

## **Elevate the Enterprise: In-House Counsel as Influencing Strategists**

### **How In-House Counsel Can Shape Corporate Direction and Organizational Success**

The influence of legal functions in corporate spaces is more critical than ever amid rapid regulatory change, global uncertainty, and increased stakeholder expectations. Legal teams can evolve from reactive problem-solvers to forward-thinking partners who shape the goals, values, and direction of organizations.

#### **Objectives for In-House Counsel**

- Demonstrate how legal contributes to long-term business planning and sound, reasonable decision-making.
- Provide pragmatic and practical approaches in including legal considerations early in the planning and execution stages.
- Advance the role and visibility of in-house counsel within the organization.

#### **Positioning Legal as a Business Partner**

In-house counsel have the opportunity to create value beyond risk management and compliance gatekeeping. By finding ways to demonstrate how the legal department can strengthen business progression, corporate legal teams can enable strategy, not just police it.

Moments to provide impact include annual planning cycles, product launches, major transactions, policy development, and operational initiatives. Identifying these moments and capitalizing on them provides tangible insight into integrating legal at a high level with significant impact.

#### **Building Influence Through Alignment and Partnership**

To build lasting and durable influence across the organization, in-house counsel can start by deepening relationships with business leaders – learning their pressure points, priorities, and success measures – and clearly, consistently translating legal advice into business terms such as revenue impact, customer experience, cost, and operational realities. That trust enables legal to shift from a “stop sign” posture to a strategic, pathfinding mindset that assists executives in weighing tradeoffs and making informed decisions in complex situations.

Embedding legal into organization processes, whether via checkpoints, governance forums, or practical playbooks, makes good judgment routine and simplifies choices for non-lawyers. Consider how your team can reflect the sophistication and value of modern corporate legal teams.

Influence also grows through disciplined, strategic use of data. Metrics like matter trends, compliance patterns, and risk indicators, show where legal accelerates outcomes, where resources are most needed, and where insights can guide continuous improvement. By keeping an external lens, legal proactively

monitors regulatory developments, litigation patterns, and industry trends then aligns those signals with commercial goals, differentiating themselves as proactive counsel.

Additional strategies include scenario planning that clarifies the best, worst, and most-likely outcomes, forward-thinking innovating, and distilling complex issues into clear, actionable recommendations that instill confidence in executive decision making. Storytelling that highlights how legal mitigated risk, improved outcomes, or accelerated progress can reinforce legal's role as a tactical value partner and strengthens the shared view that counsel advances organization resilience.

## **Practical Tools for General Counsel and Teams**

- Templates: risk and opportunity matrix; planning session agenda with legal integration points; map of legal-business alignment.
- Quick wins: stakeholder listening tours, legal office hours, targeted dashboards that increase influence and visibility.

## **Galloway Partners with In-House Teams**

In-house counsel can shape and elevate organizational direction by embedding legal thinking into business operations and planning. Legal's purpose goes beyond protecting the organization - it can help the business advance with confidence, clarity, and foresight. And partnership with outside counsel like Galloway Johnson Tompkins Burr & Smith provides corporate law capability that moves businesses forward.

*Note: this content was originally presented to ACC Dallas.*

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