

Panel Discussion Questions

1. Introduction of the panelists; each panelist will briefly explain the non-legal/legal positions they hold/held.
2. As you transitioned from a role as a lawyer to a non-legal role, did you find anything about your new role unexpected or surprising?
 - Did the way you spend/spent your workday change? How about the kinds of issues you addressed? Did you find yourself in more meetings or fewer meetings? Interacting with more people or fewer?
 - In the non-legal role, did you find it difficult to look beyond the legal aspects of a problem or was it relatively easy to engage issues on a more holistic basis? Was it difficult for you not to serve as your own lawyer, i.e., to interpret a regulation or analyze a contract dispute without engaging your legal staff?
 - What aspects of your legal training/experience were most useful to you in your non-legal role? Any “lawyerly” characteristics that made it more challenging to perform your new job?
 - Do you find yourself positioned to make more decisions, as opposed to simply giving advice? Or are/were you still in the position of making recommendations that have to go up the chain?
3. What is it that you miss most about lawyering after you were “promoted” to a non-legal role?
 - Do you have more time or less time to consider individual issues in your non-lawyer role? Do you miss formulating and communicating legal advice?
 - Many of you were lawyer-managers when you transitioned to a non-legal role. Any notable differences in managing non-lawyers as opposed to managing lawyers? Easier or more difficult?
4. How has your experience as a client changed your perspective on lawyers and lawyering?

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If I Only Knew Then What I Know Now – Practice Pointers from Veteran Lawyers Who Became Clients

- Has your perspective on what constitutes “good legal advice” changed?
- How, if at all, has your view on the proper role of a lawyer in policy development or general problem solving changed as a result of your experience?
- Having served in the non-lawyer role, are you more or less likely to add a lawyer to a team considering development of a new policy, addressing a business issue or drafting/reviewing non-legal correspondence?
- To the extent that you’re now back acting in a legal capacity or may do so in the future, how do you think that has your experience in a non-legal management role has or would change your approach to practicing law?

5. Any advice for lawyers in the audience who might aspire to working in a non-lawyer management role?

- What kinds of experiences, assignments best position a lawyer to be considered for a non-lawyer role?
- Should a lawyer discuss an aspiration to work in the future in a non-legal capacity with his or her boss or wait until the boss raises the possibility? Or does it make more sense to simply keep your eyes out for interesting postings and submit an application?