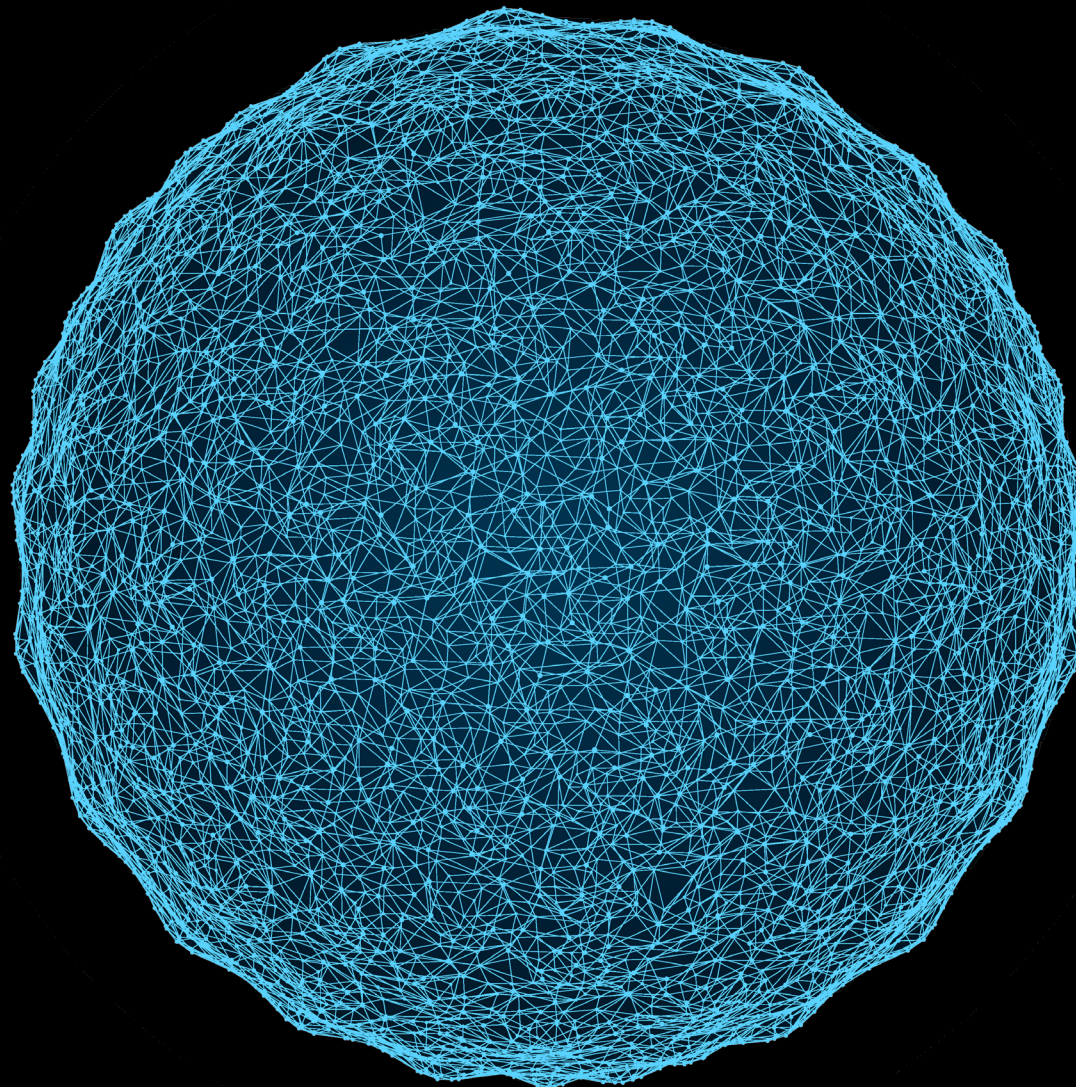


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**Connectors**

To reshape the future of corporate legal departments, transform service delivery

## Connectors

# To reshape the future of corporate legal departments, transform service delivery

Legal departments have traditionally operated at their own pace, managing legal risks and transactions and generally serving as business enablers. Legal is also tasked with the important duty of protecting the company against risk and is staffed with highly specialized individuals, which, in the past, has helped Legal avoid broad transformation initiatives focused on reining in costs. That being said, the need to transform is becoming increasingly clear in an environment in which all functions are being asked to do more with less—including Legal.

Today, Chief Legal Officers (CLOs), General Counsels (GCs), and other Legal leaders are under pressure to catch up with the rest of the business when it comes to service delivery, processes, and capabilities transformation. They're being asked to contain costs and deliver a higher level of efficiency, insight, and partnership to the business. And that will most likely require the transformation of Legal service delivery.

Sitting on the sideline as transformative capabilities such as automation, artificial intelligence, and cloud computing take their course throughout the rest of the business is not an option. Here are some considerations for Legal leaders moving into the brave new world of legal service delivery transformation.

# Start with strategy

## **Get real—and be vocal about it**

Historically, CLOs and GCs have faced limited cost reduction pressure from their organizations given the legal department's need to mitigate risk and protect the legal interests of the business at all costs. However, driven by the unprecedented competitive and cost pressures in the legal ecosystem today, corporate legal departments, and their organizations, are increasingly seeing this trend change. Today, more than ever, CLOs and GCs are expected to create a service delivery strategy for their departments to not only deliver top-quality legal services but to do so in an increasingly cost-efficient manner.

## **Identify the “Legal services delivery champion”**

Whether the GC or someone else, an active point person will be an essential part of guiding changes to the Legal operations and service delivery model. In some organizations, these people are even given the formal title of Legal Operations. Don't treat this as an afterthought: Organizations should take the time to choose the right person for the right role and then make sure the rest of the organization is aware of the role, what it means, and what to expect.

## **Just ask**

While it may seem obvious, it can be easy to lose sight of the fact that service delivery is about delivering services to people. What do they really need? Where is the current approach missing the mark? What would make their jobs easier? There's no need to guess. This is the perfect opportunity to simply ask the internal consumers of your services these questions (and many more) and then use their insights to drive your approach.

# Map your processes

## Start at the process level

Many lawyers do not often think of their organizations in terms of process flows—an approach that comes naturally to more process-oriented parts of the business, such as, say, the supply chain organization. But the same level of discipline is needed to transform Legal. It's time to take a closer look at the people in the organization, the processes they follow, what bottlenecks exist, and more. A granular understanding of these issues can be instrumental in running a successful Legal transformation.

## Take a good look at talent

Your people—and how they are organized—are a huge part of the service delivery equation. Do you have too many attorneys and not enough staff? Too many staff and not enough attorneys? Is your organization centralized, with a single GC at the center? Is it decentralized, with individual structures aligned to individual business units? Is it a hybrid model? Most important, how should you be organized to operate most effectively for Legal and to serve your business?



# Find new service enablers

## **Legal is unique in another way**

Unlike other parts of the business, Legal organizations typically source work at virtually every level—not just lower-level tasks. For example, high-level specialized work may be sourced to more costly outside counsel law firms, while more of the repeatable, transactional work may be delivered through a lower-cost legal process outsourcer (LPO). This presents unique opportunities and needs for Legal, compared with other functions that can simply push to a lower-cost provider.

## **Should there be a COE for that?**

Identify processes and tasks that are repeatable across the legal department—those (like contract drafting) that could benefit from standardization. What if, rather than each business unit having its own legal contract drafting group, or Legal having a standalone contracting group, this key task were handled through shared services? For example, a center of excellence (COE) for the entire business could be a more effective and efficient approach and increase Legal's role as a partner to the business. There are likely many opportunities to put shared services strategies to work today in order to make the Legal department and the business more effective.

## **Lean on other groups**

Legal is often among the last major functions to pursue large-scale updates to its service delivery capabilities. Seek out functions that have already undergone transformation within your organization to identify what worked, what didn't, and what might have been done differently. While these learnings may not directly apply to Legal, many of the lessons learned will provide direct insights to your transformation. Building rapport with other functions and the business can help as well. Plan on enlisting others (such as IT) to play more involved, ongoing roles in your efforts.

# To transform your business, transform your operating model

After years of serving the business as they executed a range of cost-reduction initiatives, Legal has become the center of attention in many organizations looking for every possible advantage. Many would say this is long overdue, not only for cost reasons but also because of the desire for Legal to become a more strategic partner to the business and a leading example of operational efficiency within the organization. Transforming how Legal services are delivered will likely play a big role in this important evolution. If you want to know more about how those approaches can be put to work in your Legal organization, we can help.

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