

# Search for Solutions

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO ENORMOUS CHALLENGES

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Starting in late 2000, Lloyd Johnson and I began working with an ad hoc committee of 25 current and former general counsel, who decided to meet regularly to develop strategies for law departments to use to increase their effectiveness in the 21st Century. Like most general counsel, their departments had been experiencing a steady increase in demand for legal services while also getting increasing pressure to reduce costs. With their attorneys already working overtime, the CLO 21 Group members were searching for better solutions than simply expecting the legal staff to put in even more hours.

Since then, the CLO 21 Group has met several times. In our always candid, sometimes stormy and often humorous day-long sessions, we've discussed and debated the best way for the legal staff to meet the needs of the corporation. While realizing there is no one "right answer" for all law departments, we've developed a new Gateway Model for law departments that efficiently delivers stronger results for the business, but doesn't lessen the law department's traditional role of counseling and advising on legal risk.

The model we developed amplifies 12 characteristics of Traditional and Gateway law departments, such as style



The search for methods to better manage the law department led to the formation of the CLO 21 Group and to the Gateway Model. This is how it all got started.

and culture, structure and mindset. The CLO 21 Group focused on 24 performance categories, in areas ranging from client service and outside counsel to human capital, technology and globalization. For each of these areas, we charted the strategies for Traditional law departments, those making incremental improvements, and Gateway law departments. You can review these details on our website, [www.lawexec.com](http://www.lawexec.com).

Not every member of the CLO 21 Group is ready to implement every dimension of the Gateway Model. Some general counsel members operate in companies where management has very traditional expectations of the law department, and the lawyers are viewed primarily as service providers, not business partners. Other members, however, have been quick to apply the Group's work to their own planning

and reorganization efforts, with good results so far.

It was clear to the CLO 21 Group that transforming the culture of law departments is central to achieving the objectives of the Gateway Model. This became the focus of our August 2001 meeting. Our report to you, starting on page 37, describes the differences identified by the CLO 21 Group between the Traditional in-house law firm model and the Gateway Model and the changes in the business environment that make the Gateway Model so compelling and relevant.

The Group concluded that Gateway Core Competencies (the most desirable attorney attributes) provide the best starting point for culture change and discussed a Business Integration Checklist to assess how legal teams are progressing in building stronger relationships with business partners. Our report also presents the Group's inventory of 37 Gateway Culture Building Blocks and provides insights on the action steps for implementing them.

We hope you'll find the work of the CLO 21 Group to be provocative, insightful and relevant. This month the Group meets to tackle the topic of managing risk, and we'll provide you with a complete report in the April 2002 edition of *Chief Legal Officer* magazine. ●