



Q&A with Anita Omonuwa Ogbalu on the ACC In-house Certification Program

Skills and Professional Development



In-house counsel must always hone their skills to compete in the ever-changing legal industry. To meet this demand, the [ACC In-house Certification Program](#) teaches in-house counsel the essential competencies that demonstrate their value to the business. The intensive program is virtual and attracts in-house counsel from around the world.

Anita Omonuwa Ogbalu — commercial legal advisor, employee and corporate council member at MTN Nigeria — recently graduated from the program and shares how the certification is an investment in her career.



Anita Omonuwa Ogbalu

Commercial Legal Advisor, Employee and Corporate Council Member

MTN Nigeria

ACC In-house Certification Program 2021 graduate

ACC: Why did you decide to participate in the ACC In-house Certification Program? What made it stand out?

Anita Omonuwa Ogbalu: I have always been an advocate for continuous learning and development, and was in search of a program that would equip me with the necessary tools needed to be successful in my current role as an in-house counsel in MTN Nigeria. MTN Nigeria is the largest telecommunications operator in Nigeria with a market share of over 40.1 percent.

The ACC In-house Certification stood out as an all-encompassing training program with modules specifically tailored for in-house counsels encouraging out of the box thinking, practical brainstorming exercises, and a great networking hub with other colleagues

Can you share a key takeaway(s) from the program? In other words, what was a key lesson or message that you were able to take back and immediately apply in your legal department?

A key takeaway for me was the need to identify my client, understand that I serve as the conscience of the organization, and most importantly, appreciate reporting lines and support a culture of crisis preparedness. The latter is particularly important in a country, such as Nigeria, that has a constantly shifting regulatory and policy environment.

Also, in my role as an employee council representative, the program reinforced the need to be conscious of potential risks to the organization and to support and assist my constituents through organizational change.

You were a member of one of the first cohorts that completed the ACC In-house Certification Program in the virtual format over multiple weeks. How did you find the virtual format and did it still provide opportunities to connect and engage with your fellow attendees?

I think the virtual sessions were very well planned and delivered the expected value. Whilst networking face to face with colleagues is always priceless, the breakout sessions and presentation requirement of the course provided ample opportunities to connect and engage that helped immensely in connecting the program participants.

The curriculum for the program has been developed by our Education Advisory Council (EAC). What, if any, additional skills or areas of focus do you believe would have made the program even stronger? Are there other skills the program

should consider addressing in the future?

I found the sessions on crisis management and management of external counsel to be super relevant, intentional, and practical. Whilst the program has been developed with extremely useful modules and training, I believe it could be strengthened by adding a cross-functional aspect to it.

This would provide participants with a broader understanding of rotating different job functions and competencies within an organization. This would also help remove in-house counsel from the stereotypes of complicated legalese enablers, and into the diverse world of business and legal department management whilst ensuring they remain the effective conscience of the organization.

The certification program intended to explore several core competency areas, including developing stakeholder relationships, law department management, and legal services. In your opinion, why are these skills — or core competencies — essential for in-house success?

These skills are pertinent for an in-house counsel and this certification has well-tailored courses that help to harness these core competencies and skills. It is not a simplistic subject value-add certification but a wholistic course that prepares the in-house counsel for the reality of the job.

Looking back at the course, how will the In-house Counsel Certified (ICC) designation help advance your in-house career?

The designation provides a platform of opportunities for me to network with other professionals who have undergone the course across the globe. It will help me stand out from my peers and demonstrate to my company executives my commitment to the legal profession and more specifically to my role as an in-house counsel in the company.

Would you recommend ACC's In-house Certification Program to your colleagues? What advice can you offer other corporate counsel who wants to participate in the program, but may need to convince their GC or boss?

Yes, I would recommend the ACC's In-house Certification Program to my colleagues. A piece of advice would be to remember that their organization might not always provide them the necessary training for the next advancement in their career, and as such, they must be willing to invest in their future and career. Such investment might involve self-funding their participation in the program, but it is a decision you won't regret.

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