

# Best Practices for Corporate Legal Services

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## *Proven Methods*

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*Corporations operate in increasingly complex environments. It is important that business lawyers utilize modern best practices common to other service industries. The following suggestions will maximize the client's results and minimize their risks.*

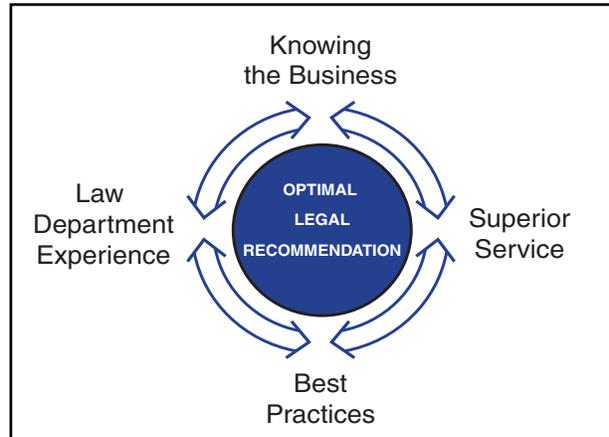
- 1. Understand the Business.** Come to know the client's business and industry. Review company information, trade journals, the web, SEC filings, debt rating reports, and other available resources. Know their operations, managers' responsibilities, products and services, organizational structure, culture, and strategic goals. Attend key planning meetings, sales meetings and industry trade shows. Ask questions.
- 2. Service is King.** Companies demand excellent service because their customers demand it of them. Be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Answer phone calls and e-mails promptly. Do whatever is necessary to help.
- 3. Constantly Reduce Legal Costs.** Legal costs are an important part of a company's budget. Lower the company's net legal costs by adopting best practices service techniques.
- 4. Be Proactive to Reduce Liabilities.** Look for problems before they come to you. Educate clients on important legal issues -- in plain English. They can be your "eyes and ears" and forewarn you of problems if they are knowledgeable of basic legal issues.
- 5. Think in Financial Terms.** Profitability is the yardstick of the business enterprise. Know the financial impact of your recommendations and explain your recommendations in economic terms.
- 6. Global View.** The CEO knows how each decision fits into the big picture. Join the CEO in knowing how each of your recommendations supports larger goals.
- 7. Automate Processes.** Processes help prevent problems. Create procedures to bring consistency and quality to legal decision-making. Use software and templates to assist in performing repetitive tasks.
- 8. Delegate Tasks to the Correct Level.** Assign legal projects to the most cost-effective level. Ask paralegals, lower-cost associates and younger law department attorneys to handle routine matters.
- 9. Be a Generalist.** Most legal decisions will involve several dissimilar areas of law. Become familiar with the wide range of legal areas specifically affecting your client's business. You will then be able to comprehensively address more aspects of more problems.
- 10. Deliver a Complete Solution.** Companies acquire legal services from many different sources. Ensure that each legal service supplier and consultant is providing the right service at the right price at the right time. Become a central advisor to the company by addressing all aspects of their business.



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11. **Work Side-by-Side with Management.** Go to their offices and workspace. Go to the sales offices, design studios and factories. See how they work and understand what's important to them.
12. **CAR.** Challenge — Action — Result. Think of each legal project in these terms.
13. **Formulate Relevant Recommendations.** Every company is different and requires solutions tailored to their business. Carefully consider the individual needs of the company while you create alternatives.
14. **Analyze All Dimensions.** Review the business implications of questions in addition to the legal aspects. This will identify the best recommendation and provide the highest value to the client.
15. **Take Action and Solve Problems.** Companies need service providers who help them achieve their goals. Do not be dispassionate, abstract commentators.
16. **Know Their Culture.** Be a cooperative member of the team. Work smoothly within their organization, according to their rules.
17. **Overcommunicate.** Inform the client of each step in the matter. This reinforces important and often complicated legal concepts and will lead to a greater understanding by the client. They may ask for less communication, but let that be their choice.
18. **Prioritize.** Know which projects need a greater focus of time and resources. Give higher priority to products or services with higher margins, products that are central to the business, and products that represent significant potential.
19. **Work Fast.** Competitive companies move fast and want advisors who do the same. Understand what it takes for the client to be competitive in their marketplace. Make sure that the client gets the work done how they want it, when they want it.
20. **Act Like Business Managers.** Budgets and deadlines help businesses operate efficiently. Become comfortable with business operational measurements, timetables and budgets.
21. **Continuous Quality Improvement.** Always look for ways to improve your services. Adopt advanced methods of providing services. Review and assess yourself constantly. Receive training in your areas of expertise and stay knowledgeable of the newest techniques.
22. **Communicate Clearly.** Answer questions clearly. Think practically and become more effective.
23. **Experience Counts.** Experience is the best teacher. Attorneys who have served as the General Counsel of major companies will provide greater value. This experience gives companies the range and depth of legal experience to most effectively address their problems.



*CorpLaw Associates LLC is a law firm of experienced business attorneys who understand their clients' businesses and who use best practices to achieve their clients' business goals. For clients who need on-site legal help, CorpLaw is one of only a few firms that specializes in this model. They can be contacted at 847.784.1300 or at [www.corplaw.com](http://www.corplaw.com).*