

Episode 146: Summary

Episode name: Speaking the Language of Business: Corporate Communication Tips from In-House Counsel

Guest(s): Mel Storey

What area(s) of law does this episode consider?

Effectively communicating with corporate clients

Why is this topic relevant?

Communication is an important skill for all lawyers to have, but when you're working with corporate clients, it's not enough to provide technically correct advice - you need to ensure it's understood, actionable, and aligned with the client's business objectives. Whether you're an in-house counsel embedded within the organisation or an external practitioner advising from the outside, how you deliver your advice can be just as important as the advice itself.

For in-house counsel, communication is even more of an art form. They're right there in the thick of it, bridging the gap between legal requirements and business realities. They're translating tricky legal concepts into plain English, managing risks, and giving advice that doesn't just say "no" but shows a path forward. External lawyers working with corporate clients face similar challenges - they have to adapt their advice to align with the client's business priorities without losing sight of the legal fundamentals.

What are the practical takeaways?

- Effective communication tailored to client needs is essential for building trust, advancing in leadership roles, and growing a successful business practice in the legal profession.
- Navigating career transitions and pursuing goals requires adaptability and the courage to make bold decisions, even in the face of disapproval or challenges.
- Upholding ethical business practices and maintaining professional boundaries are critical, even when facing conflicts or difficult decisions in corporate settings.
- Staying curious and engaged with industry trends and thought leadership helps professionals grow and thrive, particularly in industries like financial services.
- Trust in relationships is built by being genuine, admitting when you don't know something, and open communication.

- Flexibility and empathy in communication styles, along with clear documentation and accountability, are key to maintaining strong professional relationships and meeting expectations.
- Self-awareness is crucial in identifying a legal practice environment that aligns with one's strengths, values, and preferred communication style.
- Tailoring communication to audience preferences, using concise summaries, and focusing on empathy and simplicity enhance influence and reduce miscommunication risks.
- Balancing short-term objectives with long-term ethical and sustainable goals requires careful messaging, particularly in complex corporate dynamics.
- Clear expectations around response times and service commitments help avoid last-minute urgencies and foster more effective collaboration.
- Not every task is critical; staying focused on priorities and maintaining perspective can alleviate stress and improve decision-making.
- Calm leadership and diverse perspectives contribute to more balanced decision-making and help teams navigate stressful scenarios effectively.
- Engaging in open dialogue and learning from past mistakes are vital when advising on sensitive ethical matters in business contexts.
- Understanding the risks, stakeholders, and capital structure of a business before engagement is essential for making informed decisions.
- Exercising caution with alcohol consumption at professional events can prevent unintended disclosures and maintain accountability.
- Striking a balance between friendliness and professionalism ensures productive and respectful workplace relationships.
- Building professional connections through networking events and platforms like LinkedIn is an effective way to expand opportunities and relationships.

Show notes

[Mel's Podcast, 'The Counsel Podcast'](#)