

Successful Partnering Between Inside and Outside Counsel

reviewed by Thomas W. McCandlish

Successful Partnering Between Inside and Outside Counsel is a comprehensive and ambitious effort to create the definitive reference work on the relationship between in-house and outside counsel. The massive four volume set, created as a joint effort of the West Group and the American Corporate Counsel Association, represents an admirable effort to grapple with the complex set of issues involved in purchasing, managing, selling and providing legal services for the corporate world. The contributions of over 200 authors, representing perspectives of respected corporate in-house counsel at major American corporations, as well as prominent representatives of many of the largest law firms in America, provide excellent insight into the variety of substantive, procedural and ethical questions faced by in-house and outside counsel.

The basic perspective of this work is identified in the title—a partnering approach to the relationship, rather than the previous stereotype of outside counsel as experts on a pedestal engaged when the going gets too tough for in-house counsel. While the authors recognize the different economic incentives between in-house counsel seeking to control legal costs and outside counsel seeking to enhance firm profitability, the principal conceptual focus is on a deep partnering relationship in which the strategic mission of the client is furthered by the delivery of value by lawyers serving the strategic mission of the client.

Successful Partnering serves as a valuable resource for outside counsel in the training of young attorneys, in practice development and in deepening the understanding at all levels of the organization of the perspective brought by in-house counsel to the lawyer-client relationship.

Several chapters offer valuable indoctrination for young attorneys seeking to understand more deeply successful relationship management. The extensive array of forms including engagement letters, case assessments, checklists, client surveys and general tips on developing solid business partnerships will make this an invaluable reference tool. For ease of use, these forms are also available on computer disk.

The treatise provides a detailed resource for practice development activities of outside counsel—including responding to requests for proposals, marketing to potential corporate clients and the process for choosing outside counsel—written from an in-house counsel perspective. The detailed case studies provide a depth of knowledge on the perspective brought by in-house counsel to the lawyer-client relationship. Each of the six case studies offer compelling reading for those interested in the ways major corporations manage their business.

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Editor-in-Chief Robert L. Haig

(West Group & ACCA, 4 volumes, 6,032 pages and 4 diskettes of forms, \$350. To order call 1-800-344-5009.)

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This work is also an excellent resource for inside counsel with respect to law department management, selection and management of outside counsel and maintaining effective communication with outside counsel. The discussion of the problems and innovative solutions employed to solve the economic challenges facing law departments presents a variety of strategies for addressing critical issues of cost and quality in the collaborative provision of legal services by inside and outside counsel.

The West Group and the American Corporation Counsel Association have undertaken a daunting task in assembling this unusually comprehensive reference source. It is clear that any attorney involved in the provision or management of corporate legal services will benefit from availability of this detailed guide. ☺

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