

<b>Page: Submitter's Information</b>
<b>Chapter Name</b> ACC Connecticut
<b>Page: Achievement Award</b>
<b>Category</b> Best Membership Strategy Implemented
<b>Chapter Name</b> ACC Connecticut
<b>Chapter Size</b> Small (fewer than 300 members)
<b>Entry Title</b> "Legal Minds Meet Local Flavors" - ACC -CT Chapter and Friends Monthly Lunch Brunch
<b>Entry Description</b> <p>In December 2024, the Board of Directors of the Association of Corporate Counsel – Connecticut Chapter (ACC-CT) launched a bi-monthly networking lunch series for in-house attorneys in the Hartford area. These informal gatherings are hosted and attended by Board members, with each event held at a different local venue to spotlight area establishments.</p> <p>While the initiative began in Hartford, plans are underway to expand these lunches to other regions across Connecticut where our members live and work. Attendees are encouraged to bring a prospective member—whether a colleague from their company or another in-house counsel connection.</p> <p>To further promote engagement, a subsequent quarterly newsletter featured highlights from the event, including a spotlight on an ACC-CT member who attended, along with updates on other chapter activities.</p>
<b>When was the program initiated?</b> 12/4/2024
<b>What was the project objective? Describe the steps you took to achieve this objective, including key strategies, activities, or milestones.</b> <p>Our primary objective was to boost member engagement, showcase the activities of ACC-CT, and encourage new membership. The event was designed to foster ongoing networking and strengthen connections among in-house counsel in a relaxed, informal setting.</p> <p>To promote the event, we leveraged a multi-channel approach that included email invitations and notifications, regular posts on the ACC-CT LinkedIn page, and consistent reminders leading up to the event.</p>
<b>How was the objective achieved? How did you measure success, and to what extent do you believe the objective was met?</b> <p>As of May 2025, we have successfully hosted three “Legal Minds Meet Local Flavors” events. Each gathering has welcomed at least one new ACC-CT member who was introduced through a previous event, and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.</p> <p>While attendance is one indicator of success, we place equal value on the broader impact of our outreach efforts. Our communications—both leading up to and following each event—have played a key role in educating members and elevating the visibility of the series.</p>
<b>Please describe the total budget allocated for your program or initiative. Include a brief breakdown of how the funds were distributed across key areas. In addition, explain how the budget was used effectively or creatively to maximize impact.</b> <p>This initiative was launched without requiring any funding or impacting the ACC-CT annual budget. Board member Elena Antonetti, who chairs the program, has played a key role by leveraging her local knowledge and team to identify new venues for each gathering. Attendees cover the cost of their own meals, which we believe fosters a sense of ownership and commitment to participate.</p> <p>Board member Jessica Zimmerlin, our Communications Chair, designed a newsletter highlighting the event, using her in house resources without funding from ACC-CT. She then prepares the follow-up newsletters that highlight each event, showcases a member attendee and share updates with the broader membership.</p> <p>As the program expands to new regions, we plan to allocate modest funding to support events in less familiar locations.</p>

**What significant obstacles or challenges did you encounter during the planning or implementation of your program or initiative? How did you address or overcome them? If you did not face major challenges, please explain why that may have been the case and what factors contributed to the smooth execution of your work.**

During the lunch planning process, we were mindful of budget considerations—specifically, how the costs would be covered, the potential financial impact on ACC-CT, and how best to manage those concerns. One key issue we identified was the risk of registrants not showing up if the event were prepaid by the organization.

To mitigate this, we decided that for our first event, each attendee would be responsible for their own expenses. While we would handle selecting and coordinating the venue, individuals would pay their own way. We believed this approach would encourage personal investment and reduce financial risk for ACC-CT.

This model has proven successful for everyone involved—attendees participate out of genuine interest and commitment, and the feedback we've received has been overwhelmingly positive.

**What do you anticipate will be the long-term impact of your project or initiative? Describe how the outcomes will extend beyond the immediate results, including any lasting benefits to the local/global ACC community. If applicable, explain how the initiative might be sustained, scaled, or replicated in the future.**

The Board of ACC-CT firmly believes that this initiative will increase awareness, education and comradery among members. Because of the success of the program, we will be extending invitations to our outside legal sponsor to join members at the lunch, as a benefit to becoming a sponsor of some other program during the year. This will increase the incentive to becoming a sponsor, increase opportunities for expanding personal networks for members and increase awareness of our Chapter as a whole. As we grow and hopefully need larger capacity facilities for lunch, we may be able to provide partial funding to be able to reserve those facilities

**Please share what you are most proud to report about execution of this program. Please explain what this accomplishment means to you and how it reflects the values or goals of your work.**

During the 2024–2025 term, the ACC-CT Board of Directors welcomed five new members—Elena Antonetti, Jessica Zimmerlin, Gayle Wintjen, Dan Tedesco and Jason Hamilton—who now make up half of the Board. This event was spearheaded by these new members in collaborating with our Chapter Administrator Ella Johnson, and made possible through their initiative, collaboration, and commitment to launching a program aimed at increasing awareness and growing membership.

Over the past two years, the Board experienced several retirements, and we faced challenges in identifying members with both the interest and availability to serve. Successfully engaging these five outstanding individuals to join the Board is a significant achievement. Their fresh perspectives, energy, and enthusiasm have reinvigorated the entire Board and sparked renewed engagement across the Chapter.

This aligns with one of our Chapter’s core goals: to foster deeper involvement among members, which in turn supports membership growth. Encouragingly, we've seen our membership rise from 164 to 193 over the past 18 months—a clear sign that our efforts are making an impact.

**Please share how your project or initiative is innovative. Describe any original approaches, strategies, or tools you used to address a problem or achieve your goals. What makes your work stand out from more traditional methods.**

We were seeking ways to boost member engagement and attract new members—not just to our Chapter overall, but also to spark interest in serving on the Board. Our goal was to create opportunities for meaningful conversations in a relaxed, social setting. That’s how “Legal Minds Meet Local Flavors” was born.

Unlike many of our other events, which are centered around CLE sessions followed by cocktails, this program offers a more casual, non-alcoholic environment focused on networking. It provides members with a refreshing break in the middle of the workday, fostering connection and community. Additionally, it introduces attendees to new and local dining spots they might not have discovered otherwise.

**Photo upload #1**

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**Please share any additional supplemental materials related to your submission.**

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**Please share the link to any video files related to your submission.**