



# MULTILAW CONNECT

1/2026



# Introduction

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Welcome to this edition of Multilaw Connect.

This issue brings together practical insight on the realities of in-house legal today – from demonstrating impact beyond cost, to how the GC role is evolving, and what moving in-house really looks like in practice.

You have told us you value content that is focused, relevant and easy to digest. With that in mind, this will be our final full magazine format. Going forward, we will be sharing shorter, more targeted pieces designed to get straight to the point and fit more easily into your working day.

We hope you enjoy this edition and look forward to bringing you our new content format soon.



**Adam Cooke**

CEO  
Multilaw



# All about the numbers

There has never been so much data, so easily accessible. The rapid advancement of AI has turbocharged data collection to dizzying new heights, and with this has become more granular means of measuring and monitoring change. Across various industries, this is being harnessed to set metrics that map risk, justify expenditure, and offer a greater sense of visibility and transparency amid increasingly remote workforces.

In-house teams have long managed an immense amount of data, yet when it comes to establishing up-to-date metrics that reflect the complexity and scale of their work, they **often struggle to demonstrate their impact in business terms.**

Recent research suggests this challenge persists. According to Gartner:

**“57% of legal departments fail to tie legal metrics to business goals.”**

Source: Gartner (public summary)

This may help explain why broad metrics have typically been applied to in-house teams, often related to cost, risk avoidance and compliance.

While these factors are undeniably important, this approach risks underselling the true value of general counsel and their teams.



It is no secret that the role of the GC has evolved into a more strategic, high-profile leadership position, requiring diplomacy and foresight to navigate increasingly complex legal, regulatory and commercial environments.

**EY's global research reflects this shift, noting that:**

**“General counsel are expected to help their organisations navigate an increasingly complex risk landscape while enabling strategic growth and transformation.”**

Source: EY

[https://www.ey.com/en\\_gl/insights/law/how-general-counsel-are-leading-through-change](https://www.ey.com/en_gl/insights/law/how-general-counsel-are-leading-through-change)



Measuring success in the face of such complexity is not accurately reflected in spend alone, and when it comes to metrics that demonstrate the work carried out by GCs and their teams, many departments are still playing catch-up.

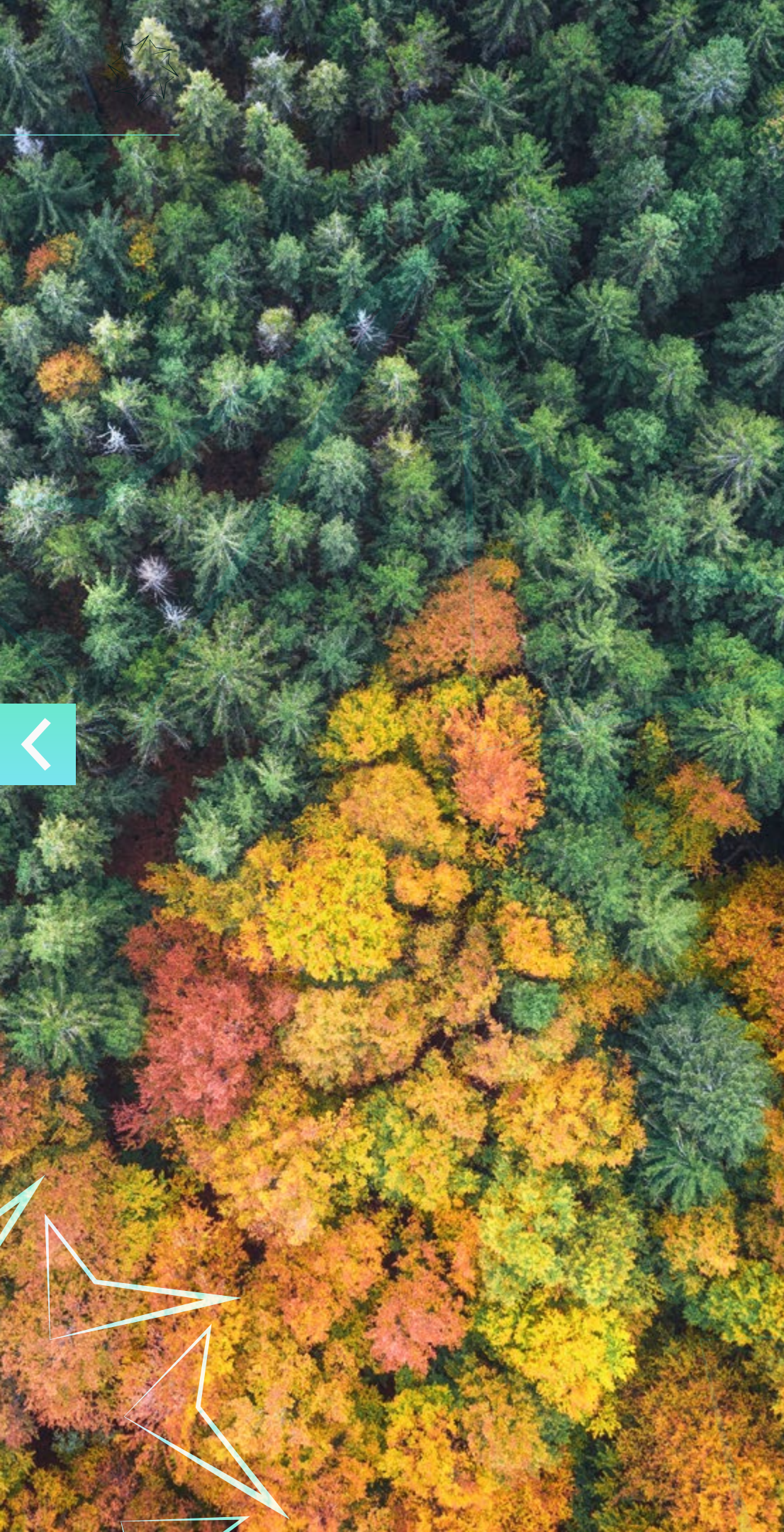
**The Thomson Reuters Institute reinforces this point:**

**“Although GCs and legal operations professionals want to prioritise service and enable their businesses, most law departments continue to track and report metrics related primarily to costs and spending.”**

Source: Thomson Reuters Institute

<https://www.thomsonreuters.com/en-us/posts/corporates/2025-ldo-index-legal-success-metrics/>





## Opportunity for change

While the role and position of the GC has evolved significantly, the metrics used to assess legal performance often hark back to an earlier time.

The **2025 Legal Department Operations Index** from the Thomson Reuters Institute provides public insight into the pressure many teams are under:

- 56% of legal departments say they are under-resourced
- 55% report flat or decreasing budgets
- 51% report little or no change in legal technology budgets

Source

This combination of rising expectations and constrained resources reinforces the perception of legal as a cost centre, rather than a strategic driver – an image many departments are keen to move beyond.

### The reality for in-house legal teams:

#### Under resourced teams

56% report resourcing gaps

#### Flat budgets

55% report no budget growth

#### Expanding remit

Growing strategic expectations

At the same time, Gartner's research highlights that:

**“Just 23% of legal departments achieved high digital readiness,”** suggesting many teams are still struggling to extract full value from technology investments.

Source



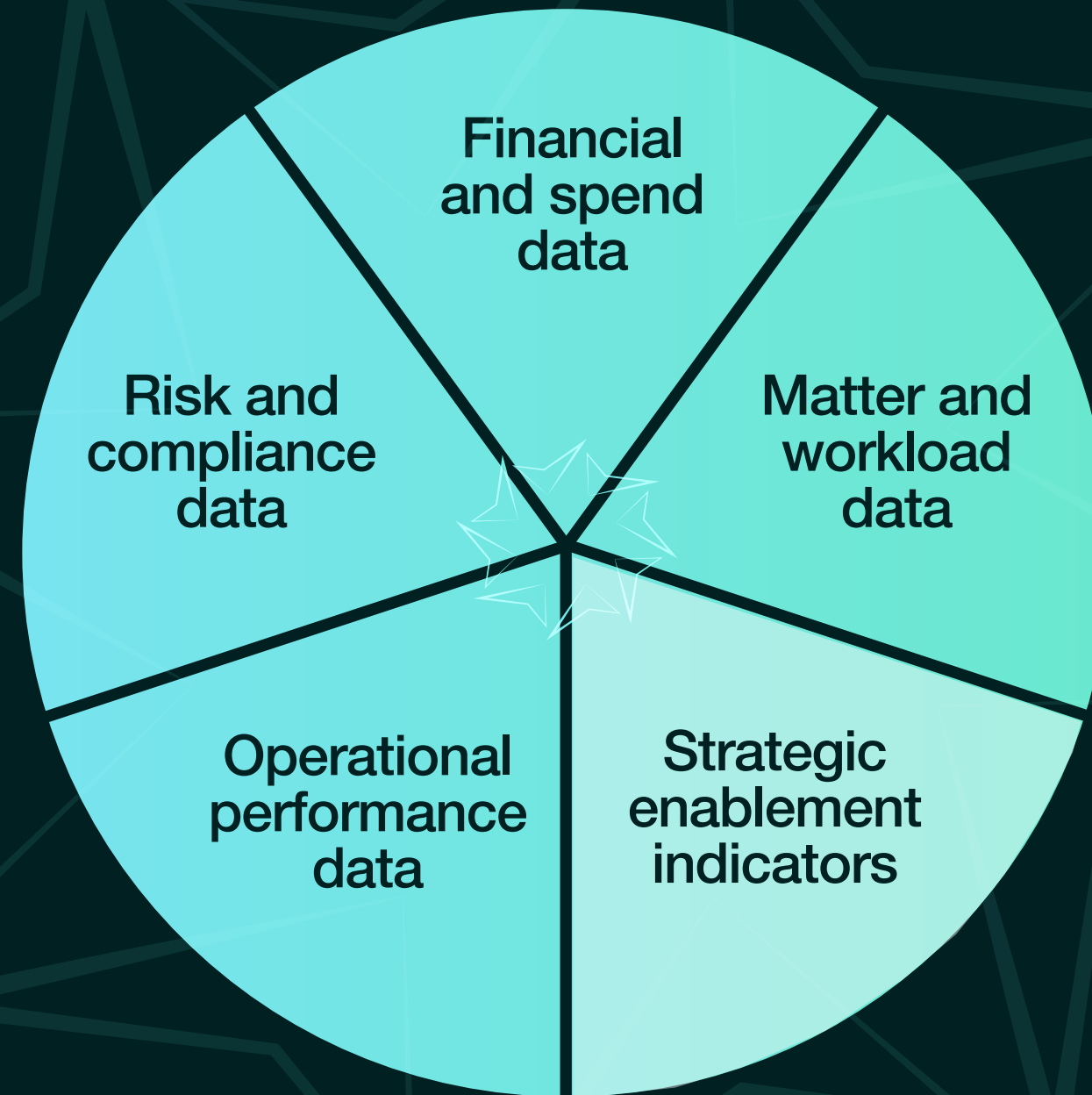
## The data most legal teams already have

### What data in-house legal teams are already capturing

In practice, in-house legal teams typically capture data across five broad areas:

- Matter volumes and workload
- Financial and spend data
- Risk and compliance activity
- Operational performance (for example, cycle times and resourcing)
- Strategic enablement indicators

The challenge is rarely a lack of data, but fragmentation. Information is often gathered for operational or reporting purposes, without being connected into a coherent performance narrative.





# From activity to impact: tracking strategic enablement

To move beyond cost-centred measurement, legal departments are increasingly exploring **strategic enablement indicators** – metrics that show how legal supports business outcomes, not just how efficiently it processes work.

These indicators answer different questions, such as:

- Did legal help the business move faster on key initiatives?
- Did early legal involvement prevent issues from escalating?
- Did legal input enable revenue-generating activity?
- Did legal advice improve the quality of strategic decisions?

The importance of this shift is echoed by the Thomson Reuters Institute:

“Legal departments must move beyond cost metrics to align and demonstrate their full strategic value... most continue to measure and report primarily on cost and time.”

Source

## What strategic enablement looks like in practice

Rather than abstract concepts, strategic enablement can be tracked through practical indicators, such as:

### Business velocity

- Time taken to approve new products or services
- Contract turnaround times for revenue-generating deals

### Risk avoidance

- Issues resolved before escalation
- Reduction in regulatory incidents or disputes

### Operational enablement

- Adoption of self-service tools by business teams
- Reduction in repeat legal queries following training or guidance

### Strategic advisory

- Legal involvement in M&A, expansion or transformation projects



## How is this data used

Most legal teams do not need new systems to begin tracking strategic enablement. Existing matter management tools, contract platforms, spreadsheets and stakeholder feedback already contain much of the relevant information.

The difference lies in how that data is framed and used.

Instead of asking, “How many matters did we close?” teams ask, “Which matters directly enabled business outcomes?”

This shift allows legal leaders to use data more effectively:

- **With the board and executive team:** to demonstrate how legal enables strategy and reduces future risk
- **With finance:** to explain resourcing and spend in business terms
- **With external advisers:** to scope work around outcomes, predictability and sector expertise rather than hours alone

## The takeaway

In-house teams typically punch above their weight. But as expectations continue to rise, relying on traditional metrics alone risks underselling the function’s true impact.

The opportunity now is not to collect more data, **but to use existing data more intelligently.**

For many legal leaders, that means:

- Stress-testing current metrics
- Balancing risk control with strategic contribution
- Using data to improve conversations with the business
- Linking legal activity to commercial priorities

Nuanced measurement helps establish clearer expectations internally and provides a more accurate picture of how legal enables growth, resilience and better decision-making.

As the Thomson Reuters institute concludes:

“The most effective legal departments are not those that track the most metrics, but those that connect performance data to outcomes the business actually cares about.”

Source



# In-house Legal in 2026: A Q&A



Yasmin Lambert

Managing Director  
RSGI

In this short Q&A, Yasmin Lambert from global intelligence and advisory agency RSGI shares a forward-looking perspective on the pressures facing in-house legal teams in 2026, how the General Counsel role is evolving, and where technology and external counsel can add the greatest value.

## Q1 – What will be the defining pressures on in-house legal teams in 2026?

I think we always have to start with the business perspective. We are undoubtedly heading into another year of uncertain and complex geopolitical and economic change. At the same time, we are moving into a new phase of AI-driven, faster and more disruptive digital transformation.

So there are two defining pressures: legal teams need to rethink how they manage risk for the business, and they need to improve how they use people, technology and data to deliver work faster and more cost-effectively. Some solutions will help them do both.

## Q2 – How is the role of the General Counsel continuing to change?

We see General Counsel continuing to move into true C-suite strategic leadership roles. They are increasingly relied upon not to be deep experts like the traditional lawyer, but to be broader advisers. They need to manage risks and anticipate what is coming next. We often refer to this evolving role as the “Chief Horizon Scanner”.

Many will continue to take on broader responsibility for corporate affairs, government affairs or risk, for example. And we will continue to see GCs in more externally facing roles, communicating to customers or the public on important changes, such as the business approach to responsible AI.





### Q3 – What skills will lawyers need to thrive in 2026 and beyond?

Advances in AI are already pushing legal teams to rethink the roles and skills they most need. There is a valuable opportunity right now to invest in skills that will serve lawyers for the coming decades.

Some are core technical skills: how to use AI, understand its limitations and risks, and interpret and communicate trends in data. Allied to that are interpersonal skills that are becoming more important as AI takes over information and knowledge work. The best in-house lawyers should have strong communication skills, understand how to tap into diverse groups of professionals and combine perspectives, be effective team leaders, and excel in stakeholder management.

In creating technology tools, we will need more product designers and managers, and fewer people focused solely on completing routine legal tasks. If we assume expertise is a given, two of the most valuable (and learnable) traits in a fast-changing workplace will be mental agility and curiosity.

### Q4 – Where will in-house teams expect the most value from external counsel?

Technology is allowing in-house legal teams to bring more work in-house, from early case assessment to due diligence. External counsel will be just as important, but they too need to shift up the value curve across every practice area.

They also need to think about how they deliver value: using technology, drawing on data, and pricing in a way that aligns incentives for the law firm and the client. And where legal knowledge becomes easier to replicate using AI, they also need to focus on what differentiates them, whether it is unique data or a better client experience.



## Q5 – How will technology and AI reshape legal workflows in 2026?

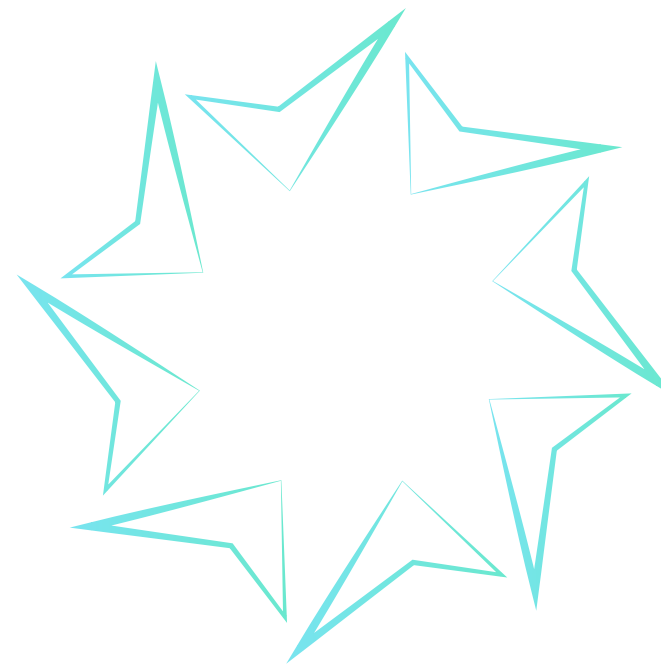
Legal teams are at very different stages in their adoption of AI, depending on the size of their teams, business appetite, investment capacity and individual leaders. There is still a long way to go on the basics. This means developing skills, and also using AI to speed up specific tasks, such as reviewing marketing materials and legal agreements, or creating a litigation chronology.

But the more advanced teams are starting to stitch these solutions together into whole workflows to manage contracting, intellectual property, compliance or litigation processes. People are involved in most steps in the process, but their roles are less time-intensive and usually more interesting.

The most significant changes come down to a simple question: who does what work? We will start to see in-house teams do more, more junior lawyers do more, other types of professionals do more, and more productised, subscription-priced legal services in niche areas.

## Conclusion

Taken together, these shifts point to a legal function that is becoming faster, more strategic and more connected to business priorities. The teams that will thrive in 2026 will be those that strengthen risk foresight while modernising delivery—combining smart use of technology with the judgement, leadership and curiosity that remain distinctly human.





Nick Beideman

Chief Legal Officer (CLO)  
W8 Shipping LLC

## Inside the Shift: Reflections on going in-house

Moving from private practice into an in-house role can feel like stepping into a different rhythm entirely — fewer clients, deeper immersion, and a much closer connection to implementation. In this feature, Nick Beideman, Chief Legal Officer (CLO) at W8 Shipping LLC, reflects on the biggest shifts since leaving private practice, the realities of operating in a global shipping and logistics business, and what makes external counsel genuinely valuable.



## What has been the biggest shift moving from private practice at a Multilaw firm into your in-house role at W8?

A lot has changed, especially in terms of my day-to-day work and the resources I have access to. I moved from a traditional U.S. “Big Law” firm - overseeing M&A transactions and acting as outside general counsel to many different clients — to being dedicated to a single privately held organisation with operations around the world.

At the same time, a lot still feels the same, oddly enough. I was already deeply involved with the client before leaving Polsinelli, P.C. to move in-house, so the transition was largely seamless - we hit the ground running as if nothing had changed. The key difference is focus: now I am worrying about one client instead of many.

Probably the biggest change for me has been the operational element. I get to roll up my sleeves and see things through to implementation, testing, and working face-to-face rather than producing work product in private practice and not always knowing what happens next. At the end of the day, I have always felt like a business person who was smart enough to become a lawyer, rather than a lawyer who learned the business side, so in that regard I could not be happier.

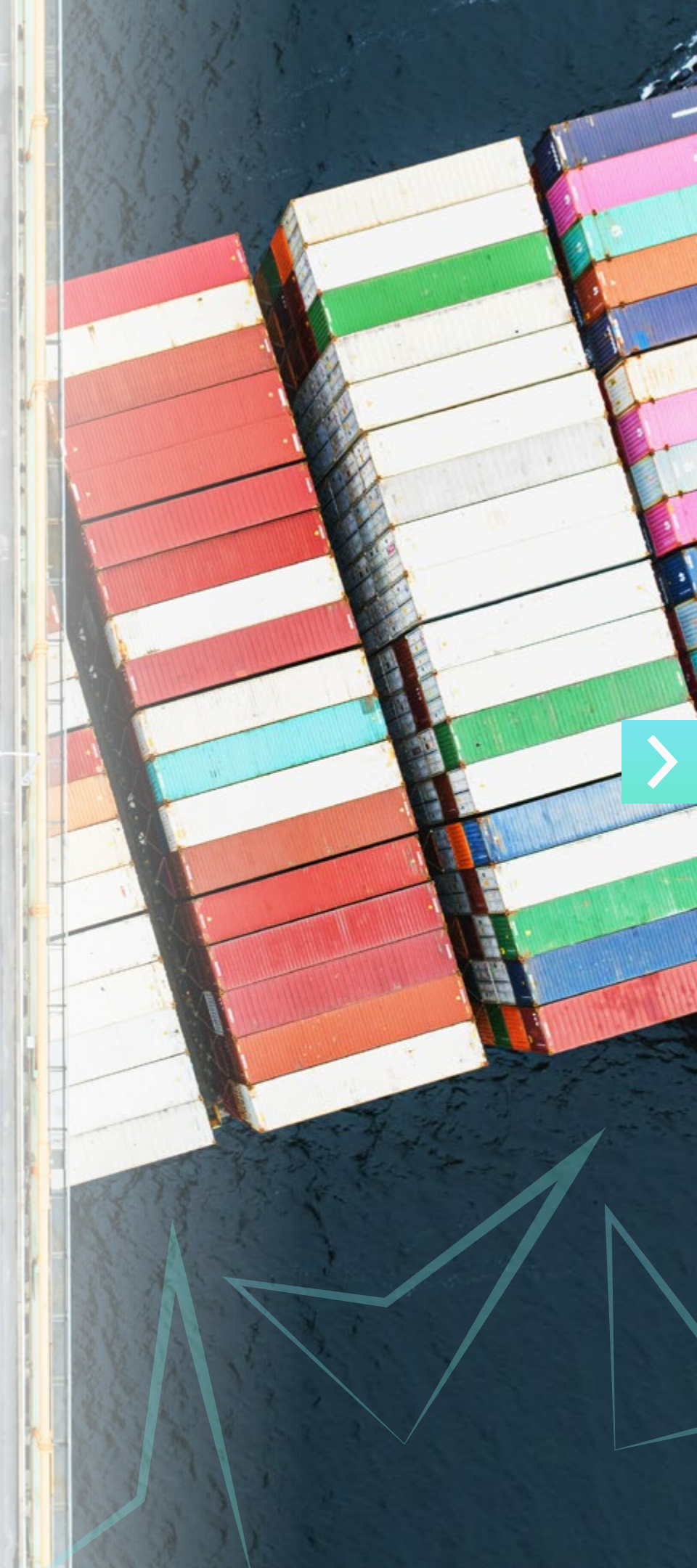
And, of course, I no longer have to enter time and bill clients every month - which I often joke may be the single greatest perk of becoming an in-house lawyer, and motivation enough on its own to leave private practice.

## Within the shipping and logistics environment, what cross-border or regulatory issues do you find yourself dealing with most commonly?

There are the things you would expect: compliance, responding to changes in the law, updating contracts, and overseeing local counsel. But banking continues to be a growing challenge for U.S. companies doing business globally, particularly those with predominantly international customers and mostly foreign-derived revenues.

Even finding straightforward treasury management services from large institutional banks can be difficult, as they become increasingly concerned about their own liability. At this point, I know more about Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Know Your Customer (KYC) requirements than I ever expected to as a corporate lawyer in the logistics space. Once you reach certain revenue levels, or operate in certain parts of the world, you effectively need a compliance function as robust and sophisticated as what a regulated fintech business is expected to have.

That said, it is hard to complain when it comes to something so important. I am also very lucky to work with a company and stakeholders who were ahead of the industry in this regard and have never shied away from investing in compliance - we do not cut corners.



## How do you approach working with external counsel across multiple jurisdictions? (If you do.)

We still rely heavily on local counsel around the world, including Multilaw firms I still work with to this day. I also seek referrals any time we are approaching a new market or dealing with an issue in a more obscure jurisdiction.

As for my approach and how I interact with local counsel, it is largely the same as before. I think of local counsel in much the same way I treated subject matter experts and specialists when I was running an M&A deal. You come to appreciate the good ones - especially those who are on time and do not need to be chased.

The lawyers who add the most value stay engaged, problem-solve, and spot issues in a meaningful way - not simply to generate more billables. They understand risk tolerance and deliver practical answers and workable options, rather than a memo that sits in a file and creates more questions than it resolves.

The most valuable advisers are those who take the time to understand the nature of our business and what the real priorities are. Just as I heard firm leaders and former mentors say: "think like a client." If you put yourself in our shoes, anticipate the internal conversations I will be having after we speak, and pre-empt the questions I will be asked internally, local counsel can become invaluable.

## Which skills or mindsets from private practice have proved most useful in-house - and were there any that mattered less than you expected?

In private practice, I oversaw M&A transactions and served as outside general counsel to companies of all sizes. Both experiences set me up well for an in-house role because, in my view, a good corporate lawyer spends much of their time as a legal project manager - especially in M&A.

So much of the job is managing other lawyers, collecting inputs from specialists, translating complex issues for the client, and helping the client navigate towards the right decision - with only a small portion of time spent afterwards actually executing that decision. Most of that still holds true for me now, except that I get to spend more time executing and working with operations to see those decisions implemented end-to-end.

A private equity M&A partner once told me: "By the time you can successfully run a private equity deal checklist and oversee a closing call, you will have a PhD in project management." I have found that to be true, and I think it is part of what makes me an effective in-house counsel and leader.



**What have you found most rewarding, or unexpectedly challenging, about operating in a business with such a strong global footprint?**

I consider myself very lucky because I joined a client I already felt deeply connected with. I am still working just as many hours and the same stressors are there, if not more, but I truly love being able to roll up my sleeves and be far more hands-on than I ever could in private practice.

I have been given the opportunity to build my own department alongside several others, and I have been trusted to work with operational teams - helping them build and refine their processes, and then watching them succeed. I get to see my contributions flow all the way through the organisation, right down to the warehouse floor, and I am part of a business that impacts thousands of hardworking people around the world. I did not anticipate how powerful and motivating that would be.

In private practice, even when you are part of a tight-knit firm, you are still to some degree - a “free agent”, selling your individual time and knowledge to different clients, partners, and teams. You hand over the work product, bill your time, and move on to the next matter. Now, I feel far more connected to outcomes. I have a deeper sense of pride in what I am building, and a stronger connection to the people I am working with and advocating for each day. I could not be happier.





# New member firms recently joining Multilaw

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Brazil

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Bichara Advogados



Egypt

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Shehata and Partners



Guinea

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Icarus Legal



Sweden

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Fylgia



South Africa

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Alchemy Law





# Upcoming Events

Thursday

5

MAR

18:30 - 20:00



Networking Drinks at Multilaw 2026 Americas regional conference

MEXICO CITY, MEXICO

Join us for a drinks at the Club de Industriales during the Multilaw 2026 Americas conference in Mexico City.

[Confirm your attendance](#)

Thursday

16

APR

18:00 - 19:30



Multilaw Drinks at 2026 EMEA Regional Conference  
VIENNA, AUSTRIA

Join us for drinks at the Multilaw 2026 EMEA Regional Conference in Vienna.

[Confirm your attendance](#)

SAT

2

MAY

19:00 - 21:00



Multilaw Networking Evening during 2026 INTA  
LONDON, UK

Join Multilaw lawyers from around the world and fellow in-house counsel attending the International Trademark Association (INTA) Annual Meeting in London, whilst taking in spectacular views from the iconic Shard building!

[Confirm your attendance](#)

Thursday

15

OCT

18:30 - 20:00



Networking Drinks at 2026 Global Conference  
PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC

Join us for drinks during the Multilaw 2026 Global Conference in Prague.

[Confirm your attendance](#)

Tuesday

6

OCT

08:00 - 10:00

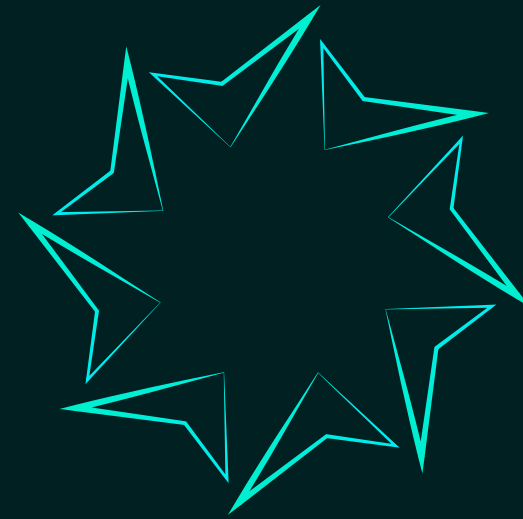


Multilaw Networking Breakfast during the 2026 IBA Annual Conference  
LONDON, UK

Connect with Multilaw lawyers from around the world and fellow in-house counsel attending the IBA Annual Conference in Copenhagen.

[Confirm your attendance](#)





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