



SUMMIT SWITZERLAND

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

PRAGER DREIFUSS

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

- 1)** Innovation is really centered upon talking to your client, and ultimately knowing what they really want and need. This approach means moving away from looking at the ‘what’ and focusing much more on the ‘why’. Not ‘How can we make our widget better?’ but ‘Why?’ and ‘How are our customers using it in the first place?’
- 2)** We often think of innovation as being synonymous with technology, but placing the client at the centre shows this assumption to be misconceived – or what has been termed ‘stack fallacy’. This is where engineers overweight their own technology at the expense of the desired outcome for the end user. In Hamish’s examples, the key to innovation was often involving those on the front line of client service.
- 3)** Innovation is about a different perspective – not just something new. Technology can help us to innovate by enabling us to think differently about what we do, but the product can often get lost in this process. During our Swiss panel, Christophe from Zurich remarked that programming algorithms to automate contracts made his team think about why certain clauses appeared in every contract if they weren’t needed.
- 4)** Innovation is as much about people as about things. One of Kees’s talent innovations at Fresenius involved thinking more flexibly – focusing on what was actually needed. Previous attempts to source talent for his legal team had been hampered by organisational constraints tied to a head office model. But once he freed his thinking by reframing the search as locating the best talent for a global company, he was able to concentrate on hiring the best talent wherever it happened to be. The result was not only an influx of top talent, but a much more global perspective.
- 5)** Swiss law firms have not yet embraced the new possibilities offered by the industry 4.0. Our panel felt very strongly that law firms need to think more creatively about partnering with clients, and develop a better understanding the new reality for GCs and the pressures they face from the business. Where law firms can innovate is by putting what the client wants and needs at the centre of their offering.

‘The Swiss summit raised some really key ideas about innovation and examples of how these are being applied in the legal industry, but also identified where there is room for more innovation. It was refreshing to have a discussion about innovation where technology is peripheral and the focus is on what the client needs. This echoes the latest ideas from the master of innovation theory in business, Clayton Christensen, whose new book situates successful innovation as something that fulfills a job the client needs to be done – even if they don’t always know initially what that job is.’

Catherine McGregor, Editor-in-Chief GC Magazine

‘Customer centricity is a key driver for any industry. The GC’s role as the interface between the business and the legal framework can be further developed into an enabler role, supporting the business to expand their focus on current and new customers and their needs. As innovation is coupled with change, smart leadership provides for room for those affected by change to make choices, being involved in and contribute to the change.’

Urs Feller, Partner, Prager Dreifuss AG