

THE IN-HOUSE LEGAL BUSINESS PARTNER



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Today's in-house legal departments operate in an increasingly complex environment. It's a juggling act to balance a range of challenging legal issues as well as greater strategic involvement with other parts of the business, with limited costs.

Lack of transparency

Another challenge is the potential threats that may occur unexpectedly. Since legal departments are not always included in all the different business processes and decisions, they can't possibly map out all the incoming risks.

This lack of transparency not only leads to limited risk control but also means that decisions can become reactive, rather than pro-active, not to mention inefficient processes and unexpected costs

The evolving role of the in-house legal department

It's clear that many legal departments struggle to manage the delicate balance between business opportunities, risks and available resources. However, another challenge they face is changing expectations in the business so that they are not just thought of as problem-fixers that are called in after incidents have already occurred, without any prior knowledge?

All legal departments have a clear ambition to act as world-class business partners whilst managing potential threats to their business. Moreover, they want to enable new business opportunities and contribute to the overall success of the organisation.



It's easy to see that the role of the modern General Counsel and the legal team is evolving from a 'legal expert' to a proactive, strategic business partner, risk and crisis manager and responsible for corporate conscience.

However, how can they achieve all of this with scarce resources and limited budgets? In-house legal departments are already struggling to meet the demands placed on them which means their ambition to act as a world-class business partner can seem out of reach.

[How can you run your legal department like valued business partner?](#)

It's vital for in-house legal departments to establish a close partnership with the rest of the business. This partnership is beneficial for both parties as it enables the business to focus on creating new opportunities, whilst ensuring the business remains compliant, as well as proactively preventing issues further down the line.

To get this co-operation running smoothly it is important to get both parties involved in the early stages. A smooth operation delivers a maximum contribution to the success of the organisation.

Proactive Decision Making

Cost Effective

Efficiencies

Transparency

Risk Control



BRIEFING

The vital role of Technology

In order to achieve their objective of becoming a strategic business partner, in-house legal departments need to take advantage of integrated technology approach. The success of such an approach depends on the completeness of the following steps and the order in which they should be executed:

- 1. UNDERSTAND:** gain insight into the business processes and establish an adequate understanding of how the organisation functions as a whole. This is a team effort from multiple departments, such as legal, IT and the rest of the business.
- 2. PRIORITISE:** based on the understanding of these processes, the creation of a heat map should be the next step. This heat map will identify issues, enable prioritisation and with the right tooling can make an easy-to-use assessment of probability and impact. Transform Data International and Step Up Smart have developed a legal compliance assessment tool to assist with this step.
- 3. REALISE:** once the prioritisation is done, it is time for the actual operational improvement by creating end-user self-service AI automation tools. Applications built in Neota's no-code AI automation platform can achieve this.

This third step is where the IT department plays a vital role in understanding the (legal) business processes. With this understanding they can look at various technologies available to enable a more efficient and integrated way of working. In other words: it will provide solutions to enable an overall alignment of all legal aspects within the organisation.

It is clear that smart legal IT solutions, often called LegalTech, can make a significant difference. The most mature organisations

have standard processes for managing IT changes, including approaches for preparation and planning phases. Therefore, IT can play a vital role working alongside in-house legal departments and the rest of the business to deliver the change.

Conclusion



Maximising success in business is delivered by an undisturbed and smooth execution of the business and legal responsibilities. Legal and compliance issues are an integral part and becoming more and more important. As such, proactively identifying and mitigating legal and compliance risks in business processes are essential. A multi-disciplinary approach, early legal involvement, real insights in the business and staff processes, facilitated by innovative IT solutions makes success far more likely.



info@transformdata.eu
www.transformdata.eu



info@stepupsmart.eu
www.stepupsmart.eu



info@neotalogic.com
www.neotalogic.com

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