contracts for important or larger matters, drafting appropriate language and setting out the duties of each party is very important, and depends on client input. Following our initial discussion meeting — where of course I ask a variety of questions and take good notes — I ask for a narrative of what the client expects from the contract and who, in their view, needs to do what under the contract, by when and for how much. The narrative doesn't have to be formal — frequently I have the client send it to me by email. And I remind them that I'm not looking for something polished and certainly nothing in “legalese.” Often I ask the client to just send me a stream of consciousness statement outlining everything they would like the contract to accomplish, including other matters that might be relevant. This approach works very well, especially for contracts involving technical matters like business arrangements involving the internet.
- 42. Put your clients to work — Part 3.** Allow in-house business unit personnel to negotiate contractual terms with outside vendors, acting only in a “review and advise” capacity unless and until the need arises to make contact with the vendor's counsel.
- 43. Put your clients to work — Part 4.** Use a designated contract coordinator from each in-house business unit, thereby streamlining the processes from “review and advise” to final negotiation and execution of contracts in each unit. This minimizes the number of employees needed to finalize contracts.
- 44. Use the right person for the right job.** As workload increases, counsel's time grows more precious and needs to be directed more precisely. Consider what tasks, with appropriate training, can be delegated from attorneys to paralegals. Well-educated paralegals are worth their weight in gold and they will appreciate being given more substantive, productive work. One member cites training paralegals to do document review on standard contracts. By creating templates, which the paralegal can use to redline third-party contracts, and checklists to review changes made to standard documents, in-house counsel can significantly reduce the need for attorney and outside counsel time.
ACC Note: We are a real believer in this tip. That is why we are offering the In-house Paralegal Program this May in conjunction with George Washington University. We believe in service to our members and know that assisting paralegals to be the best they can be serves you as well!
www.acc.com/education/discoverinhouse.
- 45. I'm from the government and I'm here to help. No, really!** Use state and federal websites as no-cost resources. For instance, information on common employment law questions such as vacation pay-out requirements and mandatory breaks are almost always found on state department of labor websites, usually with a cite to the statute or regulation. The Federal Department of Labor website (www.dol.gov) has a wealth of information on numerous areas, such as the FLSA, including searchable opinion letters. Often, these websites provide a shortcut to a quick answer.
- 46. Verrrrryyy tricky, but we like it!** Depending on your business, this one might work: I have asked all counsel reporting to me to attempt to reallocate their time so that we apply our internal resources to operations & maintenance projects as much as possible. When they are stretched too thin, we bring in outside counsel to do work associated with capital projects. The latter does not count against our legal department's budget (so I'm happy) and is considered part of the cost of a capital asset, therefore making it depreciable (so my company is happy). Win-win.

- 47. Sample Documents — Part 1.** My favorite site for sample documents is www.onecle.com. The documents are taken from SEC filings and have the benefit of being free as well as reasonably current. The site is organized by type of document; you can also word search for more esoteric samples. Another great site is the Security Lawyer's Deskbook published by the University of Cincinnati (www.law.uc.edu/ccl/).
- 48. Sample Documents — Part 2.** ACC's website contains hundreds of sample documents. Need agreements, checklists, policies, procedures? We got 'em!
- 49. Get the right expert.** Whenever possible, I use counsel who specialize in the specific issue I am dealing with. For example, on securities issues, I consult with the best expert I can find on that topic, preferably a former senior SEC staff member in the division that's of interest to me (e.g., trading & markets or enforcement). I find that these experts are more likely to know the issues well and are better equipped to give more reliable, more nuanced and far more expeditious answers than cheaper, general securities practitioners. In the end, while the hourly rate may be higher, the bill is much lower. Two 12-minute calls with a \$750/hr lawyer beats five hours of work from a \$400/hr lawyer every time.
- 50. Use technology to cut costs and go green.** We are a global company and travel can be a big cost. We have started using teleconferencing/telepresence much more, especially for training or routine business. The technology is still not perfect, but it is more than adequate for a large number of purposes. Encourage your internal clients/company to use or invest in webcams and other face-to-face remote communications technology to save the cost of travel, as well as helping the environment. The latter is also a big focus of most companies' corporate social responsibility initiatives, so it serves a dual purpose.
- 51. Trust but verify.** I manage outside counsel very tightly. At the beginning of a project I ask for a time estimate for the work and tell them to come back to me if the project will take longer. I closely examine each bill for compliance with our policies — you would be amazed at some of the mistakes on bills that I have raised, thus saving thousands of dollars (e.g., getting billed for other clients' work or things that are outside of our outside counsel policy).
- 52. Do the first draft in-house.** I draft or markup an existing document as much as I am able and only then send it to outside counsel. That way, I do as much of the heavy lifting as time and expertise permits. Associates' drafting time can quickly add up at high billing rates. I get the benefit of being able to focus on the issues that require expertise and also expedite a review of the entire document.
- 53. Tap your local law school.** When making the decision to add personnel or invest in a new research service, I evaluate whether it is more cost effective to hire a third-year law student. They get great experience and I get a part-time employee who really has a desire to learn at \$15 an hour.
- 54. Take the burn out of setting up a hotline.** As an alternative to paying an outside vendor to provide your compliance hotline, consider setting up an electronic compliance mailbox in your organization. Encourage employees who want to make anonymous complaints to do so by establishing a third-party email account (e.g., through Gmail or Hotmail). Not only is the solution free, but it will allow you to have open, ongoing communication with the employee who does not want to be identified. This solution would be workable in organizations where all employees have computer access.
- 55. The time and money you save may be your own — Part 1.** In-house counsel are often called upon to present compliance training. Associated with that effort are hours of planning, providing and monitoring completion. Don't forget that time is money. As an alternative, ACC has arranged for its Alliance partner, WeComply, to provide ACC members with discounted training credits for online compliance training.
- 56. The time and money you save may be your own — Part 2.** Like compliance, records management — or at least much of the work surrounding it — is a task that seems to find

“The Federal Department of Labor website (www.dol.gov) has a wealth of information on numerous areas, such as the FLSA, including searchable opinion letters.”

its way to the legal department. Therefore, you have a vested interest in making sure the process is facilitated and done well. ACC Alliance partners can help with that, too. ACC members get a 10 percent discount when using the record management services provided by Jordan Lawrence.

57. **Secure favored nation status.** Negotiate your price as the “best price” the law firm offers to any of its clients into the contract. However, ascertain that the *best* price hasn’t evolved back to the *only* price that all the clients seem to get. Make sure it truly is the best price.
58. **Avoid the tyranny of the first draft.** Let’s face it. When a law firm presents you with their standard retainer letter, it is drafted to benefit them. Start the negotiation with the law firm with the form *you* created, rather than theirs. And make sure it addresses all the tips we’ve provided on managing outside counsel.
59. **School’s out!** Hire a first-year law student as a “summer counsel.” A 1L will work for a reasonable hourly rate and will likely appreciate being exposed to the practical world of in-house legal work. I have found a 1L’s ability to research discrete questions, update policies, help review template contracts and assist with other tasks to be well worth the modest cost. This has given me more bandwidth so that I can reduce the need to hire outside counsel in some areas.
60. **Two dollars for the price of one.** When purchasing legal products such as print materials, CD ROMs and webcasts, you’ll earn an “ACC Dollar” for every dollar you spend if you buy them from ACC’s Alliance partner, Thomson-West. These ACC Dollars can then be applied against fees for annual membership, our Annual Meeting, Executive Leadership Institute In-house Paralegal Program, New to In-house Institute or other local or national programs.
61. **Reducing the work week.** We are a manufacturing concern facing a bleak economic outlook, which we hope is temporary. We are going to a four-day work week, which saves on operating costs, and reducing hours from 40 to 36 per week (9 per day), adding up additional savings. It’s not cre-

ative, but we expect it to be effective.

ACC Note: Use those extra hours of free time to find bargains for your family, perform some pro bono work to help change someone else’s life (and make you feel like a million dollars) or just get some rest so you will be ready to roll at the office.


62. **Save money in the meanwhile.** Transitioning between jobs? Retired? Read on. ACC offers both a retired membership (US \$95 annually) and an in-transition membership (fees waived for the first year and reduced for a second year if needed) to ensure you can stay connected to ACC resources throughout every stage of your career. Contact us at membership@acc.com or 202.293.4103, x360 for the application form and additional information.
63. **A kind word goes a long way.** When raises and bonuses are scarce, it’s important to make sure staff feel appreciated. For the GC or any other manager, that means being the team cheerleader, remembering to praise a job well done, recognizing extra effort and simply saying thank you. Beyond the legal department, it goes a long way when you send a note of recognition to the boss of a staff member from another department who was a key contributor on a project. All these things cost nothing, but pay big benefits.
64. **Add gilt to your resume at no cost.** Author an article for the *ACC Docket* or pen an *ACC Top Ten*. It adds to your resume and gives you something to attach that reflects the knowledge you just may need to have for that new job. And if you are a presenter at ACC’s Annual Meeting, not only will it add a shine to your *vita*, you will have your registration fee waived or reduced. Can’t beat that!
65. **Moving from beauty contests to beautiful savings.** We first do a beauty contest to get law firms to bid on a matter. Then when we decide on the law firm, we use two different files for the budgeting process. One form is for litigation matters; the other is for non-litigation or project-based cases. We sit down with the law firm and decide up front what we want the firm to do, which really forces us to think about what we are willing to pay for. This may mean directing them

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away from a scorched earth approach to a bare bones plan with a thinly-staffed team. For example, this approach lets us know how many depositions we are agreeing to and, if we want to cut back to save money, how this will impact the litigation.

- 66. Degreasing the slippery slope.** Another easy way to save costs is to lay the ground rules up front. When you're calling your law firm with questions, make it clear that if the lawyer on the phone cannot answer the questions that you are posing and if he/she doesn't know the right lawyer internally who can, then you are not interested in proceeding. You may also need to be clear that you want no memo or research to be initiated.
- 67. Moving from RFPs to RFIs.** When we need vendors for major activities, I avoid the usual RFP process. Instead, I prepare a Request For Information (RFI), which is mostly a fill-in-the-blank questionnaire plus a request for documents (such as audited financial statements and insurance certificates). This creates a buyer-driven information process, rather than a vendor-driven marketing puffery. We get standardized, comparable, customized replies instead of off-the-shelf proposals with names changed. This facilitates our review and ultimate approval of what is likely to be a cost-saving effort.
- 68. Think globally, hire locally.** I prefer to retain outside counsel who are also geographically nearby in order to minimize travel-associated costs, among other expenses.
- 69. Or think locally, hire globally.** When a new firm without local offices wants to do work for me, and I believe that there is a good fit, I ask that they internalize all costs and attorney time associated with travel as a condition of being retained. In other words, I get their agreement to treat them as if they are local counsel with local offices so I get the benefit of the same.
- 70. It's not your father's (or mother's) outside counsel relationship.** When working with outside counsel, I ask them to provide more than just traditional legal services for a fee. Instead I communicate the division's legal needs, and then ask them to propose complimentary presentations (e.g., CLE) that would benefit my internal clients and/or the legal team.
- 71. Getting the best from vendors.** I expect law firms to pass on their cost savings from vendors that they use. Otherwise, I prefer using our own vendors. I clarify my expectation early in the relationship about this issue by asking for market rates and the firm's preferred rate of the vendor (usually a volume discount). I then verify this and compare it with the rates of my own vendors.
- 72. Getting the best from outside counsel.** Whether you are looking for the best expert, good local counsel, good global counsel or counsel that gives you the most bang for your buck, you can find them through ACC's listservs, referrals from fellow chapter or committee members or ACC's Member to Member program.
- 73. Enhance your leadership skills, your resume and your network.** Take an active role in an ACC chapter or committee. It doesn't cost a thing but the benefits are worth their weight in gold.
- 74. Save your company some money.** Searching for new employees can be costly. ACC's In-house Jobline,SM which allows employers to target the in-house community and reach qualified candidates more quickly, offers substantial discounts for legal departments with ACC members. I think we can agree that if your company is looking to hire a qualified colleague, that can lessen your workload — the faster, the better.
ACC Note: But enough about the company. Let's talk about you. ACC's Jobline is also there when you need it. Post your résumé at no charge, and get access to almost 1,000 job postings for in-house positions around the world, spanning all disciplines of the law. Searching for a new position is costly — not finding one is even more so. Let ACC help (www.acc.com/jobline).
- 75. Your tip here.** If you have a new idea that we have not mentioned, please send the editorial team an email to editorinchief@acc.com with the subject line: "75 tip for Docket Article". Once we review the tips, we will publish the best one in the June issue in the Inter Alia section. The deadline for tips is April 15.

"When raises and bonuses are scarce, it's important to make sure staff feel appreciated."

Do all of these suggestions incite you to share your own best tips? If so, send them to editorinchief@acc.com. 

Have a comment on this article?
Email editorinchief@acc.com.

Special appreciation goes to our many members who contributed their best tips.

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“ACC’s In-house Jobline,SM which allows employers to target the in-house community and reach qualified candidates more quickly, offers substantial discounts for legal departments with ACC members.”