

WORK SMARTER, NOT HARDER

Work smarter, not harder. Many of us aspire to this seeming utopia where machines do the most painfully boring parts of our job, while we do only what brings the most glory, accolades, and excitement. Working smarter is a personal passion of mine because, while I love my work, I also want to maximize time spent with the other love of my life: my family and traveling the world with them.

Working smart is the lifeblood of Legal Operations. For all the metrics, meetings, and measurement, Legal Operations professionals just want to ensure the value of resources allocated to a task is equal to the value of the task at hand. They drive us toward this smarter way of working with changes in people, process, and technology.

As both a lawyer and an operations professional, I'd like to share some lessons I've learned over the years in trying to work smarter personally, as well as transforming the way others work.

- 1. Technology ≠ Complete Solution.** Technology companies are fantastic at marketing, listening intently to your problems, then showing you shiny new tools that will fix your most critical problems. Before buying a new tool to solve a problem, ask yourself some questions. Do you know the number of people you will need to keep the tool running, enter data, and ensure the data is correct? How will you drive adoption? How will you adapt existing processes to the technology? Do you even have a process underlying the technology? If you have not asked yourself these questions, you may be buying a tool that goes directly onto a shelf to gather dust.
- 2. Documenting Your Work Processes = \$ Savings.** If you examine your day-to-day work, it can probably be broken down into steps or tasks. Once you have broken your work into these component parts, you will often find that parts of your job—and often the ones you hate the most—could be delegated to someone else. Imagine if, instead of hiring your clone to handle your expanding workload, you could hire a more junior attorney or paralegal instead and give them the right tasks. And, even better, what if you could memorialize your instructions to this junior resource into a playbook so you didn't have to spend as much time managing them day-to-day. I have used this step-by-step analysis to help clients achieve a smarter work balance, always to their great delight.
- 3. Delegation = Career Growth.** Delegation is difficult for most of us, but in these times of "do more with less" it's the only way to accomplish everything you need reasonably. In addition to saving time, it can help you grow your career. If you give the simplest tasks on your docket to the right resource, that frees time for you to do more challenging work, network in your company, read articles and grow intellectually. And learning to be the supervisor and mentor instead of the do-er expands your leadership skills, making you more viable for management positions. Delegation is key to advancing to executive levels in your career.

Legal Operations professionals often fight an uphill battle within corporate legal departments, meeting resistance from lawyers who are anxious about changing the way they work. At base, Legal Operations professionals are there to empower attorneys, to get us closer to that utopia of only performing the tasks within our skillset that bring us the most joy and accolades.

Sincerely,



The Insider (aka: Renee Meisel)