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Engaging Your Network

Interviews and Profiles





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J. R. SIMPLOT COMPANY

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When your in-house peers join ACC, you increase opportunities to engage with colleagues, expand your professional network, share ideas and tap into their expertise. You also introduce them to the value of ACC: access to the association's wide array of in-house resources, discounts for educational programs and a network of over 35,000 in-house professionals from around the world.

Over the next several issues, we will introduce you to ACC members who have actively recruited friends and coworkers to join. They will explain why they encourage others to join ACC and offer tips for what you can do to recruit peers.

During our 2015 "Engaging Your Network" new member campaign, running now through September, you will earn rewards for each new member you recruit. We will recognize our Top Recruiters in the *ACC Docket* and at the 2015 Annual Meeting.

In this issue, we introduce you to ACC member and chapter leader, Michelle Gustavson. After experiencing how ACC membership could benefit her practice and career, Michelle has eagerly shared the value of membership with her colleagues and friends. She explains why she has become a top recruiter — and how easy it is to encourage her in-house peers to join.

What most influenced you to join ACC and renew your membership?

When I moved in-house two years ago, my colleagues in the J. R. Simplot Company legal department encouraged me to join ACC. They highlighted the benefits of the online resources — sample forms and policies, articles, and checklists — which focus on both the pragmatic and technical aspects of the law and legal practice. Having access to those resources was very convincing.

After I joined ACC, I learned of other membership benefits, such as networking opportunities and programming specifically for corporate counsel. In private practice, I was actively engaged with the Idaho legal community; however, I knew relatively few in-house attorneys. ACC enabled me to quickly expand my professional network, locally and across the globe. In a very short period of time, I was connected to a large and diverse in-house community. Further, the CLE programs offered by ACC Mountain West, a chapter serving members in Idaho, Montana, Utah and Wyoming, consistently address current issues facing corporate counsel. These are useful to me in my day-to-day practice and are helpful in providing education and insight on interesting areas of the law outside my general practice areas. Based on the value I received in the first year alone, it was an easy decision to renew my ACC membership.

What value does ACC provide to you?

The benefits that first attracted me to ACC — resources, education and networking — continue to provide substantial value. As a relatively new in-house attorney, I seek educational and professional development opportunities specifically for corporate counsel. The latter are particularly hard to find. ACC is unique in that it offers both to its members. ACC programs increase my awareness and knowledge of substantive issues most relevant to my practice, and enhance my skills in serving as a strategic business partner for my internal clients. Whether you are new to in-house or a CLO, ACC offers resources for all levels of career development.

In addition, I serve on ACC Mountain West's board of directors as membership chair. This position affords me the opportunity to enhance my leadership skills and expand my in-house network, as I work closely with fellow board and committee members.

Why did you feel it was important to encourage your peers to join ACC? How do you do it?

It is easy for me to encourage in-house peers to join. When I meet someone new to in-house practice or learn that one of my former law firm colleagues or law school peers moved in-house, I reach out to them personally to provide an introduction to ACC. I also have a running list of new and potential members and send them personal email invitations to ACC events. For example, when ACC Mountain West recently held its first annual "Attitude of Gratitude" family event at Zoo Boise, I reached out to current and potential members with young families. Making sure we engage current and potential members is key to a thriving in-house network in Idaho, Montana, Utah and Wyoming.

Further, our chapter is focusing on membership involvement and recruitment. Over the past year, we sent out a monthly email that briefly highlighted ACC membership benefits and included a testimonial from an ACC member who received value from each of the benefits. The emails were sent to current members as a reminder of the many benefits of their ACC membership and potential members as part of our membership recruitment effort. We also target legal departments that qualify for large law department membership (a department of nine or more attorneys) and invite them to attend information sessions and special events. Our chapter has experienced steady growth over the past few years, but we are hoping that these efforts will ramp up membership.

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