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# ACC DOCKET

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## The Guardians at the Door

### Law Department Management



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Did you know that the month of March is named for the Roman God Mars? As leaders — or gods, if you will — of your law department, it's only fitting that the March issue of *ACC Docket* focuses on law department management. Like any Roman god, you lead the charge for your organization when it comes to protecting and enhancing its mission and purpose. You make the tough legal decisions, wielding the superpowers you obtained in law school to protect and serve not only your company, but the legal profession as a whole.

Ok, so we're not really gods, and it takes your entire organization — from the CEO to the new intern in marketing — to successfully meet and exceed the company's goals. However, as unofficial/official guardians at the door, in-house counsel have a responsibility to make sure that the practices used in their law departments are not only ethical and lawful, but also forward-thinking and in touch with the current business climate.

For example, there was once a time when you would never think to sign a contract from your laptop. With business operations spanning countries and continents this is no longer the case. This month's cover story, written by corporate counsel at DocuSign, explores the use of electronic signature tools and offers tips on advising clients, both internal and external, on how to best use this technology.

Not only do our business leaders expect us to be aware of the legal issues that affect our particular business, and the technological advances that will assist us in addressing them, but they also expect us to select the very best outside counsel to support those needs. "Fixing What's Broken: Strategies for Increasing Diversity in Law Firms" offers strategies on what to look for when retaining firms that not only have a pool of talented lawyers to choose from, but who also have a proven commitment to diversity — demonstrated in the hiring and promotion of minorities and women. This particular point is something I personally look for when making outside counsel hiring decisions. While strides have been made, diversity in our profession is still an uphill battle in the United States, especially in leadership positions. According to a 2014 study done jointly by Vault.com and the Minority Corporate Counsel Association, while minorities and women make up more than 40 percent of law firm attorneys, almost 75 percent of partners in these same firms are white men.

Faced with those statistics, managing a law department can feel like a challenge that requires god-like abilities. We must juggle outside counsel, cross border legal teams, issues concerning IP and spend, staff and more. As always, ACC has your back, with resources like this issue of the *Docket*, as well as many more available in our Resource Library at acc.com. For example, recent program materials include "Exposing Legal Project Management Myths: The Truth Behind What Works and What Doesn't," and the *ACC Chief Legal Officer (CLO) 2015 Survey*.

In addition, I encourage you to check out the Law Department Management Committee, which provides resources and information prepared especially for members who manage people, workflow, knowledge and legal service providers within in-house legal departments.

After all, not even an in-house god can do it all alone.

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