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SAUDI ARABIA

Proceed with caution

OFFSHORE

Innovative structuring options

VALUE ADDED TAX

Is reform on the horizon?



BRUCE ALMIGHTY

GE'S GC EMPOWERS & ENABLES



COLUMNIST

BERNADETTE BAYNIE, *group general counsel, Batelco Group*

Implement key process improvement programs and streamlining initiatives that will add value to your team and the expeditious delivery of their work to the organisation.

Proving your worth – Part 3

Bernadette Baynie lists key strategic steps that general counsel can implement to maximise the value of their role in the organisation.

Congratulations, you have successfully survived your first 90 days in your new GC role!

So how do you set yourself up to achieve success in your role over the upcoming years? Success in this context means – on the one hand providing real value to the organisation through the services, governance and decision making that you perform in your role; whilst on the other hand being recognised, appreciated and rewarded for such work.

You should start mapping out the key steps and tools you will need to put in place ahead of time to enable you to achieve success in your position. They include the following:

1. Develop relevant, measurable and achievable goals and KPI's for your role and your legal department.

[a] ascertain:

- [i] the strategic goals and annual business plan of the organisational;
 - [ii] the main goals and KPI's of your CEO, as yours should be, in part, a sub set of these;
 - [iii] the main goals, KPI's and annual work plans of your executive team members and their senior managers, to identify and tailor legal services to support their business units' targeted outcomes; then
- [b] set goals which are strategically important to you, your department and the organisation; and
- [c] set complimenting "KPIs" that will track the progress and achievement of such goals.

2. Ensure that you have the authority that corresponds to the accountabilities and responsibilities of your GC role.

You need the relevant "decision making authority" and "sign off capability" regarding what are you accountable for in your role, in particular: your governance and management powers involving your work, department, budget, external legal spend, training and staffing requirements. Obtain the support of your Group CEO to incorporate this requirement in the company's governance matrixes and your job description.

3. Structure your legal department and team resources effectively

After you have collated all relevant information regarding the overall effectiveness, value and future capability of the company's "legal

function", you should then determine the most optimal structure and staffing requirements for your legal department. Ensure that its proposed size and structure matches the needs of the business and provides "ease of use, accessibility and availability" to all levels of the organisation. Socialise your departmental restructuring proposal with your Group CEO and fellow executive team members. You are more likely to obtain their support for the proposal when they understand "what" changes you are recommending and the rationale for doing so eg: such changes provide better alignment to the business and key value outputs to the company.

4. Build a high performance team that becomes an integral component of decision-making for the organisation.

Your ultimate success will depend heavily upon your legal team and its effectiveness. Therefore you need to focus on resourcing your team with the right staff, who have the attitude, capability and passion to drive the department from a purely "service support function" to a "valued business enabler". Seek to develop and recruit staff that will deliver legal services to your organisation with a strong and trusted voice that facilitates and enables business decisions to be made, with minimal risk exposure. Implement key process improvement programs and streamlining initiatives that will add value to your team and the expeditious delivery of their work to the organisation.

Enable your team members to develop a strong reputation as a "go-to department" within your company, which is sought out by business teams for its input at the commencement of matters.

Aim to make your team's contribution to become so valued to the company that new governance structures and processes can be confidentially introduced by you (when appropriate) which require: [i] your department's involvement from the commencement of all major projects and new ventures; and [ii] your team members to be appointed on relevant steering committees for them. Remember that by taking the time to mentor, develop and enable your team to achieve success in their roles - you in turn will enable yourself to become a success in yours! 🚀