

# Creative Leadership to Keep Legal Thriving as Budgets Shrink

2022

When you're bearing up under (cost) pressure, it's important to turn all the dials – optimizing people, processes, technology and data to redeem and deliver value – and that's when it pays to have seasoned legal executives employing creative leadership skills. In this webinar, we heard “war stories” from the heads of legal operations for Campbell Soup and Expedia Group about reorganizing and automating for efficiency, using data to inform and justify resourcing decisions, and employing great management tactics to defend and extend budgets so that legal needs are met.

## **SOMETIMES YOU MUST SPEND TO SAVE; INVEST IN LEGAL OPS**

Headcount is typically frozen in recessionary times, but the GC of Expedia successfully made the case to hire an experienced legal ops leader, Mike Russell, even as planes were grounded and hotels were shuttered. He promised – and delivered - a positive ROI by setting up a centralized external resources management function and using automation to enhance efficiency.

Mike put in place an outside counsel management program that evolved from a short-term focus on controlling spend by extending terms, clamping down on law firm rate increases, and enforcing (refreshed) billing guidelines, to implementing quarterly business reviews that also focused on performance, including with regard to improving diversity metrics. His program has led to more thoughtful resource selection that extends beyond

law firms to alternative legal service providers, informed by data analysis.

## **ELIMINATE THE SLACK IN THE SYSTEM; IMPLEMENT COES**

When Campbell Soup acquired another food company, it faced a challenge to deliver legal services for the merged companies with fewer people in the face of a burgeoning volume of work. The key here was **better leveraging internal resources by using centers of excellence (COEs)**. Reese Arrowsmith, Campbell Soup, states that under the shared services model that Campbell Soup put in place, specialized expertise is leveraged, risk is better managed through consistent application of policies and practices, and the operating units still have the benefit of embedded general counsel with deep knowledge of their business who coordinate with the COEs to meet their needs. Reese's postscript proves that

“doing more with less” is not a recipe for misery – the Campbell Soup legal department has one of the highest employee engagement scores in the company.

### WATCHED BEHAVIOR IMPROVES, SO TIGHTEN THE FOCUS ON THE BUDGET

It’s an aphorism that happens to be true. And at Campbells, Reese insists on quarterly updates to forecasts against budgets, and some members of the GC’s leadership team meet to discuss the management of significant matters. Thanks to this discipline and focus, unpleasant surprises are vanishingly rare. There are additional advantages. This **intensive budget management model** also involves quarterly meetings with the business unit CFOs, and in those meetings the team discusses trend data around risk, volumes of types of matters and more. Adam Ciongoli, Campbell Soup General Counsel is a proponent of these disciplined matter and cost management techniques which not only build trust that spend is carefully managed within the finance function, but also lays the groundwork for requests for targeted budget increases related to the aforementioned trends analysis.

### SET UP A FRONT DOOR FOR LEGAL, AND AUTOMATE WHAT YOU CAN

When legal service requests are coming in from all directions via email, no one has visibility into the volume, cycle times, excess demands on certain

staff resources, repetitive questions and other information needed for operational management. At Expedia, Mike purchased a **no-code workflow automation app for legal service request intake, triage and routing**. Mike advises avoiding a “helpdesk” perception through thoughtful preparation and communication, emphasizing improving turnaround times and visibility into the status of legal service requests. With the tool, Expedia can selectively enable self-service for high volume / low risk needs, and automatically provide answers to frequently asked questions so that, in essence, the legal department is helpful 24/7 around the globe.

### SHOW ME THE MONEY, AND USE IT TO DRIVE FIRM SELECTION

The CFOs office or Procurement may be coming after your highest cost external counsel. And yet, hourly rates are only half the rates x hours = total spend equation, and that math typically does not include outcomes. In a previous role, Reese conducted an **analysis that combined matter spend and settlements to consider total case costs by firm and geography** across high volumes of similar matters. The analysis produced many useful insights, such as that some of the higher rate firms were delivering better value than others once settlements were included, and also demonstrated which firms were most effective in specific geographic areas.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Epiq Legal Transformation Services
- PracticeView™ Guide: A Methodology for Legal Transformation

## SPEAKERS


**REESE J.  
ARROWSMITH**

Vice President and Head  
of Legal Operations  
Campbell Soup  
Company

Reese is the VP, Head of Operations, Legal, Compliance and Public Affairs for Campbell Soup Company, where he works with the General Counsel to develop and lead a “best-in-class” law department operations function with a primary focus on aligning the department’s day-to-day operations with business strategy. Legal Operations oversees running the daily operations of the department, including strategic planning, finance, information technology, law firm and vendor management, client service, and human resources.

Prior to this position, Reese was the VP, Head of Operations, Law, Compliance and Public Policy for Lincoln Financial Group. There he oversaw running the daily operations of the department, including strategic planning, finance, information technology, law firm and vendor management, client service, and human resources. Prior to that he worked as a legal consultant for a management consulting firm and a legal technology vendor. Reese served as the inaugural Chair of the ACC Legal Operations group and remains on its Executive Team. Finally, Reese is Treasurer of the Board of the Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger.


**MIKE RUSSELL**

Head of Global Legal  
Operations  
Expedia Group

For nearly 30 years, Mike Russell has built teams and designed systems to continuously improve legal operational efficiency and value. Currently serving as Head of Global Legal Operations for Expedia Group, Mike oversees outside counsel and vendor engagement/diversity, legal technology investments, contracts, operational performance management and process improvement initiatives along with general administration and department strategy.

Previously, Mike established and led operations and process excellence for the Ingersoll Rand Global Legal Department (now Trane Technologies). His journey also includes advising the formation of visionary law company, Clearspire, and nearly 15 years as Director, Strategic Legal Technology for Liberty Mutual Insurance Enterprise Legal Services - transforming a corporate legal department of 1,800+ professionals across 70+ locations with \$1B+ managed legal spend. He is a frequently referenced author and speaker firmly entrenched at the intersection of law practice, technological innovation, and business process expertise in legal service delivery. He was recognized as a Law Department Champion in 2011 through an ILTA Distinguished Peer Award.