

LexisNexis In-house Advisory Board

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On 6 June 2013, the LexisNexis In-house Advisory Board met to discuss personal development and its application in the world of in-house lawyers. The meeting was facilitated by Jonathan Smith, Director at LBC Wise Counsel and former general counsel at Fujitsu and of the Managed Legal Service of Berwin Leighton Paisner.

The following is a note of some of the key practical takeaways that emerged from the conversation.

Personal development for in-house lawyers

Why do in-house lawyers need personal development?

- 1) To help bolster the business case for a pay rise?
- 2) To satisfy the necessary criteria for a practising certificate?
- 3) To ensure the optimal delivery of legal advice to the internal client?
- 4) To develop individuals and maximise their contribution to the business?

Recent research conducted by LBC Wisawyers neehows that while in-house lawyers cos nider legal advice to be their most important contribution to their organisation, their business colleagues disagree.

In fact, many business colleagues thought that in terms of quality the best legal advice comes from

It was felt that the employer should encourage and facilitate a development programme, and the individual in-house lawyer should be responsible for driving its creation and execution. The leader of an in-house team should help put a structure around a training programme that meets the individual's needs.

Developing a structured training programme

The majority of Advisory Board members have developed a structured training programme within their teams, aiming to avoid a "tick box" mentality; and instead focusing on enhancing the contribution of in-house lawyers to the business.

The following are some practical tips that emerged:

- **Begin by engaging the team**

A successful outcome depends on individual belief in and engagement with the training programme. Inspire a deep commitment to personal development, and an understanding of its purpose.

- **Work with individuals and the team to build a picture of training needs**

Build a skills matrix, including both the necessary legal and non-legal competencies. You need to think about:

- What your business needs
- What your team needs
- What you as team leader need

- **Include "on-the-job" training**

One Advisory Board member offered the following breakdown of how in-house lawyers develop:

- 70% - learning "on-the-job"
- 20% - non-legal training
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- **Consider obtaining Continuing Professional Development (CPD) accreditation**

Some Advisory Board members have acquired CPD accreditation so that their internal training formally supports regulatory development requirements. This is a relatively easy way to simplify and add value to the programme. ([Click here for some background from the SRA on becoming an in-house CPD provider](#).)

- **Partner with other in-house teams**

Exploit your network of in-house lawyers, and explore ways to share the personal development burden. This might include secondments between in-house teams; setting up buddying or mentoring schemes; or pooling resources for training.

Identifying new joiners with the capability for development

The Advisory Board concluded by discussing how best practice in recruitment can help capture those with the greatest propensity to excel as in-house lawyers.

Sometimes personal development flounders because fundamentally an individual's personality and core capabilities are better suited to private practice. The following are some practical tips shared by the Advisory Board:

- Use the skills matrix you developed for the personal development programme as a map of the core capabilities you require.
- At interview stage, focus on the candidate's personality and fit within your team and the business as a whole.
- Consider asking business colleagues to run an interview, allowing you to observe the interaction.
- Consider using assessment centres as a way to uncover more about the candidate's true potential as an in-house lawyer

Further reading

- [When enough's enough](#) – an article from Jonathan Smith, Director of LBC Wise Counsel, including some practical thoughts on training and mentoring.
- [Let's get personal](#) – an article from Paul Gilbert, CEO of LBC Wise Counsel, taking an in-depth look at personal development for in-house lawyers.
- [When being a good lawyer is not enough](#) – a research paper on the development of in-house lawyers from LexisNexis and Cranfield Business School.

<p>Clive Davies Senior Counsel, Fujitsu Services</p>	<p>Clive is a senior counsel with Fujitsu Services advising on major service contracts with customers especially in the public sector.</p> <p>Prior to joining Fujitsu in 2007 Clive was the lead IT and outsourcing partner at D J Freeman for 13 years and Olswang for 4 years. He qualified in 1977 and worked as an in-house lawyer for the Alexander Howden</p>

<p>Ian Leedham Senior Counsel (Disputes & Commercial) National Grid PLC</p>	<p>Ian has been involved in numerous re-organisations, mergers, acquisitions and outsourcing with National Grid and is responsible for a 45 strong team dealing with commercial legal matters, disputes, construction, IP, employment, health & safety, property and Global Records Management and Group IP portfolio. Within the department, Ian has been involved in various legal panel reviews and technology innovation within the Group and assisting other in-house teams. National Grid won the "In-house Legal Department Initiative of the Year" at the Legal Technology Awards 2006 and were recognised in The FT Legal Innovation Awards 2007 and 2008 and the only in-house entry shortlisted in the British Legal Awards Best Use of Technology 2006 and 2008. Ian speaks regularly on innovation and technology in the legal industry which are topics he feels passionately about.</p>
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