CONCEPT

Legal Department Management: Legal Operations, Outside Counsel and Legal Risk

23 – 27 November 2026
Dubai - Five-star CBD venue



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Introduction:

Legal department management often lags behind the business it serves: requests arrive by email with no triage, lawyers spend senior time on routine documents, outside counsel spend has no budget owner, legal risks live in individual memories and the board receives no structured view of exposure. This Core Concept course equips general counsel and heads of legal affairs to run the in-house function as a managed service, from operating model and legal operations through matter planning, panel firms and legal technology to board reporting. Participants build a Legal Department Transformation Plan with a Legal Risk Register.

Course Objectives:

- Define the general counsel mandate as business partner and governance adviser, with a legal function strategy aligned to organisational priorities
- Design a legal operating model with an intake and triage route, a service catalogue, self-service tools and clear decision rights
- Plan and control legal matters using legal project management scoping, budgeting and status reporting methods
- Select, instruct and govern outside counsel through panel arrangements, matter budgets and alternative fee arrangements
- Identify, rate and record legal risks in a register and report legal exposure to executive management and the board
- Specify a legal technology and knowledge roadmap, team structure, capability plan and KPI set for the legal department

Target Audience:

- General counsel who report to the chief executive or board on legal matters and legal exposure
- Heads of legal affairs who own the budget, staffing and service levels of an in-house legal team
- Deputy general counsel who lead practice groups such as corporate, commercial, employment or regulatory work
- Senior in-house lawyers preparing to take over management of a legal function
- Legal operations leads who run legal spend, technology, reporting and process improvement for the department

Course Outline:

Day 1: The General Counsel Mandate and Legal Function Strategy

- General Counsel Roles: Business Partner, Governance Adviser, Guardian and Crisis Lead
- Legal Function Reporting Lines: Chief Executive, Board and Committee Access
- Legal Department Strategy Canvas Linked to Organisational Objectives
- Legal Demand Mapping by Business Unit, Matter Type and Complexity
- Legal Department Maturity Self-Assessment and Current-State Baseline

Day 2: Legal Operating Model and Legal Operations Frameworks

- CLOC Core 12 Competencies as a Legal Operations Reference Model
- Legal Service Catalogue: Advice, Transactions, Governance and Disputes Oversight
- Intake and Triage Workflow with Risk-Based Routing Rules
- Self-Service Playbooks, Standard Templates and Approved Fallback Positions
- Delegation of Authority and Legal Sign-Off Matrix for Business Teams

Day 3: Legal Project Management, Matter Planning and Outside Counsel Governance

- Legal Project Management Cycle: Scope, Plan, Budget, Execute and Close
- Matter Plan with Work Breakdown, Milestones and Assumptions Log
- Outside Counsel Panel Selection, Rate Cards and Performance Scorecards
- Alternative Fee Arrangements: Fixed Fee, Capped Fee, Success Fee and Blended Rates
- Legal Spend Analytics and E-Billing Guideline Enforcement

Day 4: Legal Risk, Contract Governance and the Electronic Legal Office

- Legal Risk Taxonomy and Likelihood-Impact Rating Scale
- Legal Risk Register Design with Owners, Controls and Treatment Actions
- Board Legal Risk Report and Escalation Thresholds
- Contract Lifecycle Governance Overview: Request, Approval, Repository and Renewal
- Electronic Legal Office Stack: Matter Management, Document Automation, E-Signature and AI Tools

Day 5: Legal Department Transformation Case Study and Plan

- Knowledge Management Plan: Precedent Bank, Know-How Notes and Search Taxonomy
- Legal Team Structure Options: Generalist, Practice Group and Hub-and-Spoke Models
- Legal Department KPI Dashboard: Cycle Time, Spend per Matter and Client Satisfaction
- Multi-Sector Case Study: Diagnosing a Stretched In-House Legal Team
- Legal Department Transformation Plan and Legal Risk Register Presentation to a Simulated Executive Committee

Skills You Will Gain:

- Legal Function Strategy
- Legal Operating Model Design
- Legal Demand Triage
- Legal Project Management
- Outside Counsel Panel Governance
- Legal Spend Control
- Legal Risk Register Management
- Legal Technology Roadmapping

Why Attend This Course:

- Leave with a Legal Department Transformation Plan and a Legal Risk Register built from your own function's current state
- Gain a defensible case to present to executive management for legal headcount, technology and outside counsel budget decisions
- Test your legal operating model against peers leading legal teams in banking, energy, construction, services and public bodies
- Return with ready-to-adapt tools: service catalogue, intake form, matter plan, panel scorecard and board risk report layout

Conclusion:

An in-house legal function earns its seat at the executive table when it runs like a managed service with a clear mandate, predictable spend and visible control of legal exposure. The course moves from the general counsel role and legal function strategy through operating model design, legal operations and legal project management to outside counsel governance, legal risk registers, contract governance and the electronic legal office. It closes with knowledge management, team structure, KPIs and a transformation plan each participant takes back to their own legal department.