

Chapter Spotlight: Middle East

Interviews and Profiles





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IDEMIA

What brought you to IDEMIA, and what do you like most about being in-house counsel?

With the world around us heading toward technology and digitalization, I also wanted to be a part of the evolving digital journey. The opportunity at IDEMIA was a good segue to being involved in the era of tech innovation/disruption.

As in-house counsel, you are very close to the business and understand its challenges and the complexity within which it is operating, allowing you to be a great business partner.

As the senior legal counsel of Middle East, Africa, Pakistan, and Turkey, what

challenges do you currently face, and how are you addressing them?

Legal resources are limited, and regional coverage is wide. Efficiency innovations enable doing more with less by streamlining internal operational processes to improve profitability. To effectively deliver, we are assessing some of the smart tech tool available in the market like chatbots, contract management tools with AI, and contract automation for reoccurring requests (e.g., NDA).



What are some of the skills the next generation of in-house counsel need to hone?

Soft-skills, such as effective communication, empathy, teamwork, commercial acumen, and growth-minded attitudes are the keys to success for an in-house counsel as it is no longer enough to be an expert in your practice area or top of your class in law school.

Another skill that is key to the next generation of in-house counsel is the ability to adapt or acquire new skills in response to change. Conventional legal services are changing (and evolving) with the

advent of AI, blockchain, and other technological advancements in the business and legal industry.

How did you first become involved in leadership with ACC Middle East, and how has it helped you in your career?

I joined ACC, and became active in chapter events, when I transitioned from private practice to in-house about four years ago. I wanted to contribute to raising awareness about the needs of the in-house bar, and it was a great platform for me to connect with the in-house community and share and exchange best practices and new trends in the legal and regulatory landscape.

Leadership in ACC Middle East provides me with opportunities to contribute to thought leadership (via articles or speaker engagements) and networking opportunities, which have resulted in some great connections like mentors and friends in the legal industry and supporting industries. It also allows me to give back to the profession.

How does your chapter promote meaningful connections and provide value to its members?

We bring in world-class speakers to focus on soft skills, especially leadership. We try to promote meaningful connections through hosting socials and other networking opportunities. Our sector specific round tables are particularly well-attended. We also focus on EMEA topics that are of interest to in-house around the globe.

What are ways members can become involved in your chapter?

Members can be involved in many ways and at various levels. Interested members can drive sector specific focus groups, speaker engagements, and can contribute to thought leadership by writing articles. They can also become involved as a country representative and helping the chapter build awareness in the local market amongst the in-house community. Volunteers help with all sorts of event planning and content curation as well.

How does being an ACC member help you gain time in your schedule?

The ACC website is often my first starting point when I’m searching for an agreement template or white papers. Also, the message boards for the IT, Privacy, and eCommerce networks are a way to get a quick answer when I haven’t got much time.

How have the connections you’ve made through ACC helped you to be the best version of yourself? How have they made you a better lawyer?

Some of the interpersonal relationships that I’ve made through ACC have gone far and beyond the ordinary. They have given me an opportunity to share my journey and have an open and honest discussion on what I could have done better if given a second chance. Furthermore, learning from shared experiences, and the wisdom of others along this journey, has made me a more self-aware and confident (yet humble) lawyer.

How has your ACC membership helped you shape the culture of your organization? Specifically, what changes in culture have you seen?

I often benchmark what we are doing against the practices emerging in other geographic regions and jurisdictions. Considering the best practices highlighted by other organizations helps me step back and see the bigger picture.

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