

# Leadership Profiles

Insights from Legal & Compliance Thought Leaders



## Featuring David Yawman



Former EVP, GC & Corporate Secretary  
**PepsiCo, Inc.**

BarkerGilmore Strategic Advisor and Leadership Development Coach

*“Trust emanates from competence and character.”*

## What are the biggest differences, in your view, between advising top legal teams from the inside as GC and doing so as an external executive coach?

That’s a great question because the roles are entirely different. In fact, I’ve had to move past my naïve idea that being a successful GC would equate to my being a value-added coach. In hindsight, I believe I was effective as an internal leader because I understood myself – I was humble enough to learn, empathetic enough to interact with others, and confident enough to make decisions. That put me in a position to lead inside an organization. In my current work, if I were simply a mentor, I would share my experiences with my clients in hopes they would hear something of value they could apply in their work. But, I’m a coach. As a coach, my goal is to provoke the individual I’m working with to reflect and understand themselves – what are they good at, what are they not good at, what triggers them, what brings them energy/excitement, how are they using their time, etc. Guiding someone through their own self-awareness, with the goal of improving their leadership, is a strikingly different skill from leading inside an organization.

## In your coaching work, what traits separate high-impact legal leaders from their peers?

Leadership impact is a result of your influence. Legal leaders (and all business executives) distinguish themselves by their level of influence within an organization. To have influence in an organization, your colleagues must trust you. Trust emanates from others’ belief in both your competence and your character. Competence grows over time through hard work, curiosity and discipline. Character stems from knowing your core values and acting consistently with those values. In my coaching work, I provoke executives to reflect on what competence means in the context of their current role – what is their “value proposition” to the organization (e.g., strategy, execution, leadership, etc.). And, of equal importance, I work with executives to clarify and lead through their core values (e.g., results, collaboration, fairness, etc.). You need both competence and character to have influence and impact as a leader.

SPONSORED BY

 **BarkerGilmore**  
Elevating In-House Legal & Compliance

Continued...

# LEADERSHIP PROFILES: Interview with David Yawman

## When advising on succession and leadership development, what are the biggest blind spots executives often overlook?

The most successful executives I work with are those who truly embrace the concept that they are ongoing works in process; there is no end to personal development. So, I consider the biggest blind spot to be an individual's belief that they are talented enough, informed enough, or self-aware enough. If an individual cannot answer "how are you growing right now?", they may have stopped pushing themselves into new areas of knowledge or experience, or their ego may bar them from confronting (i.e., admitting to) their own growth opportunities. Growth begins at the edge of your comfort zone. So, those who are committed to growth welcome an almost perpetual sense of discomfort. Some executives reach a certain level and think "they've arrived" - that they no longer need to push their self-development edge. That is a blind spot of the highest magnitude.

## How do you approach coaching executives who are strong technically but struggle with people leadership or cross-functional collaboration?

I start with the fact that there are thousands of individuals who can do the technical work. Inside an organization, those who add incremental value are those who make the culture and environment more productive. My Dad is 85 and has been a practicing social worker for 60+ years. He facetiously says that, in the mind of any person, "the world would be perfect if everyone thought and acted the way I do." A successful executive naturally becomes very loyal to the way they do things; their way has worked well. That's fine until the same executive thinks that their way is the only way or the best way to do everything. For such a person, interacting with others you don't manage/control is difficult because of an unwillingness or inability to accept others for who they are. I've found that, if I can push an executive to reflect honestly on who they are (including the realization that who they are is not better or worse than who others are), that individual is in a better position to accept others for who they are. Thus, through an individual's self-awareness work, mutual respect flows more easily, as does individual learning, team collaboration, and enterprise-wide results.

Continued...

*"Amidst all the leadership traits studied, none is more predictive of leadership effectiveness than self-awareness."*

~ David Yawman

SPONSORED BY

 **BarkerGilmore**  
Elevating In-House Legal & Compliance

# LEADERSHIP PROFILES: Interview with David Yawman

## What advice do you give to high-potential lawyers aiming to transition into broader business leadership roles?

First, you have to do the work and understand the industry/business/market. The intellectual elements are simply the price of entry – the easier part – and you have to work hard and be curious to broaden and deepen your knowledge base. Second, you have to evolve your “value proposition” to reflect your current and future roles. This is a riff of the concept that “what got you here won’t get you there.” High-potential lawyers are often those who have done great work, but leadership is not about the work you do; it’s about the value you provide. So, can you elevate from a doer who bangs out the work to a leader who adds value to the organization? Easier said than done but recognizing the need for evolution is the start. Finally, I encourage everyone to enhance their self-awareness. Amidst all the leadership traits studied, none is more predictive of leadership effectiveness than self-awareness. To be effective, you must be open to a deep understanding of who you are and what you stand for – your strengths, weaknesses, and values. Everyone can benefit from accepting that feedback, mentors/coaches, and self-reflection are critical elements of continued development and career growth.

## DAVID YAWMAN BIOGRAPHY

Dave Yawman is a Strategic Advisor & Executive Coach at BarkerGilmore. He has over 25 years of experience leading global legal, compliance & ethics, public policy, and government affairs departments at a Fortune 50 company. He has advised Boards of Directors, CEOs, business leaders, and colleagues from all over the world and is known for his steady presence and balanced style. His core value comes from knowing what it takes to be both an effective business and functional leader, how to positively influence organizational culture through his commitment to principled leadership, and how to collaborate cross-functionally to make tough calls on nuanced, business-critical issues. He is an expert in positioning and structuring legal and compliance departments in support of the organization's broader objectives, and he is steadfast in his belief that talent development is critical to leadership success and sustained excellence.

In the legal and compliance arena, Dave has served on various boards, councils, and committees over his career. Currently, he is on the Advisory Board of the Rutgers Center for Corporate Law and Governance. He previously served on the New York State Business Council for Access to Justice, having been appointed by the Chief Judge of the State of New York. He has presented on numerous legal, compliance, and policy issues at law schools, conferences, podcasts, and symposiums, including at the Ethisphere Institute, Harvard Law School, Next Wave Leadership, Rutgers Law School, St. Johns University School of Law, Transparency International, and the United Nations. Dave has been recognized for his commitment to volunteer and pro bono work, and he was elected by his legal peers and community leaders to chair two separate Boards of Directors: the United Way of Westchester & Putnam Counties (NY) and the Pro Bono Partnership (which provides free legal service to nonprofit organizations in NY, NJ, and CT).

Dave earned his B.A. in American Studies from the University of Notre Dame, and his J.D. from Rutgers Law School.

Dave previously served as Executive Vice President, General Counsel & Corporate Secretary at PepsiCo, Inc., a Fortune 50 company. After obtaining his law degree, he started his legal career in the U.S. Federal Court and at a Wall Street law firm (Fried Frank). He then moved in-house and spent 22+ years at PepsiCo, rising from an entry-level legal position to become General Counsel. As General Counsel, Dave was a member of the Executive Committee and worked closely with the board, CEO, C-Suite, and leaders at all levels to help shape PepsiCo's business strategy and corporate culture. He gained significant public company, operating division, and international experience leading a team of 600+ colleagues in the global law, compliance & ethics, public policy, and government affairs departments across the 200+ countries in which PepsiCo operates. As General Counsel, he worked with the board on a CEO succession. Earlier in his PepsiCo career, Dave served as Chief Compliance & Ethics Officer, during which he played an integral role in evolving and expanding the PepsiCo compliance program globally. During his “career within a company,” Dave developed a deep knowledge of global markets, organizational structures, government affairs, and public policy. He also leveraged his EQ to develop insights about leadership, culture, and diversity & inclusion, becoming an impactful internal voice well beyond his role as General Counsel.

SPONSORED BY