

# A BarkerGilmore 20th Anniversary Executive Profile

Interview conducted by John Gilmore, Managing Partner



## Kurt Meyers



General Counsel  
Equitable

***“You have to act like an owner, not a lawyer.”***

The transition from senior legal leader to General Counsel often looks straightforward from the outside. In practice, the shift requires a different level of judgment, business fluency, and leadership presence.

Kurt Meyers stepped into the General Counsel role at Equitable with strong legal and leadership credentials. Within months, the scope expanded quickly, highlighting what separates the top legal seat from other senior roles.

“The hardest part was ensuring an equal seat at the table on every business issue,” Meyers explains. “I realized how many areas of the enterprise I had not been deeply involved in before.” That realization defined the early months in the role and set the tone for how he approached the transition.

As part of BarkerGilmore’s 20th anniversary, the firm is reconnecting with former placements, like Meyers, whose careers reflect the qualities required to succeed at the highest levels of in-house legal leadership.

### Expanding Beyond Legal Expertise

Meyers’ path to General Counsel did not follow a narrow legal trajectory. After joining Equitable as Head of Litigation, he quickly recognized the need to deepen his understanding of the business.

Rather than staying within the legal function, he moved into areas where familiarity was limited. “I raised my hand early for a finance committee,” Meyers says. “I understood about 30 percent of what was being discussed in my first meeting.” Early discomfort became a deliberate strategy for accelerating learning.

Instead of stepping back, he leaned in. Meyers took on work that created value for the team while accelerating his own development, including drafting key materials for finance leadership.

Over time, the approach built credibility across the organization and positioned him as a business-minded leader rather than a functional specialist.

## **Operating as a Business Leader**

Broader exposure led to an opportunity rarely offered to legal leaders. Meyers was asked to run a major, but underperforming, business unit with full profit-and-loss responsibility. The role required a fundamental shift in perspective. Legal judgment was barely relevant. Leadership was everything. Business performance became the primary measure of success.

Meyers approached the challenge with the same discipline applied throughout his career. He analyzed the business, focused on its competitive edge, identified inefficiencies, and rebuilt the operating model. “I took it apart and put it back together,” he says. “We doubled the profitability.” Results at that level confirmed how the organization viewed his capabilities and accelerated his path to General Counsel.

## **Leading Through Others**

As General Counsel, Meyers leads a global legal organization of more than 150 professionals. The transition from Head of Litigation to enterprise leader required a shift in focus. “My job is not being the person who is best at the work,” Meyers explains. “My job is making other people good at the work.” The role now centers on scale, not individual execution.

Leadership at that level requires clarity on priorities and disciplined allocation of time. Meyers focuses on high-value issues while investing heavily in developing his team. “I try to understand what is holding people back,” he says. “What are they afraid of, and how do I help them get better?” Performance improves when leaders remove friction for the people around them.

## **Credibility with Senior Leadership**

Meyers’ effectiveness as General Counsel is grounded in his ability to operate as a true business partner. Senior leaders seek input not only for legal guidance, but for perspective on broader enterprise decisions. Credibility comes from preparation, engagement, and a willingness to step outside traditional legal boundaries.

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For leaders aspiring to the General Counsel role, Meyers emphasizes visibility and impact as critical factors. “If senior leaders know who you are and you are changing how they think, that creates momentum,” he notes. Influence at that level depends on being known, trusted, and consistently valuable in the room.

## Perspective on Career Growth

Meyers’ advice to aspiring General Counsel reflects his own experience. Advancement depends less on title and more on impact within the organization. Understanding how leadership perceives contribution is essential.

Meyers actively sought feedback from senior executives to calibrate his impact and identify areas for growth. “I put the CEO, the CFO, and the COO on my 360 review,” he says. “I wanted to know what they thought of me.” Direct input from senior leadership provided clarity on both strengths and gaps.

For external candidates, particularly those moving from private practice, Meyers emphasizes a shift in mindset. “You have to act like an owner, not a lawyer,” he explains. The distinction often determines success in an in-house environment.

## A Partnership Built on Understanding

Meyers’ relationship with BarkerGilmore began while he was in private practice and not actively considering a move in-house. Like many senior lawyers, he initially filtered out most recruiter outreach. Relevance changed that dynamic.

“You spoke to me about what mattered to me,” Meyers recalls. “You focused on impact.” The conversation aligned with his motivations rather than generic factors.

The opportunity became compelling because it connected to leadership, influence, and long-term trajectory. “Your conversation changed my life,” Meyers says. The result was a move that reshaped his career.

## Closing Perspective

Kurt Meyers’ career reflects the qualities organizations seek in a modern General Counsel: business acumen, leadership presence, and the ability to operate across the enterprise.

For BarkerGilmore, his trajectory reinforces a consistent approach developed over twenty years. Deep understanding of both the role and the individual leads to alignment that extends well beyond placement.

## A Partner in Leadership

At BarkerGilmore, we believe the right leadership decisions shape organizations for years to come. For over twenty years, we have advised clients and candidates with a focus on fit, readiness, and enduring partnership. Learn more about our work and access additional resources on [our website](#), or reach us directly at [877.571.5047](tel:877.571.5047) or [info@barkergilmore.com](mailto:info@barkergilmore.com).