

Global SuperForum

Nearly 100 senior corporate counsel and law firm partners gathered to celebrate three years of Martindale-Hubbell's Counsel to Counsel initiative at the Global SuperForum in London. Martindale-Hubbell international director Derek Benton recalled the first forum, which was held aboard the HMS Belfast: "It's appropriate that we started Counsel to Counsel on a ship built for stormy conditions as the past three years have brought a sea of change for the legal profession."

Since 2000, 47 Counsel to Counsel forums have been held globally with hundreds of senior corporate counsel and dozens of law firm principals. "Counsel to Counsel is its own 'best practice' for frank, open discussions among peers," remarked Dan Fitz, general counsel of Misys plc and Association of Corporate Counsel (ACC) board member.

A lively audio-response poll, facilitated by co-founder Leigh Dance of ELD International, Fitz and Benton, followed the morning forums. Some responses fueled jokes and others heated debate: 73% of in-house counsel said they would probably not or definitely not consider private practice as a future career move. Private practice attorneys were more open to a move—56% said they would consider going in-house. While in-house counsel continued to demand that their outside counterparts better understand their needs, 68% of private practitioners felt that in-house counsel have not improved in communicating their needs and objectives.

After two afternoon forums, everyone gathered for a reception to continue the day's dialogue. The consensus among in-house counsel was that their companies have greater respect for them than five years ago and that the job has become more complex. A repeated comment was that SuperForum colleagues find comfort in hearing that fellow counsel face the same stresses.

Martin Issitt, head of corporate practice for Eversheds, summed up, "Fantastic day, very worthwhile."

London SuperForum Stats

- Counsel from **12 countries** in Europe and North America attended
- **53%** of participants are **head of company** or division legal department
- For **one-third** of SuperForum participants, more than **70% of work is international**
- **Main sectors:**
 - IT/technology/telecoms (27%)
 - consumer (13%)
 - automotive/aerospace/manufacturing (21%)
 - financial/banking (18%)

Nearly 100 counsel attended, including those representing the following multinational corporations or their subsidiaries:

Agfa Gevaert Group
American International Group, Inc.
Aventis
Cisco Systems, Inc.
Dana Corporation
F. Hoffmann-La Roche Ltd
Fidelity National Financial
Hasbro, Inc.
Honda Motor Co., Ltd.
Lloyds TSB Group
Pfizer Italia
SAP Canada Inc.
Sony Business Europe
The Sumitomo Trust & Banking Company, Ltd.
Tractebel



Anne Fletcher, Group General Counsel, British Telecommunications plc and Horacio Gutierrez, Associate General Counsel for EMEA, Microsoft Corporation, listen during a discussion of the morning's sessions.



Carol Welu, Partner at Squire, Sanders & Dempsey L.L.P., adds her vote to an audio-response poll question.



Natalie Jobling, Director of Legal Affairs, FCE Bank plc, listens as Derek Benton, International Director, Martindale-Hubbell, speaks about the audio-response poll results.