



C O M P E T E N C Y
F R A M E W O R K
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FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF
IN-HOUSE COUNSEL
OF SINGAPORE

LEVEL 1

WORKING LEVEL POSITION, INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTOR, TYPICALLY SUPERVISED, UNLIKELY TO HAVE MATERIAL BUDGET RESPONSIBILITY

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Core Legal Knowledge

Baseline knowledge and ability to advise in the technical areas relevant to your employer and its industry sector, e.g.:

- Contracts
- Transaction management
- Disputes/privilege
- Sector-specific regulation – e.g., financial industry, TMT, shipping, etc.

Focus on the basics – clear and concise advice and drafting, sticking to deadlines, prioritization.

Adjacent Legal Knowledge

Awareness of adjacent areas, with ability to identify issues, e.g.:

- Rules relating to data
- Intellectual property
- Employment
- Competition / antitrust

(note in some industry sectors what may be considered adjacent – e.g., data and IP – may well be a core competency)

Adjacent Non-legal Knowledge

Awareness of non-legal areas relevant to your employer and its industry sector, e.g.:

- Your company's business model

Awareness of how public policy issues affect your employer and its industry sector.

Risk Management

Ability to identify and evaluate legal risk in the context of your employer's business, consult law firms and other stakeholders where appropriate, and make well-informed recommendations.

BUSINESS SKILLS

Leadership

Learning from role models on leadership. Starting to define own leadership style.

Basic understanding of cross-cultural considerations.

Management

Basic understanding of and ability to identify considerations important to:

- Business clients
- Other internal stakeholders – e.g., Finance, Tax

Escalates to Legal manager where appropriate.

Basic project management skills.

Developing skills around management of law firms and service providers.

Communication and Relationships

Developing personal network in the company, and in the broader industry and profession.

Good communication skills – presentations, negotiation, influencing and advocacy.

Ability to solicit and assess diverse viewpoints before taking a view on a legal issue and debate robustly with cooperative or non-cooperative counterparts.

Ethics and Conduct

Compliance with Code of Conduct

FUTURE-READY SKILLS

Internationalization

Primarily leveraging domestic qualification(s). Developing awareness of and exposure to the typical issues encountered in mature, international legal systems and emerging economies.

Beginning exposure to macro issues.

Digital

Awareness of how digital trends are impacting your employer and industry sector:

- Analytics/AI
- Cybersecurity
- Design thinking
- Architecture – cloud, etc.,
- Social evolution – mobility, social media, sensors/ IoT
- Changes in legal risks arising from digital trends – data, privacy/ data protection, IP, competition

Legal Technology

Proficient in platforms and tools used by your employer to communicate with clients, share knowledge, and develop / store / execute documents.

LEVEL 2

TEAM LEADERSHIP POSITION, CAN OPERATE INDEPENDENTLY TO A CORPORATE STRATEGY, SOME BUDGET RESPONSIBILITY

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Core Legal Knowledge

Advanced knowledge and ability to advise in the technical areas relevant to your employer and its industry sector, e.g.:

- Contracts
- Transaction management
- Disputes/ privilege
- Sector-specific regulation – e.g., financial industry, TMT, shipping, etc.

Adjacent Legal Knowledge

Baseline knowledge of adjacent areas, with advanced ability to identify / address issues, e.g.,

- Rules relating to data
- Intellectual Property
- Employment
- Competition / antitrust
- Insolvency
- Corruption/AML/sanctions
- Knowledge of other relevant legal systems

(note in some industry sectors what may be considered adjacent – e.g., data and IP - may well be a core competency)

Adjacent Non-legal Knowledge

Baseline knowledge of non-legal areas relevant to your employer and its industry sector, e.g.:

- Your company's business model and roadmap
- Finance
- Tax / transfer pricing

Ability to articulate how legal decisions relevant to your employer or industry segment are impacted by public policy issues, and make appropriate recommendations to address such issues.

Risk Management

Excels at identifying and evaluating legal risk in the context of your employer's business, consulting law firms and other stakeholders where appropriate, and making well-informed recommendations, including in ambiguous situations.

Has exposure to crisis management (facing major prosecution, business suspension, labour action, governmental intervention, hostile takeover, insolvency, material investigation).

BUSINESS SKILLS

Leadership

Can align team efforts to a corporate strategy, and ensure (cross functional) team buy-in.

Advanced understanding of cross-cultural considerations, diversity and inclusion.

Management

Advanced understanding of and ability to identify/ navigate considerations important to:

- Business clients
- Other internal stakeholders – e.g., Finance, Tax

Escalates to Legal leadership where appropriate.

Ability to operate in various types of management environments, with or without well-defined KPI. Has the ability to articulate team / departmental performance in any scenario.

Intermediate / Advanced cost and change management skills.

Intermediate / Advanced project management skills.

Effective management of law firms and service providers to extract optimal value.

Communication and Relationships

Strong rapport with colleagues, can influence legal department leadership and other stakeholders / company senior management, and peers in the industry.

Advanced communication skills – presentations, negotiation, influencing and advocacy. Ability to solicit and assess diverse viewpoints before taking a view on a legal issue and influence senior-level stakeholders both internally and externally.

Ethics and Conduct

Role model for Code of Conduct and personal ethics

FUTURE-READY SKILLS

Internationalization

Proportionate to the nature of the employers' business, demonstrate advanced knowledge of typical issues encountered in mature, international legal systems and emerging economies. In the process of broadening geographic experience and exposure to develop familiarity with typical legal issues.

Has awareness of macro issues.

Participates in regional/international forums and is developing a visible presence.

Digital

Ability to articulate how digital trends are impacting your employer and industry sector:

- Analytics/AI
- Cybersecurity
- Design thinking
- Architecture – cloud, etc.
- Social evolution – mobility, social media, sensors/IoT
- Changes in legal risks arising from digital trends – data, privacy/ data protection, IP, competition.

Legal Technology

Ability to identify opportunities for automation and simplification, and implement mechanisms to address those opportunities. Seeks data to evaluate effectiveness of and refine solutions. Broad awareness of trends in the legal technology industry.

LEVEL 3

GENERAL COUNSEL, REGIONAL SEA/APAC HEAD OF LEGAL FOR MNC, SIGNIFICANT BUDGET AND STRATEGIC RESPONSIBILITY

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Core Legal Knowledge

Expert knowledge and ability to advise in the technical areas relevant to your employer and its industry sector. Demonstration of thought leadership capabilities.

Adjacent Legal Knowledge

Advanced knowledge of adjacent areas, with expert ability to navigate such adjacencies, which should include:

- Corporate governance
- M&A/fundraising/listing rules
- Material disputes and investigations
- Brand advocacy/corporate communications strategy/investor relations

Deep engagement with public policy issues affecting your employer and its industry sector and ability to develop a strategy to manage legal and regulatory changes.

Risk Management

Expert ability to manage risks both strategically and tactically. Can lead company-wide projects to mitigate legal risk in a given area.

Has made significant risk decisions in crisis.

BUSINESS SKILLS

Leadership

Ability to identify important changes for the future, define a vision, grow support for that vision, chart the process to attain the vision, and execute. Delivers consistent success on such organization-wide projects.

Expert understanding of cross-cultural considerations, diversity and inclusion.

Advanced talent management skills (recognition, development, succession planning).

Be a driver and adopter of legal technology and champion innovation in legal operations.

Management

Ability to define success factors for departmental performance, including performance, budget and team engagement factors. Ability to implement a system to measure such factors, obtain and allocate resources, and deliver consistent organization-wide success.

Strategic law firm and service provider management skills; maintains relationship with firms and service providers at executive level, ability to extract maximum value from panel.

Advanced cost and change management skills.

Communication and Relationships

Manages board-level stakeholders, maintains a peer relationship with senior management, and senior colleagues in the industry including government.

Consistent track record of outstanding communication skills – presentations, negotiation, influencing and advocacy. Ability to rapidly distil the most complex issues - points of law or fact scenarios - into a decision point for the Board or senior management, and stand by that decision in a wide range of forums.

Ethics and Conduct

Role model for Code of Conduct and personal ethics

FUTURE-READY SKILLS

Internationalization

Proportionate to the nature of the employer's business, demonstrate advanced knowledge of typical issues encountered in mature, international legal systems and emerging economies. Familiar with most legal issues in any given geography which overlaps with the risk footprint of the employer, and able to direct the resources of the legal department more efficiently as a result.

Has a current and forward looking view on macro issues facing economies (e.g., interest rates), geographies (e.g., populism, social trends) and industry sectors (e.g., upstream/ downstream issues), has a response, and can define how that affects strategy.

Has a visible leadership presence on the regional/international stage.

Digital

Ability to define and articulate your employer's approach to digital trends and their impact on your department's work and the wider legal industry:

- Analytics/AI
- Cybersecurity
- Design thinking
- Architecture – cloud, etc.
- Social evolution – mobility, social media, sensors/IoT
- Changes in legal risks arising from digital trends – data, privacy/data protection, IP, competition

Legal Technology

Ability to evaluate, define and prioritize opportunities for automation and simplification, and implement mechanisms to address those opportunities. Seeks data to evaluate effectiveness of and refine solutions. Ability to execute the necessary change management across legal department processes, and manage the human impact.