



Are Media GC on How COVID Forced Tough Changes

Interviews and Profiles





Adrian Goss

General Counsel, Company Secretary & General Manager - Corporate

Are Media

Sydney, Australia

Are Media General Counsel, Company Secretary, and General Manager – Corporate Adrian Goss was attracted to the media business because of its exciting history — Are Media can trace its past back more than 80 years to some of Australia's most iconic print titles.

Present day, Goss is helping to steer the company in new directions after COVID forced structural changes to the industry. "It created real pain, but it forced us to move from where we were to where we needed to be quickly," he shares.

Gradual and rapid changes

Goss has been working for Are Media for nearly 15 years. He has seen major changes during his tenure – but none as dramatic as the past year. The company had to temporarily shutter its New Zealand operations. Supply chain issues bedeviled the company’s logistics. And it isn’t over yet, he notes.

The overall business has been undergoing a gradual transformation for years. “Print is still profitable but it’s declining,” he says, adding that print magazines compete with free digital products for consumers’ time. Declining revenue has led to media consolidation. A private equity firm acquired Are Media in June 2020 after it was spun out of Bauer Media Group, Goss’ former employer.

He points out that the whole media ecosystem has been changing: “Those business models that used to be incredibly robust and profitable, like television and radio, as well as print media, have been crowded out by a much greater selection of media, and those commercial pressures tend to push businesses to merge to strengthen their balance sheets and product portfolios. It’s a fascinating time to work in media because there’s so much change.”

Get comfortable asking questions

He has been front row to those restructurings. In challenging times, Goss has had to rely on skills that he didn’t learn at university, or during his time in law firm practice.

“When you’re a young law firm lawyer, it’s hard to know what’s important to a client until you’ve been a client,” Goss says. “Every in-house counsel knows you can sometimes get advice that is long and expensive and not really what you wanted – not in terms of the answer but in terms of the form, and perhaps the emphasis.”

He credits mentors, such as a former CFO, who counseled him to “read the payment terms” first to help him think like his business colleagues. Our training has us focus on aspects such as liability regimes, which are important but not nearly as important as knowing when and how much the company will be paid. It sounds simple, but it can be lost when an in-house counsel is afraid to be close to the business – and the people running it.

As Goss’s career has progressed, he has been thrust into non-legal roles and decisions. “The best advice I can give is to ask questions,” he says. “And it’s easier to ask questions if you’re close with the people running the business.”

Getting to know... Adrian Goss

Are Media has a large portfolio of titles. What’s your favorite?

I’d have to say *Gourmet Traveler* because it appeals to two of my favorite things: eating and traveling.

What do you look for in a hire?

I look to the interpersonal element. I look for a lot of energy and excitement, which is what you want in an industry as exciting as media.

What do you want your legacy to be?

I hope my business colleagues felt the business was well-served. I have also mentored excellent junior lawyers, and I am looking forward to watching their careers progress.

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Joshua H. Shields



Editor

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