

### **In-House Legal Jobs – Day to Day**

There are more than a few stereotypes which surround in-house roles. Whilst some private practitioners haughtily regard it as a step down from the rigours of billable hours others assume it to be fit for those a little longer in the tooth. The truth is, there is no age limit. More and more young lawyers are looking in-house to broaden their horizons and whilst the absence of time sheets and perhaps a more humane working environment often make the position of general counsel seem highly attractive, there is far more to in-house than flexi time and a 'nine to five'.

On the contrary, depending on the industry, the challenges facing lawyers in commerce and industry are many and varied and it takes a certain type of lawyer to really flourish in the role:

Be decisive. As a lawyer giving day-to-day advice to other departments within the organisation or perhaps even reporting to the board of directors, you will be frowned upon for preferring to sit-on-the-fence. Marketing managers, HR team leaders and financial directors are often under pressure to deliver on tight deadlines of their own. The disappearance of timesheets may be greeted with a heavy sigh of relief, but be aware that once out of private practice, no one will congratulate you for hours spent on a particular piece of advice. The counsel you give must be cogent, concise and quick.

Make an effort to understand the business in which you operate. Get out of your office and onto the factory floor. Understand what the departments you serve are trying to achieve. The more you endeavour to establish clear lines of communication with the various parts of the business, the more likely you are to be involved at an early stage of a process.

Put things into plain English. Although a skill which all lawyers should endeavour to develop, this particular attribute is crucial when advising your commercial colleagues. Few will thank you for a compliance report or contract review made opaque due to complex legalese, no matter how thorough. Be prepared to dip your toes into other disciplines. This is especially relevant for sole in-house counsel, where you may be required to advise on areas which do not fall precisely within your area of expertise. Private practitioners are often surprised how their breadth of knowledge widens following a move into industry which forces them to venture from their comfort zone.

For more information please contact [Rod Ellis](mailto:rod.ellis@relegal.co.uk) on 0161 638 9239 or [rod.ellis@relegal.co.uk](mailto:rod.ellis@relegal.co.uk)