



GOODWIN

The pressure on general counsel offices is greater than ever before. From budgets to project management, ever-shifting technology to improving efficiency and delivering results, the burdens are as heavy as they are varying. Goodwin recognizes the importance of gathering in-house counsel together to allow them to discuss with other GCs what they view as the most pressing operational and management issues. Our GC series assembles distinguished general counsel to share how they are confronting and overcoming key issues. Here are some insights from our recent Boston and Silicon Valley panels.



Hannah Gordon
San Francisco
49ers



Jeff Hadden
TA Associates



Daniel Haley
formerly of
athenahealth



Kathi Hartman
Thermo Fisher
Scientific



Lori Henderson
Moderna



John Kuo
Varian Medical
Systems



John Schultz
Hewlett Packard
Enterprise



Wanji Walcott
PayPal



Brackett Denniston
Goodwin
Moderator

WHAT MATTERS MOST

KEYS TO BECOMING A SUCCESSFUL IN-HOUSE LAWYER

“Understand the business and work with senior management to come up with legal solutions to their business problems.”

— Kathi Hartman

“It takes experience and skill to think of yourself as a leader of a business function as opposed to a lawyer that parachutes in and solves a problem... this just takes experience and time.”

— Lori Henderson

“It is important to develop relationships built on trust. The people with whom you work really need to trust that you have no personal or political agenda.”

— Jeff Hadden

“Being confident enough to hire a subject-area expert is a huge key to success as a general counsel.”

— Daniel Haley

ON RISK MANAGEMENT AND COMPLIANCE

“Insert yourself as lawyers into the product development process. It may take several years for business stakeholders to start seeing compliance lawyers as not watchdogs in the room but as partners in formulating business strategy.”

— Daniel Haley

“Think separately about compliance versus understanding the risks inherent in your business. Try to understand what your business people are solving for as far as the end goal and then identify the risks along the way and mitigate them.”

— Lori Henderson

CRISIS MANAGEMENT, AND ROLE OF GC

“Your integrity and communication feeds into how you handle crisis. A lot of crisis management is preparation and then that preparation feeds into what your communication is.”

— Hannah Gordon

“As general counsel, you’re not looked at just as the point person, but actually the person who can bring calm into the room. That is something that the Board of Directors and the CEO really expect from you as general counsel.”

— John Kuo

“Anticipate the worst. Bring in the outside counsel, bring in the PR, the crisis communication experts, bring in the forensics people. You need to bring in your experts and bring them in early so you have all the information and all the experts at the table as this is playing out.”

— John Schultz

EXPECTATIONS FROM OUTSIDE COUNSEL

“Subject matter expertise, often in the form of a quick call for some advice on some specific matter that I’m not familiar with or that I don’t have the expertise to answer.”

— Hannah Gordon

“Always take the high ground – no excuses. If you make a mistake, admit it and own it.”

— Jeff Hadden

“Control your team and give me some predictability around the spend.”

— John Schultz

“Partners at law firms are very busy and have lots of clients, but the best ones are focused on you when you’re with them. They know what your matter is and what you’re doing and what’s important to you...and it’s very clear there.”

— Lori Henderson

“We firmly believe we need a diverse team to succeed, and win in the marketplace. It’s really important to me to see diversity in the firms we use.”

— Wanji Walcott

“Someone who has the expertise in the subject matter and jurisdiction: with the courthouse, with the clerks, with the judges, that they know the lay of the land.”

— Kathi Hartman

“Demonstrating creativity is a way of demonstrating engagement with me and my company.”

— Daniel Haley

DIVERSITY

“The firms that have brought a diverse team when they pitched us – and have that diverse team actually do the work – are the firms that actually end up working on various matters; they end up being the firms that get to know our business and the teams with whom we develop a relationship.”

— Wanji Walcott

“Diversity was number 1, number 2 or number 3 in what I try to do every year, and that’s true of most general counsels. That means diversity of outside counsel teams as well as taking care of your own house, and more broadly, learning about the unconscious bias, and talking about it openly.”

— Brackett Denniston

“Diversity is very, very important. We have the perch, the soapbox for which you drive change. We each should be very intentional as to how we look at and hire any outside counsel. We are responsible for the next generation of lawyers and how they will affect the balance, and we can influence that.”

— John Kuo