

Corporate Legal & Compliance: Goals and Needs

top-of-mind survey 2018

Methodology

In December 2017 and January 2018, we reached out to senior in-house legal and compliance decision makers around the world to share with us their goals and needs for the next 12 months. 115 of them, across 18 countries on five continents, responded to our online survey.



Global corporate legal and compliance leaders responded:

100%

work in companies operating globally

60%

work in companies that operate in more than 40 countries

41%

of their companies have headquarters in the U.S.; the rest in 14 countries across five continents

30%

are based in the United States

Welcome to the mind of today's legal buyer

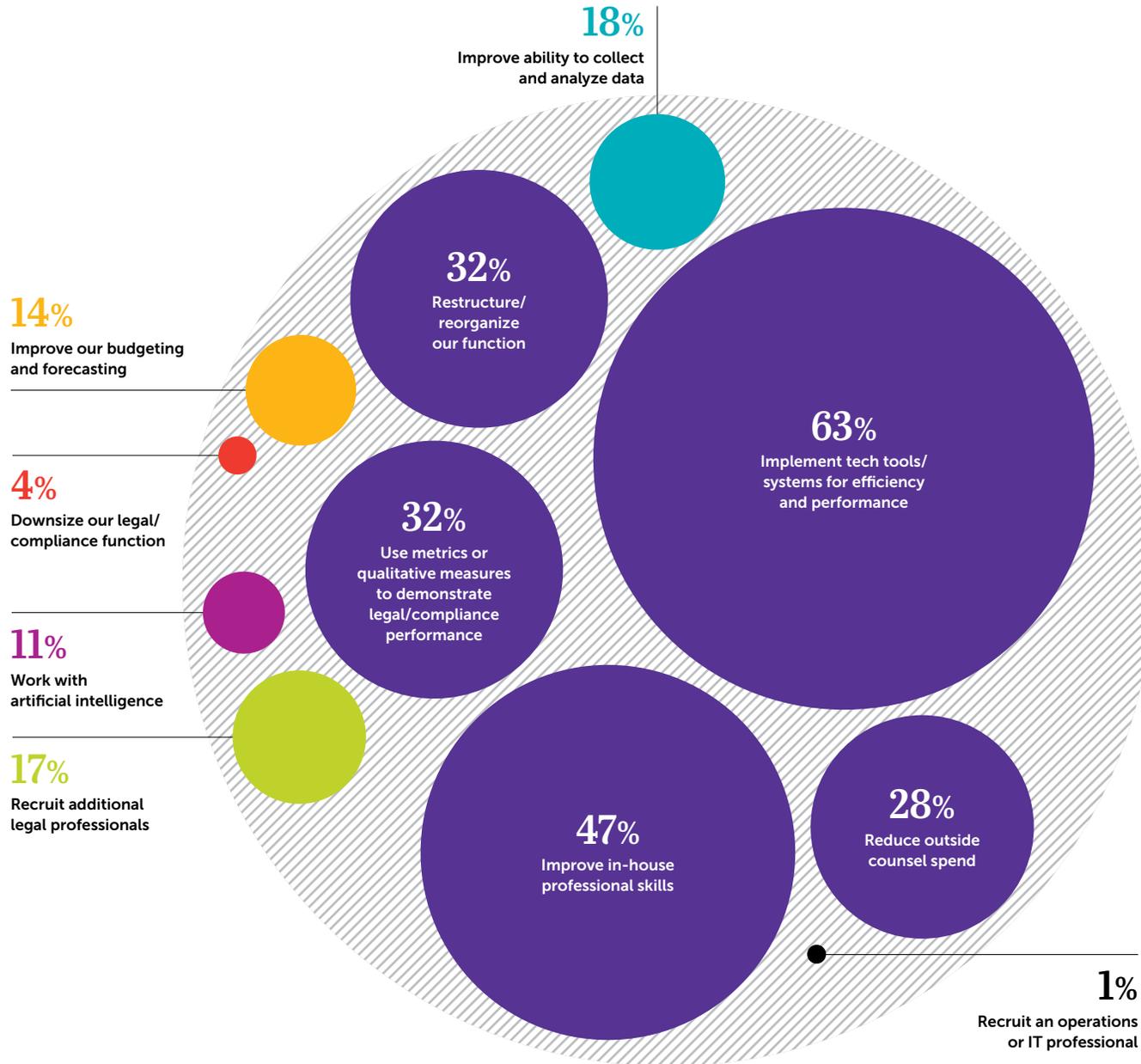
The legal profession is being reshaped before our eyes—and at an unprecedented speed—by forces from AI to alternative legal providers to exponential growth in regulation worldwide. As demand for legal services remains relatively flat, it is more critical than ever for law firms to protect existing client relationships and to clearly stand out when pitching for new business.

For either of these to happen, law firm communications must be improved in order to connect with your clients wherever you operate. It's not enough to implement an innovative project management program if your clients aren't aware of it. It annoys your clients to have to rewrite your advice so that it's clear and concise. It's a loss if your advice never makes it to management or the board room.

How do you make sure your communications program is working as hard as it can to win and keep clients? Start by understanding what is on the minds of legal buyers—from general counsel to compliance officers to business executives.

In late 2017, we asked legal counsel around the world to share what was on their minds. What are their priorities and where do they need your help? We hope our findings and recommendations will help you shape your marketing and business development plans for the next year.

Q: What are the primary operational objectives for your legal/compliance team in 2018 beyond delivering legal advice?

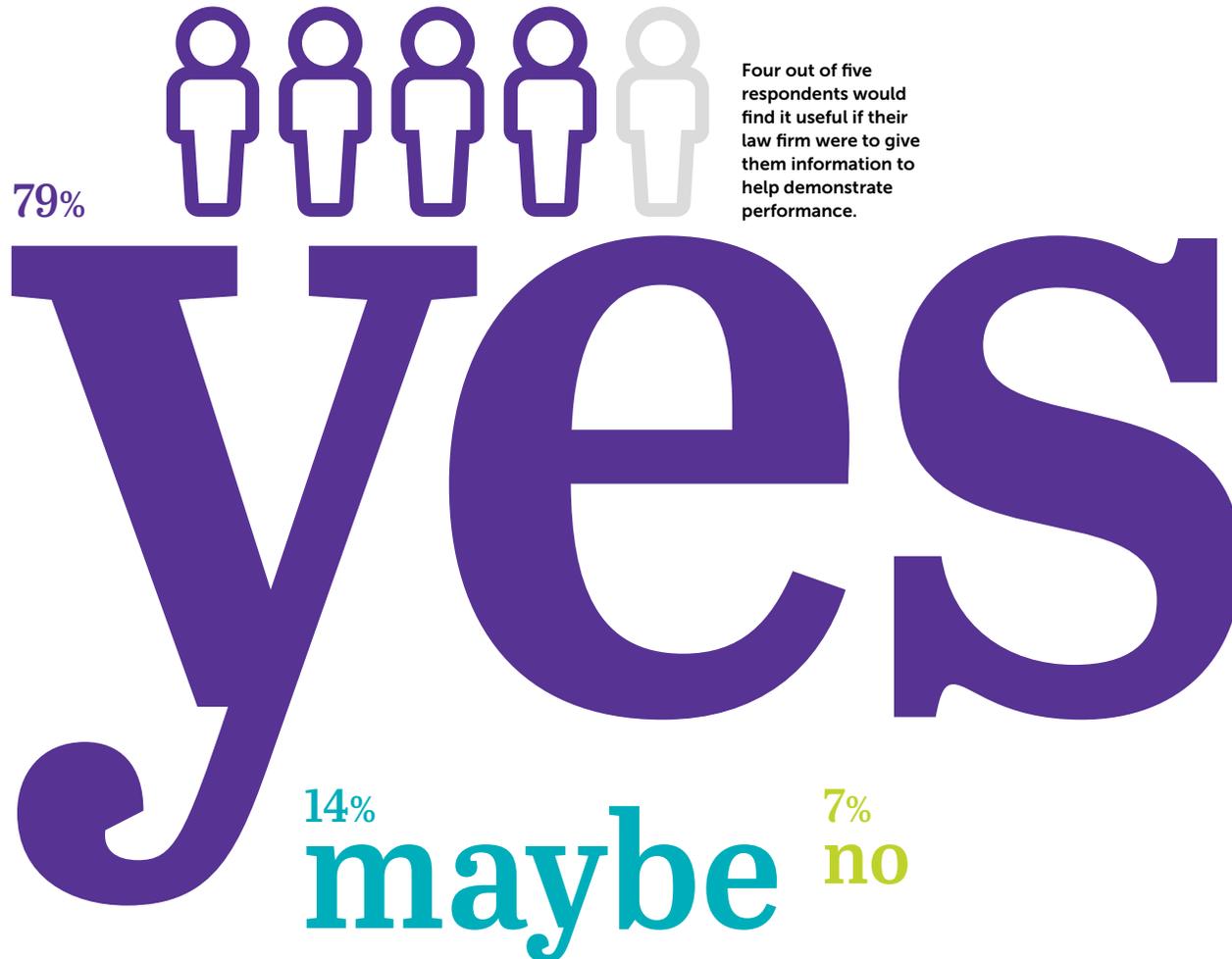


Showcase your technology

Out of 12 options, implementing technology tools for efficiency and performance is clearly the top operational objective for legal/compliance teams worldwide. Using metrics or qualitative indicators to demonstrate their legal performance to management runs a close second. Your firm can set itself apart by helping clients with both of these objectives.

- Your marketing and BD should focus on services as much as legal skills: simple or sophisticated tools, processes, and systems that save time and improve performance. This is especially important for upper-middle market to small companies where legal teams have no bandwidth to introduce their own systems, and no tech support on their teams.
- As one Silicon Valley general counsel told us, even technology companies have to compete for IT services internally, as the company's products get first dibs. The more you can share knowledge about productivity and efficiency, the better.
- Showcase your IT tools and processes for your clients, and make sure your lawyers know how to talk about them.
- Talk with your clients about performance metrics that are important to them. Make sure your end-of-matter or end-of-year recaps present those metrics visually so they are easy to find and understand.
- Give your clients operational information and ideas to help them succeed: Host roundtables or give lawyers materials to spark conversations about what you are seeing regarding clients' use of metrics, new staffing approaches, data analysis, use of IT, etc.
- Put your CIO or CTO in touch more directly with key clients. Help them make the case for corporate support and resources for IT tools. Consider shared development of new tools.

Q: Would it be useful if your outside counsel gave you information that helps you demonstrate your value to the business?



Prove performance

To prove performance after every matter, your lawyers should set goals with the client at the start. Record them in a simple format so you can circle back later.

Show, don't just tell, how you performed on the client's work, including:

- meeting budgets
- meeting deadlines
- new or novel legal ideas
- doors opened
- qualitative aspects unique to each matter

These summaries should not look like legal briefs but like business reports, with clear information, charts and infographics. Presenting information in the language of business often drives powerful client conversations.

“*Demonstrating the invisible part of legal services (i.e., preventing risk from materializing) needs constant reinforcement.*”

Q: Are you familiar with the IT and service delivery tools your law firms may offer to help you increase efficiency and streamline work?



Give service tools center stage

Why invest in tools if your clients don't know about them? Given that better use of technology tops the buyers' list of 2018 priorities, this is a golden opportunity to align your efforts with what clients want.

- Train your lawyers to explain both the features of the tools and EXACTLY how they have improved efficiency and results. Proposals should include the same information. Strike vague, outdated claims like, "We use state-of-the-art technology."
- Consider installing a lobby display that demonstrates your client service innovations and technology tools. For trade show exhibits and association meetings, produce materials that show how IT tools improve efficiency and performance.
- Corporate legal departments are often last on the list to receive a company's technology resources. If your firm has a CTO who's a leader in this area, add value by offering some of their time to your clients. When pitching for business, have a technology person available to advise on software and solutions your prospect can use to manage the matter efficiently.

46%

of respondents either don't know about their law firms' IT and service delivery tools or are not very familiar with them.

46%

say they are familiar with a few of their law firms' tools

8%

say they are very familiar with their law firms' tools.

Nearly half of respondents...

either don't know about their law firms' IT and service delivery tools or are not very familiar with them. With all the law firm talk about innovation, this is a disappointing finding—but also an opportunity to shine.

Q: How do you prefer your external counsel to deliver advice?

Keep it brief

An overwhelming majority prefer practical, concise responses. This was no shock to us; in interview after interview, legal buyers tell us they are pressed for time.

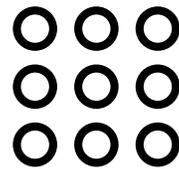
87%

Concise



13%

Thorough Report



- Get shorter! No more long, wordy documents unless your client specifically asks for them. In all communications, start with summary paragraphs or bullet points.
- If you operate globally, remember that many of your clients don't speak English as their first language. All the more reason for clear summaries and shorter words and sentences.
- Take the time to design new work product templates your firm can use to share advice. Invest in powerful graphical approaches to make your point—just as trial lawyers do in court. Graphics often communicate better than words to clients who don't share your mother tongue.
- One size fits all doesn't work; clients have different needs for how they receive information. Ask, don't assume, what kind of reports each client wants. When starting out with a new client, show them a few examples of what you prepare so they can choose. Better still, develop a system with flexible components you can tailor to each client's preference.
- Train client-facing legal professionals to write and speak at the same 12-year-old reading level as *The Economist*. Provide tools that measure readability, like the [Gunning Fog Index](#).

Q: Does your outside counsel generally give you information that is ready to present to business executives or your board of directors, with no editing required?

Prepare for the next audience

Clients hate to have to translate dense legalese before they can share your advice with the business side. Law firms that communicate clearly and make the general counsel's or compliance officer's job easier will stand out and win repeat business. Pages of wordy advice increase uncertainty and make it harder for your clients to make decisions.

By asking your clients about their business expectations, you are able to deliver reports that highlight business issues while raising legal issues—putting you in the enviable position of trusted business advisor.

7%
yes

43%

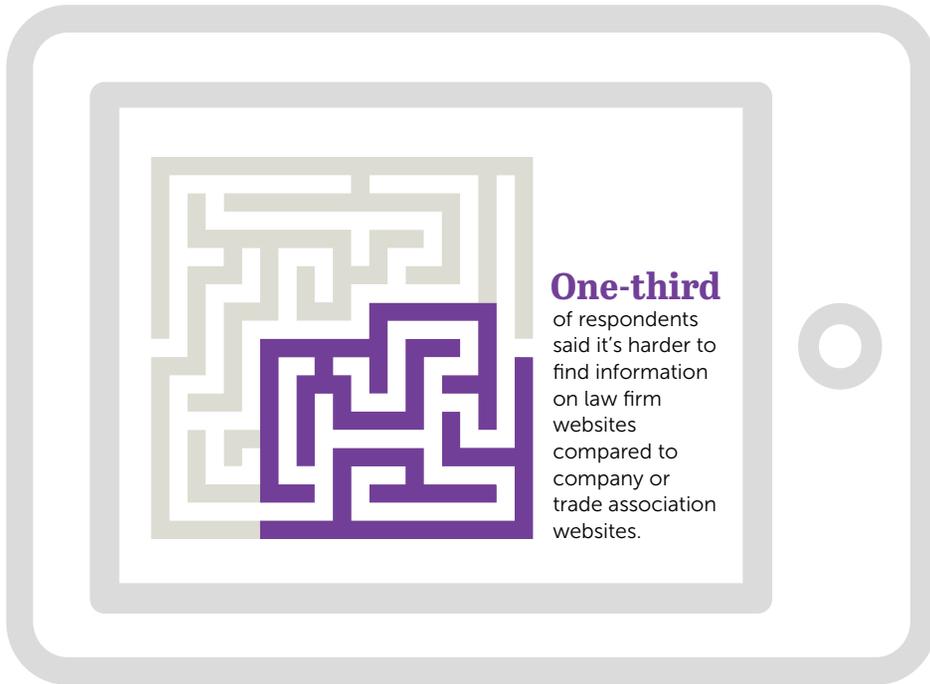
sometimes

38%

rarely

12%
no

Q: Is it easier, harder, or equally difficult to find information about legal or business topics on law firm websites compared with other types of organizations?



“All websites mix information with marketing, so filtering of each is required.”

Make your website a destination

The good news is that accountancy websites are not seen as significantly better than law firm websites, despite their more robust content. The bad news? One-third of respondents said it's harder to find information on law firm websites than on company or trade association websites.

“Law firm websites often suffer from being high-tech brochures that few read. To foster true engagement with clients as well as colleagues, they need more content to build their reputation and relationships.”

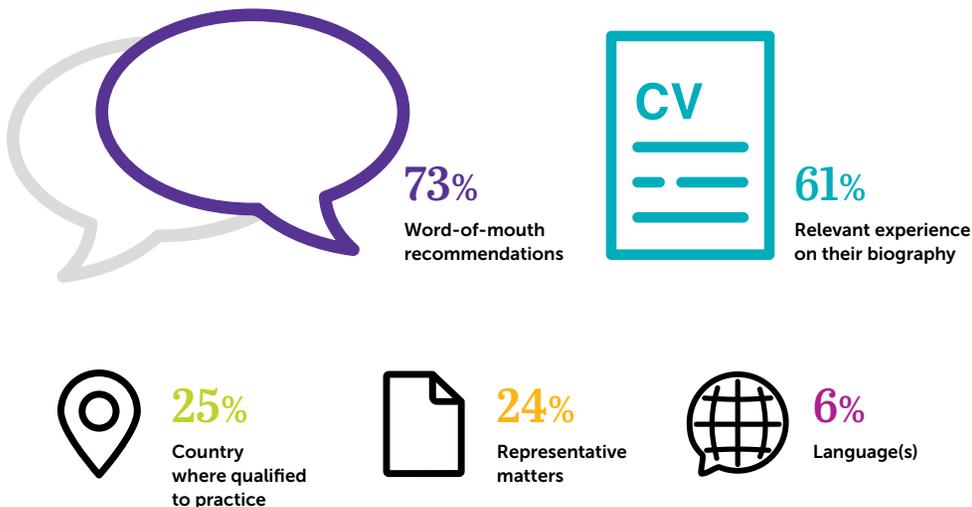
Justin Castillo, Head of Legal, BT Americas

The bigger find is that many legal and compliance buyers aren't going to law firm websites at all to look for information. Why? Very few law firms have devoted the resources needed to turn a law firm website into a true destination for learning. Even where law firm thought leadership exists, it is often overlooked because it's too long, too detailed, too comprehensive; in short, too lawyerly.

- Lawyers often provide articles for your website that they wrote for another purpose. Give your marketing teams the time and freedom to edit this content.

- Train your lawyers to write content that acts as a teaser to invite the reader to learn more. Remind them that lack of time is one of the common complaints of legal buyers.
- Pull quotes, graphs, infographics, and other visuals make a tremendous difference in getting readers to remember who you are and what you wrote. Use them wherever possible.
- Don't let your website become a dumping ground for everything anyone in the firm has ever done or thought. Smartly curated content is better evidence of thought leadership.

Q: Which two factors influence your decision most when identifying outside counsel candidates for an engagement (not counting location or personal relationships)?



“A creative approach to problem solving influences my decision.”



Awards and rankings not persuasive

We know everyone enjoys recognition from journals and organizations. But note how low rankings and awards scored in our survey. Don't spend all your budget—or your prime marketing real estate—on mindshare in that area.

Earn word-of-mouth praise

What people say when they talk to others about your lawyers and firm has enormous power. Your performance is a key factor in this, and your verbal communications are, too. Providing lawyers with the right words is a key element of a communications program and makes verbal recommendations easy.

- Sum up your performance on every matter and every case. By providing end-of-matter summaries that show key metrics and lessons learned, you will reinforce how you add value.
- Get together with clients off the clock at least twice a year. Talk business, not matters. This gives you the chance to learn about the client's business issues and talk about your firm's new services or efficiency tools.
- A short but powerful handout that visually depicts new developments will be remembered long after a text-heavy document.
- Dedicate extra resources to raising the profile of the firm and its talent in new domestic and international offices. Law firms need to recognize that some offices just need more loving. Corporations have known and followed this approach for years, but the law firm structure still gets in the way of smart marketing and business development choices. Yes, a partner who doesn't get as much attention may briefly have hurt feelings, but the right internal informational campaign can help you minimize any problems.
- Ask and pay attention to how your clients describe their companies' most pressing business issues. Incorporate those priorities in your positioning and legal advice.

Emphasize experience

Clients are scrutinizing your representative matters as well as your biographies, both on your law firm's website and on LinkedIn.

- Since many younger buyers start with LinkedIn, make sure each LinkedIn bio adds to the reader's understanding of the lawyer's skills. LinkedIn bios give your lawyers the chance to share how they think or help clients in their own words, since the bio doesn't have to exactly match those of colleagues in the firm. Let their personalities shine through.
- Make your representative matter descriptions meaningful, varied, and interesting. A two-page list of "Successfully represented client in an acquisition" is a sure-fire way to lose the reader's attention. Give your audience some idea of why each matter is significant enough to include.
- Show your firm's creative side. On a website or in a LinkedIn description, highlight what was novel or innovative about your approach to the matter. In materials targeted to a specific client, show how your relevant experience may apply to their matter.

Q: What percentage of professionals in your legal/compliance function are dedicated to these areas?



72%

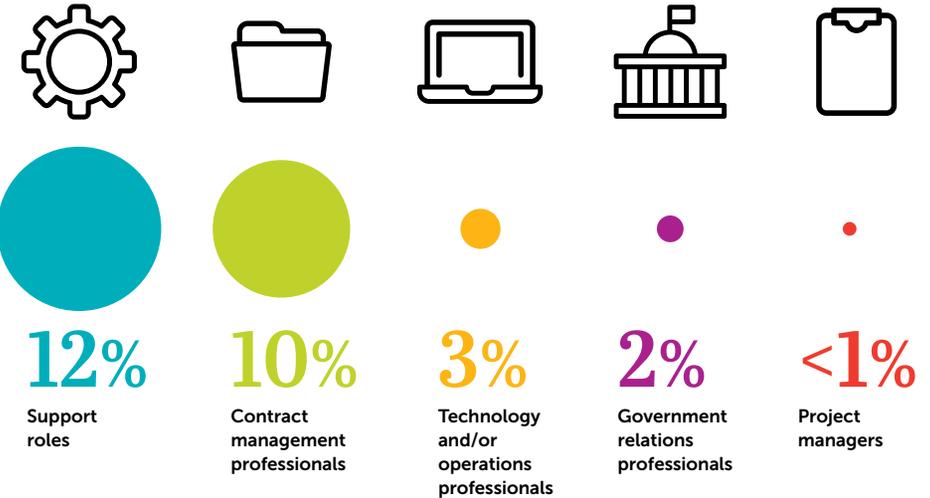
Legal and compliance professionals

Be a technology resource

Technology and operations professionals account for only 3% of the average corporate legal function among both global and U.S. respondents. The legal operations role is growing, but it hasn't caught on to the same extent as that of contract management professionals, for example.

Here's your opportunity: Your clients really need help from their law firm to implement the right technology tools.

If you have regular check-in meetings with your clients (which you should!) make sure technology is a key agenda item. Share what you've done to improve your own productivity. Talk about any tools you've previewed but perhaps not implemented.



Q: Which in-house legal/compliance leadership skills do you think will be most in demand in 2018?



“Communications are so much more important than I expected, both for me to lead and manage change effectively, and for my team to adopt technology tools and new approaches.”

Fabienne Rehulka, General Counsel Europe, Swiss Re



Share cybersecurity, business knowledge

Cybersecurity and data privacy are on the minds of legal buyers around the world, regardless of industry. Law firms know this and are jumping on the bandwagon to claim expertise in these areas. Promoting your practice credibly and distinctively can give you a market advantage.

- Give concrete examples of your experience in all market-facing materials. Highlight any of your lawyers with relevant industry or government experience.
- Provide practical thought leadership throughout the year. Consider a signature piece on a specific aspect of cybersecurity or data privacy that you can use as a calling card.
- Scrutinize your service offerings to ensure you have the right complement of people. The alternative service providers aren't afraid to staff their work with non-lawyers who bring a higher level of insight to this area.
- Consider hosting continuing education programs and workshops that provide benchmarking information to help your clients improve their business and financial acumen. Remember, you are the expert because you see the inner workings of many companies, not just one. Sharing your knowledge will reinforce your position as a leader and increase demand for your services.
- Ability to influence comes second only to cyber know-how. Know who your clients' stakeholders are. Make sure your relationship partners know the expectations of their clients' most challenging internal buyers—does the Audit Committee, CFO, or board have certain expectations? Is the business manager's demand for a speedy resolution creating pressure? Once you understand the demands facing your client, you can demonstrate your performance better.

About ELD and Right Hat

ELD International and Right Hat work together to help law firms and in-house counsel develop powerful communications programs. ELD International works with global counsel leaders to improve performance and demonstrate their value. Right Hat, an award-winning marketing design studio, creates memorable brands and communications tools based on a deep understanding of client businesses.

Together, we help law firms and in-house counsel and compliance teams

- create targeted thought leadership pieces
- appeal to buyers operating in multiple countries
- reality-check concepts and programs with a global audience
- plan impactful client events globally
- conduct quick polls and in-depth research with global legal buyers
- optimize marketing budgets
- lift communications from "as expected" to "exceptional"

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