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Career Development



As CLO of a global company like Anheuser-Busch InBev (AB InBev), I have the privilege of working with a legal team that spans several continents. Our global operations are divided between six geographic regions — North America, Mexico, Latin America North, Latin America South, Europe, and Asia Pacific — with legal departments operating in each. As a result, there are about 100 nationalities represented throughout the organization, and I'm proud to say that this diversity makes us a stronger company that's not only innovative, but also poised for continued growth.

While the legal team benefits from the expertise of an international workforce, managing it does not come without challenges. With team members based in several locations, it takes a coordinated and informed effort, fueled by effective communication, to make sure that everything runs as smoothly as possible.

The cover story of this Law Department Management-focused issue of *ACC Docket*, "Optimizing Your Global Legal Team," highlights the importance of promoting knowledge of basic international business etiquette (which we all know varies depending on many things, not just geography), and offers tips on integrating a workforce that is scattered across the world. Suggestions range from simple things like taking into account time zones when sending emails or scheduling meetings; to face-to-face meetings with all staff at various times during the year, which can be a bit more challenging.

For several years at AB InBev we have run a successful program in which members of our Chinese legal team spend several months in the United States seconded to one of our relationship law firms, as well as spending time with our global and US business unit. This has proved to be a great way for them to gain exposure to a completely different culture and part of our business, as well as hone their legal and English language skills. Members of our US and global teams have also benefited from

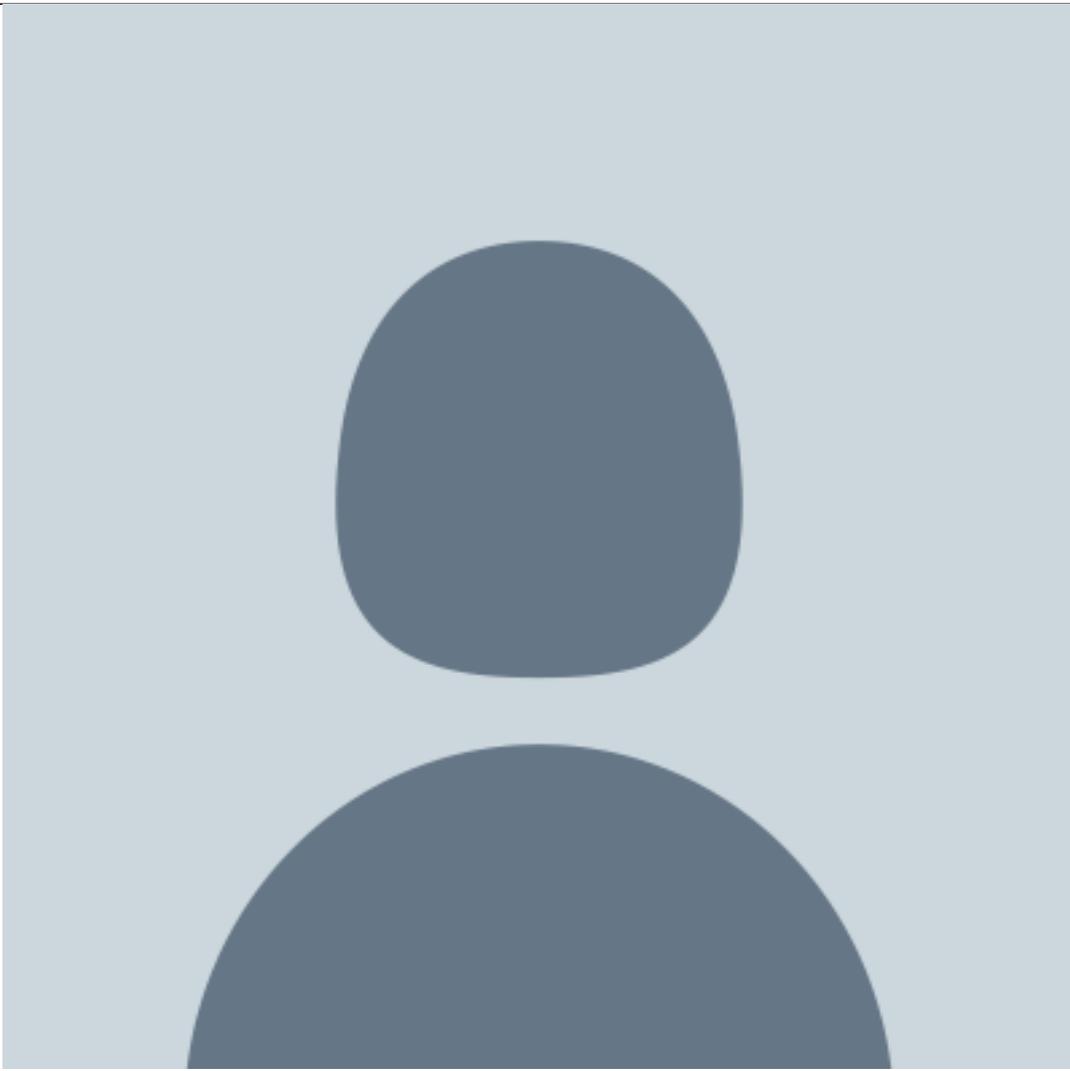
learning about best practices being implemented in China. We are now replicating this program in Europe. This may not be an option for every organization. However, any opportunity to introduce your staff to other business units and legal systems — while simultaneously expanding their knowledge of various cultures — is worthwhile. Gaining a deeper understanding of your company's operating model across borders, and the cultural norms of the places where it operates, benefits the business as well as an individual's professional development.

Helping my team and colleagues succeed is an essential part of my job. Making sure that the opportunities for growth and development are equally accessible to all is particularly important to me, as it is to ACC. The ACC Foundation recently kicked off an initiative in support of the professional development of women in the law: Women in the House (WITH). Championing women in the legal profession around the globe is aligned with the foundation's (and my own) mission to foster diversity and leadership, and I'm excited to see the programming and resources that come from this initiative. Read about recent events and learn how you can contribute to all the great things the ACC Foundation is working on by visiting acc.com/foundation.

Not many things come one-size-fits-all and law department management is no exception. There are many things to consider, especially in today's connected world. Even if your company doesn't have offices or subsidiaries in other countries, chances are you work with teams, outside counsel, and individuals who don't live in the same time zone as you. Figuring out the best practices for your organization and legal department takes time and commitment — and sometimes a little help.

Thankfully, as an ACC member, a range of information is available at your fingertips. From the Law Department Management Committee to the articles that fill this issue and more, ACC has a resource that can help — no matter where in the world your professional journey takes you.

[Sabine Chalmers](#)



Former ACC Board Chair