



Reader Reaction: Recommended Resources on Legal Operations

June 21, 2018

Anne Ristic

Subscribers responded to our first few posts with great recommendations and suggestions for further reading. Our post on legal technologies became one of the most-read Stikeman Elliott posts ever, while our post on the gap between risk and crisis elicited a lot of “I’ve been there!” reactions from readers.

Aligning Legal Department Strategy with Corporate Strategy

As a future topic to explore, **Jonathan Boulakia, Chief Legal Officer of Chartwell Retirement Residences**, suggested that we look at the challenge of aligning the legal department strategy with the overall corporate strategy. He noted that this can be particularly difficult for law department leaders at the outset when they’re finding their feet in a new environment. We’ve flagged this as a topic to cover in the coming months. In the meantime, **Amy Hu, Director, Legal at Goldcorp Inc.**, noted the same challenge and offered some insights from Sterling Miller’s blog, [“10 Things You Need to Know As In-House Counsel – Making Legal the Department of Yes”](#), saying “it provides great practice tips and insights on how legal teams must function to survive within the business realm.”

More on the Intersection Between Legal Technologies and Humans

From the response to Andrea Alliston’s [Seven Legal Technologies Every Lawyer Should Know About](#), it seems that firms and legal departments alike are moving beyond talking about legal technology innovation, to actually doing it. But everyone agrees that technology is not a magic solution that works on its own. Experience across the board shows that significant human effort is required to assess, implement and integrate each technology product into existing legal work patterns. Having the right lawyers and applications experts focused on implementation is key.

Readers had some good suggestions for further reading on this topic. **Will Hutchins, Managing Director of Espresso Capital** which provides debt financing to early stage tech companies, recommends [“Putting Products into Services”](#) by Mohanbir Sawhney in Harvard Business Review, September 2016, saying “it’s an interesting overview of how professional services firms can embed tech products in their services – and it has some insights on how to think about fee structures for this”.

For readers implementing new legal technologies and actively looking for solutions, **Adam Sharpe, Commercial Counsel** and **Shawna-Leigh Moulton, Director, Governance and Legal Operations, at Siemens Canada**, recommend “[The In-House Counsel’s LegalTech Buyer’s Guide 2018](#)” from LawGeex. In their view, this guide is suitable for in-house departments looking to use innovative solutions to improve internal processes and operational efficiencies. The guide provides a comprehensive overview of the top 3 to 5 vendors for each of the grouped categories of legal technology (eg. contract management, matter management, e-discovery), and also provides helpful resources such as a Contract Automation cheat-sheet, an analysis of key legal trends, and five steps to follow when buying legal technology. Adam and Shawna-Leigh note that while the guide is not perfect (more detailed information on pricing and categorization of legal technologies in relation to department size would assist readers in navigating quickly to innovative solutions applicable to their specific needs), it is a good source for in-house counsel who are trying to make sense of the tools on the marketplace.

Risk and Crisis - Further Reading on the “Gap”

Lois Chiang, CEO of Periscope Advisory LLC, who consults on organizational design and operations in legal and academic organizations, responded to our post on [Navigating the Gap between Risk Management and Crisis Response – 5 Pitfalls](#). Lois recommends “[How to Avoid Catastrophe](#)” by Catherine H. Tinsley, Robin L. Dillon, and Peter M. Madsen, in Harvard Business Review, April 2011 which illustrates how systematically analyzing ‘near misses’ can provide organizations with learning to better manage both risks and crises.

We’d love to hear more feedback and will continue to gather reader recommendations for future posts. In the meantime, stay tuned for our next post on **Design Thinking Applied to the Advancement of Women – Sponsorship**.

DISCLAIMER: This publication is intended to convey general information about legal issues and developments as of the indicated date. It does not constitute legal advice and must not be treated or relied on as such. Please read our full disclaimer at www.stikeman.com/legal-notice