



Unleashing Breakthrough Performance: Focusing your Legal Department

Deepening Relationships with Business Stakeholders for Corporate Counsel

The legal department of a Fortune 100 international manufacturer of consumer goods was struggling with being a better partner to their business stakeholder. The legal department was well embedded with their business partners but was focusing too much energy and time on work that was low-impact. The legal department was also stretched very thinly because it was spending significant amounts of time on one-on-one counseling rather than advising multiple stakeholders simultaneously.

We designed a four-step process to transform the relationship between the business and the legal department. The heart of this process was an effort/impact matrix that quickly and succinctly identified the types of work that the lawyers were engaged in that did not add much value to the client but were taking up significant resources from the legal team. Then, the individual attorneys (with training) used this tool to facilitate frank and candid discussions with their stakeholders regarding the types of work that each party should be focusing on, and how they could better work together to achieve their common goals. The result of these meetings was a shared agreement that at least three low-impact areas of counseling would be eliminated from each attorney's workload. In each instance, the lower value work was shifted to a more economic solution to maintain a comparable level of support to the business.

In a follow-up analysis among key business stakeholders, satisfaction and overall rating of the corporate legal department skyrocketed (certain key metrics showed a 20% year-over-year improvement) while the overall risk portfolio of the client was being more effectively monitored and managed by the newly unburdened legal department. The client had also managed to trim over \$800,000 from its annual legal budget by rationalizing its legal service providers to the risks being managed.