BLACKBIRD FOR TRAINING

Legal Affairs Management Essentials Training Course

3 – 7 May 2027
Paris (France)

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Legal affairs management is the organisation of an in-house legal function's work: identifying and controlling legal risk, managing contracts through their lifecycle, handling disputes and litigation, and supporting governance and compliance. This 1-week course is for in-house lawyers, legal affairs officers and managers who oversee legal matters, and its final deliverable is a legal affairs operating plan with a legal risk register and a contract and dispute tracker.

Introduction

The course rests on three methods. A legal risk register rates each exposure by likelihood and impact and assigns an owner and a control. Contract lifecycle management follows an agreement from request and negotiation through execution, performance and renewal or termination. Alternative dispute resolution, covering negotiation, mediation and arbitration, offers routes to settle a dispute before or instead of court. The level is practitioner and suits both lawyers and non-lawyers who manage legal matters. Teaching uses case studies, contract review exercises and a litigation strategy simulation.

Course Objectives

- Define the role of a legal affairs function and distinguish its duties from those of external counsel
- Apply a legal risk register to identify, rate and treat legal exposures in a business unit
- Apply contract lifecycle management to control agreements from negotiation to renewal, including cross-border contracts
- Compare negotiation, mediation, arbitration and litigation and select a route for a given dispute
- Interpret the legal responsibilities of boards and shareholders and the governance duties that shape legal advice
- Select legal technology and continuous improvement steps that make the function more efficient

Target Audience

- In-house lawyers and legal officers, who must decide which matters to handle internally and which to send to external counsel
- Legal affairs managers building or running a function, who must judge how to prioritise risks, contracts and cases
- Contract and procurement managers, who must determine when a contract issue needs legal escalation
- Compliance and risk officers, who must select the controls and monitoring that keep legal obligations met
- Company secretaries and governance staff, who must assess the legal side of board and shareholder decisions

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Course Outline

Day 1: The Legal Affairs Function, Frameworks and Risk

- In-House Legal Function vs External Counsel: Roles, Costs and Coordination Compared
- Legal Frameworks and Key Terminology: Systems, Sources of Law and Core Concepts
- Role of the Legal Affairs Manager: Responsibilities, Reporting Lines and Service Levels
- Legal Risk Identification and Assessment: Register, Likelihood and Impact Ratings
- Compliance Programmes: Developing, Monitoring and Reporting on Regulatory Requirements

Day 2: Legal Risk Treatment and Contract Law Basics

- Risk Avoidance vs Risk Mitigation: Declining Exposure Compared with Controlling It
- Legal Risk Tools and Case Studies: Controls, Clauses and Lessons from Failures
- Crisis Management and Resilience: Handling Sudden Legal Challenges to the Organisation
- Contract Law Fundamentals: Formation, Key Clauses, Drafting and Negotiation Basics
- Contract Management Practice: Obligation Tracking, Compliance and Early Dispute Handling

Day 3: Contract Lifecycle and Cross-Border Agreements

- Domestic vs International Contracts: Governing Law, Jurisdiction and Enforcement Differences
- Contract Lifecycle Management: Request, Negotiation, Execution, Performance and Renewal Stages
- Contract Auditing and Monitoring: Checking Performance and Compliance Against Terms
- Contract Technology: Repositories, Templates and Automated Alerts for Key Dates
- Managing External Counsel: Instructions, Budgets and Integration with the Legal Team

Day 4: Disputes, ADR and Litigation Management

- Mediation vs Arbitration vs Litigation: Control, Cost, Speed and Enforceability Compared
- Litigation Risk Assessment: Merits, Exposure and Settlement Value of a Case
- Litigation Strategy Development: Objectives, Evidence and Procedural Choices for the Organisation
- Case Documentation and Court Procedures: Files, Deadlines and Hearing Preparation
- Post-Litigation Steps: Enforcing Outcomes, Lessons Learned and Ongoing Compliance

Day 5: Governance, Ethics and Legal Affairs Plan Practice

- Board Duties vs Shareholder Rights: Legal Responsibilities in Corporate Governance Compared
- Governance, Ethics and Social Responsibility: Reporting Duties and Professional Conduct Standards
- Emerging Trends, Legal Technology and Continuous Improvement: Applying Earlier Tools Going Forward
- Integrated Case Exercise: Applying Risk, Contract and Dispute Methods to One Business
- Legal Affairs Operating Plan: Completing the Risk Register and Contract and Dispute Tracker

Skills You Will Gain

- Legal Risk Register Management
- Contract Lifecycle Control
- Contract Auditing
- External Counsel Management
- Dispute Route Selection
- Litigation Risk Assessment
- Governance Advice

Why Attend This Course

- From reacting to legal problems as they arrive to a register that rates and controls legal risks in advance
- From contracts filed and forgotten to agreements tracked through each lifecycle stage and renewal date
- From defaulting to court to weighing mediation, arbitration and litigation on cost, time and control
- From an informal legal service to an operating plan with a risk register and a contract and dispute tracker

Conclusion

Managing legal affairs means treating an organisation's legal exposure as something to plan and control rather than something to react to. The course makes three distinctions clear: in-house work against external counsel, domestic against international contracts, and mediation against arbitration and litigation. Over one week it suits in-house lawyers, legal officers and managers responsible for legal matters who need a working method for the function, ahead of any longer study of the subject.

Course FAQs

What is legal affairs management?

Legal affairs management is the organised running of an organisation's legal work: assessing and controlling legal risk, managing contracts, handling disputes and litigation, supporting governance and compliance, and coordinating with external counsel.

What is the difference between mediation and arbitration in legal affairs management?

In mediation a neutral helps the parties reach their own agreement, and nothing is imposed. In arbitration a neutral tribunal hears the case and issues an award that binds the parties and can usually be enforced like a judgment.

Which methods does the legal affairs management essentials course follow?

The course follows a legal risk register for rating exposures, contract lifecycle management for agreements, and alternative dispute resolution alongside litigation management for disputes.

Is the legal affairs management essentials course right for a contract manager?

Yes. Contract managers practise lifecycle control, contract audits and early dispute handling, and learn when a contract issue should be escalated to the legal function or external counsel.

What do delegates produce in the legal affairs management essentials course?

Delegates produce a legal affairs operating plan for their organisation, including a legal risk register with owners and controls and a tracker for contracts and active disputes.