



2021 in Review: Top 10 Lessons In-house Counsel Learned

Diversity and Inclusion

Environmental

Skills and Professional Development

Technology, Privacy, and eCommerce



Although not as chaotic as 2020 (thankfully), this past year still had some trying moments. From grappling with hybrid workplaces to advocating for attorney-client privilege in Europe, we've curated the most pressing lessons in-house counsel learned in 2021.

1. Championing DEI

“Let’s be honest: As employment attorneys, we have been stifling progress. But the good news is, we are also uniquely situated to help develop creative, Title VII-friendly approaches to move the needle.”

– DEI, Esq.

Discover how your HR and legal departments can promote [DEI](#) at your company.

2. Refreshing your mindset

“When you’re changing industries or starting a new role, whether you have five years of experience or 20, you have to go into each situation as a student.”

– Martin Felli, EVP, CAO, and CLO at Blue Yonder

For more advice on advancing to the C-suite, read the rest of this article on Martin Felli.

3. Building an ESG program

“Review what others in your industry are doing, as well as ESG leaders. This isn’t only about keeping up with your neighbors. Find out how you can excel and differentiate yourself from the pack.”

– Noah Webster, Chief Legal and Compliance Officer at Zix Corporation

Make your business more sustainable with guidance from this ESG case study.

4. Adapting to hybrid workplaces

“When some people start being in the office when others are not, or are in the office on alternate schedules, or are in different offices, we have to continue to be inclusive with team meetings.”

– Lamis Hossain, Legal Director of Product at Uber Health

Improve your remote leadership skills with advice from this exclusive Q&A.

5. Advocating for privilege

“[In Spain], there is no real difference between in-house and law firm practitioners as members of the bar. And in that sense, it is important to underscore that nobody can call themselves a lawyer (including an in-house lawyer) or give legal advice as counsel, unless they are an active member of the bar registered as ‘practicing lawyer.’”

– Javier Ramírez, Vice President and Associate General Counsel of Regions Litigation at HP Inc.

Learn more about Spain's privileged conversations in this dual-language interview.

6. Protecting privacy internationally

“Data hosting location and data portability are therefore important considerations, not just from the Data Privacy angle, but also as regards global trade restrictions risk assessment.”

– Stephen H. Baird, Associate General Counsel at SITA

Find out how the winds of trade have impacted the global economy, from privacy to patent law.

7. Creating (and sticking to) healthy habits

“Whether we want to increase our daily meditation, exercise more, reduce our social media use or negative self-talk — we need to start by creating small and consistent actions and routines.”

– Caterina Cavallaro, General Counsel at Standards Australia

Follow these "Positively Legal" tips to increase mindfulness and decrease stress.

8. Expecting the unexpected with litigation

“Be mindful that there are factors outside of counsel’s control that can impact the litigation, such as uncooperative opposing counsel, unfavorable judicial rulings, a high volume of data received from the opposing party or third parties, and unexpected world situations, such as pandemics and natural disasters.”

– Dan Happe, Cynthia Rowe, and Leslie Witterschein

Prepare your company for whatever [litigation](#) woes that 2022 has in store.

9. Embracing legal tech

“Legal teams have also become more open to technology than ever before. Historically, most legal departments have been tech resistant, but the events of the past year and a half have forced everyone, ready or not, to embrace new tools for remote working.”

– Deana Uhl and Mary Beth Blair

Mixed up from [implementing](#) AI remotely? Navigate legal tech with this straightforward [roadmap](#).

10. Creating a personal brand

“Over the past year, I have come to understand that we all have a personal brand. The question is whether we know what it looks like and if we will tap into it and let others see.”

– Niti Nadarajah, Head of Legal (Australia) at Philip Morris

Learn more about crafting your professional image with this "Personal Branding" column.

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