

## MCC INTERVIEW: Reese Arrowsmith / Campbell Soup Company

## ACC Is All In on Legal Operations

*The association's first chair of its ops section explains why*

**Reese Arrowsmith**, who heads legal operations at **Campbell Soup Company**, is the inaugural chair of the legal operations membership section of the Association of Corporate Counsel (ACC). He spoke with us about his new role at ACC, the growth he's seen in the field of legal operations and where he thinks it's going next. His comments have been edited for style and length.

**MCC:** Although legal operations is still a relatively new field, you're one of the profession's veterans. How did you find yourself in the field?

**Arrowsmith:** I've had the opportunity to be a vendor, a consultant and an in-house operations executive over practically two decades. I started on the vendor side, at a legal software company where I worked for the professional services team and spent time in dozens of law departments. My role was about helping the corporate law departments streamline operations, remove waste and automate through technology, as well as track and manage outside counsel spend.

From there, I wanted to do broader legal consulting, so I left to go to a management consulting firm. I worked there for a number of years, focusing solely on the office of the general counsel. We helped law departments plan strategic initiatives, develop and roll out policies and procedures, implement systems, initiate cost-savings programs, and develop outside counsel management programs.

Then I went in-house in 2011 and spent five years establishing and leading legal operations at a financial services company, Lincoln Financial, before coming to Campbell Soup Company in April 2016. Through all of this, I have had the opportunity to work with clients ranging in size from as small as 10 attorneys to over 1,000 attorneys. One of the many things I learned along the way is that all legal departments, regardless of size, face similar challenges.

**MCC:** How have you seen the legal operations field grow and change?

**Arrowsmith:** Legal operations has grown as the legal services industry has evolved, and we're now at a point where legal operations is spurring, rather than resulting from, additional changes in the legal industry.

When I started in the field, more often than not companies did not have legal operations as a function, and almost none had a chief legal operations officer. In the late 1990s, the role typically focused on technology. This was a time when matter management was just becoming popular, e-billing was gaining widespread use and document management was becoming a norm.

Throughout the 2000s, companies really started putting pressure on law departments to cut spending, primarily through cutting outside counsel costs. As the pressure to do more with less became more prevalent, general counsel started hiring business-focused leaders to run their legal departments.

Over the past 10 years, the function has expanded exponentially. The roles and responsibilities as well as the number of companies that have a legal operations position have increased dramatically.

I was reviewing the results of The Ninth Annual Law Department Operations Survey (Blickstein Group/Consilio), which found that 33 percent of responding companies added their first legal operations professional in 2008. A much smaller



**Legal operations is not just the hub or spoke in the wheel; it is the motor spinning the wheel.**

number were added in 2009, likely the result of the financial crisis, but we have seen another surge from 2013 to 2016. According to the ACC Chief Legal Officers 2016 Survey, the percentage of GCs/CLOs reporting legal operations staff more than doubled between 2015 and 2016, reaching 48 percent last year.

The role has also grown in its importance to the company. Now more and more legal operations executives are reporting in to the GC, which is good because an empowered legal ops professional is an impactful legal operations professional. The core functions of a legal operations professional currently include the following responsibilities:

- strategic planning
- financial planning and reporting
- head count planning and management
- process improvement (including policies and procedures)
- vendor management
- resource management
- records management
- e-discovery

The role continues to evolve. I was called by a recruiter about a year ago regarding a position where a 50-person compliance team reports into the newly formed head of legal operations role. Based on my experience at Lincoln Financial Group, the legal operations function can have a huge impact on the compliance function within heavily regulated industries. Legal departments

will continue to think proactively to limit legal, compliance and regulatory risk. Legal operations professionals are suited for these challenges.

**MCC:** How has the legal industry changed in recent years, and where do you see it going next?

**Arrowsmith:** There are new vendors, including alternative legal service providers and technologies, popping up every day. These include solutions that will undoubtedly disrupt the industry. Corporate legal departments are clamoring for firms to deliver legal services more efficiently. The first vendors or firms that truly meet the need will be hugely successful and lead the industry into the future. The companies that are disrupting the status quo in today's world are centered on technological innovations. Airbnb has been widely known for a few years and only has 3,000 employees, yet it is estimated to be worth \$30 billion. That's roughly the same as its largest brick-and-mortar competitor, Marriott International, which has more than 100,000 employees and has been around since 1927.

From a technology perspective, if all predictions are correct and the changes that are taking place come to fruition, there will be a fundamental change in the way the legal industry works from beginning to end. One example that may have an enormous impact is artificial intelligence. We have probably all read articles about how this and other technology will reduce the number of lawyers needed. This truly fundamental change will require legal departments and the legal industry to rethink how they function, and the legal operations role will be instrumental in that transition. Companies are going to need to adopt, and will want to adopt, these new solutions. The developments will change how lawyers learn, do research, make decisions, develop case strategy and complete document review in support of deals, contracts and litigation.

All of this change will have to be managed by someone. Legal operations is not just the hub or spoke in the wheel; it is the motor spinning the wheel.

**MCC:** How has ACC Legal Operations evolved over time? What's next?

**Arrowsmith:** ACC Legal Operations was founded in March 2015 and has grown 40 percent since the kickoff conference – itself a sellout. At its core, and despite our rapid growth, we are close-knit and collaborative. Our founding steering committee set up interest groups to reflect legal operations subfunctions. We have ample opportunities for like-minded people to collaborate, so that principle hasn't changed. The types of collaboration opportunities have evolved as the groups have formalized. For example,

*Continued on following page*

**Reese Arrowsmith** is a vice president and head of legal operations at Campbell Soup Company, where he oversees the daily operations of the law and public affairs department. His responsibilities include budgeting and financial reporting, financial analysis and controls, recruitment and on-boarding of new personnel, procurement, IT services and facilities and equipment. He went to Campbell in April 2016 from Lincoln Financial Group, where he was also a vice president and head of operations. He was previously a vice president at Duff and Phelps in Washington, D.C.



# The Ethical Hacker

## *Data, Disputes, Discovery and More...*

## Field Notes: Leveraging IoT Data Isn't a Budget Killer

By **Charlie Platt**

**L**ike many, I attended LegalTech Jan. 31 – Feb. 2 and enjoyed catching up with old friends while seeing new, emerging technologies. Did you see the car forensics kit being offered by Berla? That was pretty cool and something I am definitely going to keep an eye on. One of the things I always enjoy is the post-LegalTech articles. Everyone talking about what they saw, what caught their eye, and where they think the legal technology world is heading. I was really looking this year for anything related to the internet of things (IoT), especially with Alexa making the news recently as an eyewitness to murder. Of course, there's also the pacemaker that recently provided critical evidence in an arson investigation, and Fitbits are becoming notorious for impugning eyewitness accounts. Our devices aren't only spying on us; they're turning state's evidence!

I will say that I was a little disappointed I didn't see more IoT technologies, but some of the articles that came out afterward certainly caught my attention. Many were talking about IoT data and how difficult and expensive it is to get, use and turn into legal arguments. This surprised me. We (iDS) just finished up a case where we had IoT data, alongside more traditional, structured data, and we were able to turn

it around for a very little amount of effort and cost. By that I mean under two months from initial engagement to the plaintiffs' voluntarily walking away from the case, and at a cost that was a tiny fraction of the potential exposure to our client. Our client was lucky that the data in that case was in their favor but, regardless, isn't it better to know the answer up-front and negotiate from a position of knowledge, rather than ignorance?

With the right tools, the right team and the right strategy, IoT data can be leveraged for much less than many attorneys assume. Yes, it's new. Yes, it's obscure. Yes, it's daunting to those who haven't worked with it. But it's not cost-prohibitive if done right, and it can literally make the difference between long, drawn-out litigation with murky, disputed facts, or a quick and clean settlement based on a clear and concise factual record.



**Charlie Platt** is a director at iDiscovery Solutions (iDS) and a Certified Ethical Hacker. He advises clients on data analytics, digital forensics and cybersecurity. You can reach him at [cplatt@idiscoversolutions.com](mailto:cplatt@idiscoversolutions.com) with any questions about this article or other data-related concerns.

### ACC

*Continued from previous page*

we now have many webcasts and virtual roundtables in which the rest of the membership can take part.

Overall, the legal operations function is burgeoning, so we have a great mix of established legal operations executives and first incumbents – those people who are establishing legal operations at their companies. While there is still plenty of interest in keeping up with the latest, cutting-edge legal operations strategies, we have found that there is also a real willingness from seasoned legal operations executives to mentor those who are in early stages of defining, designing and building legal operations functions. We have a great “pay it forward” dynamic. As we continue to grow, I hope our community retains these qualities.

**MCC: Congratulations on being named the first-ever chair of ACC Legal Operations. What are your goals for the coming year?**

**Arrowsmith:** Thank you. I am honored to hold the role of chair for the next 18 months. My goals are driven by the needs of the industry. First and foremost, this means working with the rest of the ACC Legal Operations membership to develop a foundational tool kit for a legal operations professional and ensuring that we have the strongest possible ongoing education. The field is quickly evolving, so we want to stay in front of the trends.

We are excited to have a new strategic plan in order to take our progress a step further and build our resources. A lot of this will be based on our

collaborative approach, as we are asking our interest groups to contribute tool kits, templates and best practices for various work streams. People are clamoring to know what their fellow legal operations professionals are doing and what benchmarks tell us, so we will continue to be an information hub.

Another goal is helping ACC Legal Operations to shape vendors' offerings. Our tools and technology interest group plans to collaborate on determining which legal department needs are not being met by vendors, then working with vendors to bring those solutions to fruition. We also want to work more closely with other associations within the legal industry, such as those aligned with technology or outside counsel. We think there are opportunities for stronger collaborations in order to advance the legal industry as a whole.

Being part of the broader ACC community, we have a great opportunity for ACC Legal Operations to share what we learn. Some departments don't have the capacity to hire a team or individual dedicated to legal operations, but we'd still like to share the strategies we've found to be successful. Also, many GCs are curious about how to best set up legal operations in their departments, and we're happy to have those conversations and help the process along.

There are so many more changes to come within the legal industry. ACC Legal Operations is entirely member-driven, so I look forward to hearing from our members about what they want to see next. It's an exciting time to be a legal operations professional, with many opportunities to push forward and manage change.