

ADVISING CASE STUDY

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.