
A Continuing Conversation with Leaders from the Legal Industry



Florie Perellis, *Vice President & Assistant General Counsel*
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Florie is a Vice President in the Dispute Resolution Division of the Law & Regulation Department at Allstate, where she oversees significant litigation & disputes initiated against the enterprise. Florie's team also provides support for company initiated litigation, as well as training & advice to the organization.

Q: *What about your job and/or day-to-day activities do you think outside counsel should know that would better enable them to serve your needs?*

A: We are the lawyers to our business partners. They do not view outside counsel as their lawyers unless and until they work together successfully and extensively on a case or project. We need to give practical realistic advice – we can't deal in a theoretical world. Additionally, sometimes we have a very short deadline to answer a question.

Q: *How do you define outside counsel's role? How involved are you in managing outside counsel's activities?*

A: I believe that outside counsel's general purpose is to facilitate a course of action that inside & outside counsel agree upon with a business partner. I believe that they need to assist in identifying risk and ensuring that our business partner has a full appreciation for that risk and all it entails.

I am very involved in managing outside counsel. I view myself as a sort of "super partner" -- and I am involved in every strategic decision, I review significant pleadings

and briefs, and I will be personally involved in witness preparation and testimony on my matters.

Q: *What are your expectations for outside counsel who represent your company?*

A: I expect that they will be great listeners, be very responsive, learn our business, meet and learn how to deal with our business partners, and act as if I am the most important client they have (because someday I may be!).

Q: *What are some reasons why you have terminated relationships with outside counsel?*

A: Failure to properly communicate is probably the primary reason I've terminated relationships with outside counsel. Poor writing/drafting is the #2 reason, and inability to articulate and execute a clear strategy (only playing defense) is reason #3. If I have too many problems with an outside counsel's work product, it makes it very difficult for me to keep them on as my outside counsel.

Q: *Do you have an example of how you benefitted by outside counsel taking ownership of a matter?*

A: Yes. One firm has project managers that ensure that projects/pleadings are completed in a timely manner and on budget. They regularly provide us with a written document so that we are all on the same page with respect to what's going on, what we've spent, and the timelines involved. I love this.

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