

# Developing a Confident and Strategic General Counsel in a Private Equity–Backed Company

**THE  
CLIENT:**

Private Equity  
Portfolio  
Company  
in the  
Technology/  
Manufacturing  
Sector

**ADVISING  
SERVICES:**

Executive  
Coaching

**INDUSTRY:**

Technology,  
Hospitality

**CLIENT  
OBJECTIVE:**

Strengthen  
leadership  
skills and  
executive  
presence of  
the General  
Counsel while  
managing  
a rapidly  
expanding  
legal function

## Client Context

A private equity–backed company in the technology and manufacturing sector was pursuing aggressive growth in preparation for an eventual public offering. The Vice President of Legal and General Counsel was a respected attorney but lacked confidence managing a rapidly expanding legal function and did not yet feel fully integrated as a senior member of the leadership team.

## Challenges

- Transitioning from skilled legal practitioner to senior executive capable of leading a growing legal and compliance function.
- Establishing confidence and executive presence within a male-dominated industry.
- Navigating complex challenges, including major corporate transactions, executive turnover, cost-cutting programs, and workplace crises.
- Balancing immediate responsibilities with the need to build long-term leadership capacity and C-suite credibility.

## Advisory Approach

The General Counsel engaged a BarkerGilmore Strategic Advisor and Executive Coach — an experienced former Fortune 500 GC — for a long-term leadership development engagement. Over a four-year period, the coach and GC have worked together to:

- Establish a consistent cadence of biweekly sessions to address pressing issues while building toward aspirational leadership goals.
- Position the GC as a thought leader and trusted peer within the C-suite and with the board.
- Provide guidance through pivotal events, including M&A transactions, executive transitions, cost-control initiatives, and crises such as workplace violence incidents
- Identify opportunities for broader professional engagement inside and outside the company to support ongoing growth and visibility.

## Results

The coaching engagement transformed the GC from a capable attorney into a confident, respected, and highly strategic business leader. Outcomes included:

- Recognition as a peer by senior executives and as a trusted advisor to board members.
- Greater influence and credibility in shaping both legal and business strategies.
- Expanded role as a thought leader across a range of key business issues.
- Increased compensation reflecting enhanced contributions and impact.
- Strong recognition from the CEO, board, and private equity sponsors for professionalism and leadership.

## Key Insights for Legal Leaders

This long-term engagement reinforces several principles that apply broadly to executive advising:

- **Balance:** Effective coaching addresses both current challenges and long-term leadership goals.
- **Trust:** A foundation of candor and confidentiality enables the advisor and executive to identify real barriers and test new approaches.
- **Flexibility:** As responsibilities evolve and challenges shift, the advising relationship must adapt to remain relevant and impactful.

## Conclusion

Through BarkerGilmore's executive coaching, the General Counsel evolved from a skilled legal practitioner into a confident, strategic, and highly regarded senior executive. By strengthening leadership presence, broadening influence, and building out long-term capabilities, the GC advanced from "legal leader" to "business leader" and created lasting value for both the individual and the organization.