



CLOC 2019: BEYOND LEGALOPS 1.0

Today we're talking with Doug Kaminski, EVP of Cobra Legal Solutions and a veteran of legal industry conferences spanning over two decades, about the recent Corporate Legal Operations Consortium (CLOC) Annual Conference in Las Vegas.

What did you think about the educational sessions at CLOC2019?

Having been to almost every legal conference out there, I can honestly say that I'm impressed with the depth and quality of the educational content at CLOC. Unlike some of the conferences early this year, the sessions have fresh content that's delivered in a meaningful way by thought leaders and high-caliber practitioners from in-house legal teams and legal service providers. The topics were well thought out and timely, full of information and best practices that attendees wanted to hear. I was in a number of sessions that were standing room only despite having ample space...not something I've seen at other conferences.

What struck me the most was the lively engagement with the attendees that sometimes became spirited debates. To me, that's a sure sign that the content is excellent and thought-provoking. I was part of many conversations after sessions that carried on the themes and discussions, both with the speakers and between fellow attendees. We all hope to come away from professional conferences with good ideas and maybe a new perspective or two, and, in my opinion, CLOC delivers on that.

After attending CLOC, what do you see for the industry? What is in store for in-house/outside counsel, corporations and law firms in the short term and the long term?

I think that the legal profession is at an interesting inflection point. I'm seeing signs from some legal operations managers that their approach and initiatives have now gone beyond what I call LegalOps version 1.0, mainly legal spend reduction based on procurement controls and measures. Those who have graduated from pricing exercises to true process improvement are focusing on value creation and optimizing all their resources for the legal services required.

Looking ahead, both short and long term, I think we'll see more collaboration between those requiring legal services and their supply chain. I characterize the delivery of legal services as a supply chain as this value orientation looks at all the possible resources to meet the needs,

whether insourced, outsourced via traditional means, automated, or through newer legal service providers. As legal operations managers seek to optimize their processes to derive higher value, they will naturally source from whichever resource helps them accomplish this.

What is your approach to “sales” at a conference like CLOC? How do you get people to pay attention to Cobra when there are so many providers vying for the potential clients’ attention?

At this stage in the evolution of legal operations, there’s a tremendous need and desire for sharing knowledge and, frankly, blowing up old ideas related to the delivery of legal services if those ideas no longer meet the value goals of the modern legal department. As such, there’s a lot of analysis and process mapping taking place to identify the best ways to perform legal service-related tasks. This means that a LOT of conversations are taking place between legal operations managers and their peers, with providers, with subject matter experts, with counsel, and with outside consultants.

I’m fortunate that I’ve been a part of many of these conversations in various roles over the years, so I’ve been able to add perspective for legal operations managers, validate assumptions or point out gaps, connect them with peers, and help them navigate and prioritize their value optimization initiatives. This has allowed me to go well beyond the usual service provider focus of “X dollars for Y services” to one of true collaboration with our clients to leave their processes better than when we began.

In other words, I think that the sales role at a provider like Cobra Legal is far more about helping clients solve problems than it is merely growing top line revenue. When you approach a conference like CLOC with that type of mindset, you get excited about meeting with people who are trying to re-engineer their legal processes because you know you can probably help them or, at the very least, point them in the right direction. I look forward to many more conversations with potential clients for that reason because Cobra Legal can make a difference and, in the process, help the overall profession mature and grow.

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About Cobra Legal Solutions

Cobra Legal Solutions and CobrATX were formed over a decade ago to help you derive higher value from your legal functions. Cobra Legal Solutions is a diverse team of like-minded professionals with deep experience in both corporate legal departments and law firms united with one common goal: to improve the efficiency of legal support services. We combine our expertise in eDiscovery, contracts and due diligence, document review, legal research, and technology to deliver consistent, measurable results for our clients. Through a Value Sourcing

approach and judicious use of technology assistance, we can significantly reduce the cost and risk in the business of law.

More information is available at our site www.cobralegalsolutions.com.