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ACC Value Champions Carry the Flaming Torch

Law Department Management





Sirisha Gummaregula, chief operating officer at QuisLex.

The 2019 ACC Value Champions who convened at the ACC Annual Meeting said they started their value initiatives in response to an external impetus: They landed in new companies due to spin-offs, or responded to market challenges by undertaking extreme cost-cutting. There were many references to fire — from hot embers to burning platforms. It was compelling to hear how these Value Champions, and those before them, carried on after fighting those threatening flames, becoming torchbearers by

spreading carefully tended new value-focused management practices.

When Deutsche Bank teamed up with QuisLex to create an eDiscovery Center of Excellence, they provided their proof of concept by tackling some of the most significant matters to get big results. “Then others wanted to get in on that,” noted Sirisha Gummaregula, chief operating officer at QuisLex. “You need to market [your initiative] internally.”

Past Value Champion and soon-to-be general counsel at MSA Safety, Stephanie Sciullo, agreed that internal perception is essential. She pointed out that Legal at MSA got momentum when new hires were selected in part because of proven skillsets in project management, process improvement, and financial analysis. People noticed, and the legal department gained influence by garnering respect.



Stephanie Sciullo, soon-to-be general counsel at MSA Safety.

Similarly, McAfee’s value initiative, creating a tool to intake, triage, and route legal requests, created the capacity to embed lawyers in the business units more deeply. “We got more involved with the business clients, even though we were sending them into a tool,” said Ron Wills, senior director and chief of staff to the president and chief revenue officer. “We were discovering risks we were not aware of by getting involved earlier in the product development lifecycle.”



McAfee's Ron Wills, senior director and chief of staff to the president and chief revenue officer, and Katherine Neumon, global marketing and business attorney.

Law firm co-Value Champions also reported radiating effects. Their solutions to burning client challenges led to enhanced practices they could take to other clients. Both Thompson Coburn and past honoree Ogletree Deakins, partnering with Rabo Finance and hhgregg respectively, revamped how processes, people, and data were deployed to improve the cost-effectiveness of legal services. What began as bespoke solutions are now enhancing the firms' value propositions elsewhere.



Fred Paulmann, CEO at the Counsel Management Group.

When the conversation turned to macro trends, two-time co-Value Champion Fred Paulmann, CEO of the Counsel Management Group, pointed to increasing sophistication in applying data analysis to outside counsel management. Like his clients Toyota Motors N.A. and Andeavor, more legal departments are using data to set parameters within cascading levels of decision-making. Learning about how to anticipate scope, set fees, and manage one type of matter or phase is applied to others — the torch touches and the flame spreads (but nothing burns down).

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