


# 4 Tips from the CLO on Succeeding In-house

**Interviews and Profiles**

**Career Development**



Martin Felli started his law career as an M&A and high-yield finance lawyer at a Latham & Watkins and then pivoted to intellectual property and sports entertainment when he moved in-house at HBO. Felli continued garnering expertise and building his in-house career at companies in the advertising, green energy, and software industries. Now, Felli is the executive vice president, chief administrative officer, and chief legal officer of Blue Yonder, a leading supply chain software company.



Martin Felli, EVP, CAO, and CLO, Blue Yonder

Reflecting on his career journey, Felli remarks that when he made the jump to various industries, he always brought his lessons with him.

## 1. Embrace the unknown

When I started with HBO, they were at the cutting edge of technology. I had solid underpinnings from my practice, but I was learning new skills and got involved in these initiatives marrying entertainment content and technology.

What led me to those experiences, like the first Sprint-HBO partnership on phone screensavers and ringtones, was my willingness to raise my hand and jump into things that other people didn't want to do.

Whether it was because they were already established or just weren't interested, I don't know. But I was the one who said, "Yeah, I'll do it."

Be eager to learn new things and jump into uncharted fields.

## 2. Dive deep into the business

Something that has helped me is being able to understand each business I engage in as legal

counsel, deeply.

Sometimes you have to understand the business even deeper than the folks in the seat because you have to give counsel. See where the business wants to go, specifically to your company, but widen your aperture to where the industry as a whole is going. Bring value from that perspective, and not just as a bystander waiting to give an opinion when asked.

And never be shy about jumping on new opportunities because you learn from each one and that helps you the next time.

## 3. Approach everything with a humble mindset

When you're changing industries or starting a new role, whether you have five years of experience or 20, you have to go into each situation as a student.

Even if you think you know it all, never approach anything with arrogance. Instead, think "I am here to learn, I am here to listen." And you have to reach out to your business counterparts with that in mind.

Look at your organization and identify individuals who know the history and the legacy, and identify those who know the future and strategy of the organization. Then sit down and connect, whether it is through a coffee or lunch or whatever. It's also an opportunity for you to share what you bring to the table and what matters to you, but the priority is to be in listening mode.

People want to impart knowledge and once you go in with that mode you would be surprised at how quickly that accelerates your learning.

## 4. Connect the dots

Once you're taking on new opportunities, learning more about the business, and connecting with your colleagues, you start seeing the gaps.

Then you become an instrument to connect different groups, because you realize sometimes that the left and the right hands are not meeting. You can say, "Hey, I have seen this in this other part," or, "These people have this challenge. I think they may benefit from you."

You're able to offer a perspective and become the connection. It's all just an opportunity to help your organization grow.

Danielle Maldonado



Assistant Editor

Association of Corporate Counsel