

Insights from
Agnieszka Kosowska
Attorney at Law,
Owner of CGC Law



Edition Focus: Legal function evolving to Strategic Business Partner

December 2023

By Lydia Van Der Meulen, Global Head of the Life Sciences & Healthcare Practice Group:

This article is to share the insights from our periodical internal industry seminar, in which we had the privilege to host the Amsterdam/Warsaw based Agnieszka Kosowska, until recently General Counsel at Polpharma Biologics Group BV, an ambitious, fast-growth private European biologics business.

Agnieszka Kosowska is an attorney at law and currently the owner of CGC Law, advising businesses on complex compliance, governance, and stakeholder communication matters. She has been a member of several supervisory boards and has extensive experience with leading international firms such as Roche, Colgate Palmolive, PwC, and White & Case, implementing legal, compliance, risk and communication standards across a range of geographies.

Agnieszka shared her insights focusing on the key success factors for leaders tasked with governance in rapidly evolving businesses – from start-ups, scale-ups to high growth companies.

“Long gone are the days when the in-house lawyer handled contracts and the occasional dispute. Today, in most companies the role is that of a key business partner and member of the leadership team.” Governance is not limited to compliance and risk mitigation, but a critical foundation for commercial partnerships with large multinationals, as well as for business financing by commercial banks or investors. Failing in corporate governance and lack of internal controls can hinder business success. Professionalising the role of Legal as a Business Partner function will support sustainable growth.

From personal experience Agnieszka knows most fast-growth businesses are not bringing in a General Counsel soon enough. She shared reflections and learnings from her own career, including the recent four years of, as she stated ‘a colorful adventure’ with a company that started as a spin out in 2019 with a small team, scaled to 1200 personnel at six locations in 2023 – operating on the global market of biosimilars, nearly 700 mln EUR (3 bln PLN) in investment today. She enjoyed stepping up as experienced Corporate Lawyer to General Counsel, yet needed to hit the ground running. She was faced with an urgent need to implement number of key processes in several important areas simultaneously in a rapidly growing company. Over the course of her career, she has proven Legal’s added value (read: ROI) in negotiating complex deals with government and commercial partners, and managing material risks during fast-growth times.

The term “support functions” greatly underplays the critical role these areas have in the growth, development, and success of a company. Today, understanding the company, the market(s) and competitive landscape are as important to Counsel as is legal expertise. Risk management, regulatory and legal compliance, shareholder rights, corporate governance, and often public affairs are implemented and overseen by the legal function. This frequently includes involvement in strategy development and planning for the company, whether public or private. The scope will continue to expand with new ESG regulations and reporting requirements.

We were delighted to welcome Agnieszka to inspire our team. As an Executive Search & Leadership Consulting firm, Pedersen & Partners is committed to enhancing our knowledge of the industries with which we work, including all domains of Life Science & Healthcare.