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Don't Panic

Career Development

Technology, Privacy, and eCommerce



There is a reason for this in-house pragmatism: We are not afraid.

Feeling old yet?

If not, just flip through the pages of this issue of the ACC Docket. Even if you are the most tech savvy lawyer, attuned to the changing landscape of privacy law and an expert in blockchain technology, you will quickly realize how much has changed in the past few years, months, and weeks.

“Back in my day,” you will say, “I could attend a legal conference on technology and talk intelligently about the topics for at least a year, or even two.”

Not anymore. Today, by the time you walk out the door of that seminar, everything you heard is old news.

Before throwing down this magazine in disgust — or, like most readers, angrily close your browser or app — take a step back, and think about how the great in-house lawyers responded to abrupt changes in the past.

Panic was not an option. Pragmatism ruled the day.

When the cost of litigation discovery started to exceed attorneys’ fees, great in-house counsel figured out how to use scale and company systems to make a more efficient process, driving down the cost.

When the internet first bloomed and parents around the world feared that corporate websites would brainwash their children, it was in-house lawyers who banded together to create the first web policies to protect children (long before privacy policies ever existed).

When our clients, raised in a world of instant gratification, wanted faster legal services, it was in-house counsel who developed the first automated contract drafting tools and online libraries.

And the great work continues today: in novel licensing structures, collaborative legal projects, and in the next generation of automated systems.

While one might expect in-house lawyers to occupy the bleeding edge of technology — reflecting our corporate environment and our client's expectations — there is a distinct flavor to how we react to disruptive changes. In a word, we are practical.

Great in-house lawyers, faced with an upheaval in technology, keep calm and don't fall in love with the first solution. They look to the fundamental aspects of their work and their clients' needs. They take a deep breath and never panic.

There is a reason for this in-house pragmatism: We are not afraid.

In-house law remains a bastion of human capital and personal interaction. Of course, we support automated efficiency. No in-house lawyer wants to keep doing the same repetitive, mundane tasks. But we also know that we were hired for a very special reason: to be a clear and cogent voice of the law when the outside world is confusing, clouded, and contradictory.

With all this technological disruption and disarray, we are needed now more than ever.

Which is why there is no need for undue worry. Yes, the world seems to spin faster every day, but we have faced upheavals before. Calm, rational, and practical lawyers will always prevail.

[Bill Mordan](#)



General Counsel and Company Secretary

