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In-house Counsel Q&A

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Describe your current role (eg, responsibilities, size of team, structure).

I am the national director of legal training for Liberty Mutual Insurance Company. We provide training conferences and seminars for attorneys, paralegals and others in our legal department. We have offered programmes in trial advocacy, advanced advocacy with expert witnesses, deposition and discovery, workers' compensation advocacy, negotiations and mediation, bad-faith law, subrogation, attorney anti-fraud advocacy, marketing legal services, the challenges of change, attorney leadership and legal ethics across the United States.

Our structure is quite simple. I have one very capable assistant, Rebecca Hagen. But for every programme we recruit the best, most experienced lawyers from our own legal department to serve as speakers or faculty members. We are very discriminating in our selection and it is considered quite an honour to serve as a speaker, even though it requires a lot of work and time away from home.

What is the greatest achievement of your career thus far?

Since 1992, I have been responsible for the design, development and implementation of Liberty Mutual's attorney development programme. Through this programme we have presented training conferences and seminars on the diverse range of topics outlined above to attorneys and paralegals throughout the United States. This has been possible only because our general counsel, Chris Mansfield, has always been committed to training the people in our legal department.

I am also very proud of my service on the legal department's ethics committee since 2003.

In your current role, what is the most challenging situation that you have faced?

The most challenging aspect of these turbulent times is the fast pace of change. Heraclitus once said, "Nothing is permanent except change". But Heraclitus could never have imagined the dizzying pace of change in the 21st century.

What is the best piece of advice that you have ever received?

Always be the best-prepared lawyer in the room.

What are the most significant challenges that in-house lawyers are likely to face over the next few years?

Developing an ability to adapt to constant change in what we do, how we act and how we think of ourselves as lawyers as we serve our clients.

If not a lawyer, what would you be?

I would never be anything but a lawyer. The legal profession has such breadth. It encompasses so many areas of our lives and offers us unlimited opportunities. In my career I have been a trial lawyer, a managing attorney, a corporate lawyer and a teacher, all without leaving Liberty Mutual.



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