

# Introduction

Since I left full-time employment in 1998, I have worked with a large number of heads of legal departments and their teams as a consultant, trainer, mentor, coach and interim manager. From time-to-time I have taken assignments as a foot soldier to refresh my appreciation of what it is like to be a member of a team, instead of its leader. Such assignments reinforce my belief that a legal team only performs to best effect when a number of vital elements are in place and the head of the team is committed to bringing the best out of everyone.

This report aims to capture those vital elements of effective legal department management and to provide a guide to the busy in-house practitioner, who needs to balance his case load with the pressures of managing a department.

My involvement in the world of in-house legal departments has spanned nearly 40 years. During that time there have been significant changes in:

- how the law and in-house lawyers are perceived by business people
- relationships between in-house lawyers and private practitioners and the ability to move between in-house and private practice, and
- working practices.

Managing an in-house legal department can be hugely stimulating and fulfilling. It can also be very stressful and fatiguing. It is tremendously important to take time periodically to step back from the activities, which seem so pressing, and chart a way forward for the delivery of legal services to your organisation, the development of your team's performance and your own.

Appendix A contains a checklist of issues you might like to run through before reading this report and then revisit once you have.

Appendix B contains tips for any in-house lawyer as to how they might tackle some of the challenges – you may like to adopt some of them and even share them with your team.

Recommended sources are listed in the Bibliography.

I am very grateful to Richard Norman who collaborates with me for providing his insights on particular subjects.