

Value Practice:

Outside Counsel Review Committee Adds Value for Southern California Edison's Law Department

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**Interviewed while Senior Vice President and General Counsel
Southern California Edison Company**

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OUTSIDE COUNSEL REVIEW COMMITTEE

The law department has an outside counsel review committee. Committee membership rotates annually; the committee consists of a Chair (selected by direct reports to the General Counsel) plus around five additional in-house lawyers.

Key roles of the committee:

- **Vet and assess conflicts and waiver requests-** the committee is on point to assess conflicts issues and recommend to the General Counsel whether to clear or waive conflicts.
- **Annual law firm performance reviews-** each year, the outside counsel review committee reviews the performance of the top six or seven firms used by the law department. This is important because any annual bonus to the firm is dependent upon its performance.

OUTSIDE COUNSEL REVIEW PROCESS

The annual review process includes:

- **In-house lawyer and client interviews-** as part of the review process, the committee interviews in-house lawyers and clients to solicit feedback on firm performance on significant matters.
- **Internal 'report cards'-** information gathered via this process is aggregated and feeds into a 'report card' for each firm.
- **Sit-down session to discuss report-** the review process culminates with a sit-down session between the General Counsel and the relationship partner from the firm. Also participating in the session may be a representative from the outside counsel review committee and a deputy general counsel whose team had significant contact with the firm. In addition to communicating information on the firm's performance for the given year (which feeds into bonus determinations), the review discussion also includes a comparison of year-to-year performance of the firm in the various categories assessed.

CRITERIA FOR PERFORMANCE

Performance is assessed on an A to F scale in a number of areas, including:

- Attention to budget
- Substantive expertise
- Easy to work with
- Quality of work/results
- Efficiency
- Responsiveness

In addition, the law department communicates its expectations and encouragement for diversity and community involvement and includes progress and commitment in these areas as part of its overall assessment.

GENERAL COUNSEL HAS FINAL SAY ON RELATIONSHIPS

Ultimately, the law department's relationship with major firms that perform service for Southern California Edison is managed by the General Counsel, who has a role in all hiring and firing decisions.

Contact Information

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