

From CLO to CEO: A Roadmap for Legal Professionals

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Learn how to leverage your legal expertise into a broader leadership role. This checklist offers invaluable insights to legal professionals aiming to transcend traditional legal roles and thrive in the c-suite.

This resource is based on the ACC webcast "[Storytelling Series: Careers Beyond the Legal Department 2.0](#)" featuring Wola Joseph-Condotti, Group Managing Director/CEO of West Power and Gas Limited. The session provided a comprehensive guide based on her remarkable journey from legal practice to CEO.

Key Strategies for Career Advancement

1. Cultivate Excellence and Curiosity:

- ☐ **Strive for excellence in all endeavors**, from academic to professional life.
- ☐ A **curious mindset** drives continuous learning and going above and beyond expectations.
- ☐ An **excellent mindset** ensures that you always want to go above and beyond in all tasks settling you apart for success early on.

2. Build a Robust Legal Foundation:

- ☐ **Develop strong legal expertise early** in your career.
- ☐ **Be open to learning** and strategic about where you begin your legal training, as this foundation can significantly impact future success

3. Seek Cross-Functional Experience:

- ☐ Actively pursue roles that offer **exposure beyond the legal department**.
- ☐ **Cross-functional experience** in areas such as HR, operations, customer service, and regulatory affairs can be crucial in preparing for a CEO position.

4. Reframe Your CV:

- ☐ To **overcome "your CV is too legal" barrier**, articulate your experience in commercial terms.
- ☐ Highlight how your legal work has contributed to **data-driven improvements and cost savings** for the

5. Develop Financial Acumen:

- ☐ Gain a strong **understanding of financial principles**.
- ☐ **Learn to interpret financial statements**, comprehend budgeting, understand business strategy, and analyze balance sheets.

6. Embrace Intentional and Influential Leadership:

- ☐ Transition from being a "risk-averse blocker" to a **calculated risk-taker**.
- ☐ Lawyers must learn to **balance legal considerations with commercial realities** and effectively influence commercial teams.

7. Develop Financial Acumen: Master Business-Oriented Communication:

- ☐ Blend legal advice with a commercial **perspective**.
- ☐ **Avoid legalese** and instead provide clear, business-aligned, and solution-oriented opinions that empower stakeholders to make informed decisions, not just mitigate risk.

8. Prioritize Mentorship and Sponsorship:

- ☐ **Seek out multiple mentors** across various aspects of your life—career, family, and personal growth.
- ☐ **Nurture these relationships** to support your long-term goals.
- ☐ Remember that **competence is key to attracting sponsors** who advocate for your advancement.

9. Cultivate Business Presence and Thought Leadership:

- ☐ **Leverage platforms like LinkedIn** to connect with peers, share insights, engage in industry discussions, and build a visible professional brand.
- ☐ LinkedIn can expose you to what others are doing with ACC and other organizations.

10. Foster Positivity, Gratitude, and Support Systems:

- ☐ Recognize that **professional challenges are inevitable**.
- ☐ **Cultivate resilience, gratitude, and a positive outlook** while building strong support systems to navigate your career journey.

Bonus Insight: Lawyers should shed the role of mere "gatekeepers" and instead become **collaborative enablers** of business success.

Learn More:

- Watch the recording of this session "[Storytelling Series: Careers Beyond the Legal Department 2.0](#)"

Check out:

- [Career Advancement Toolkit for In-house Lawyers](#)
- [ACC Career Development](#)
- [Exploring Careers Beyond the Legal Department](#)
- [7 Tips for In-house Lawyers Who Use LinkedIn](#)

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