

The ECJ Akzo case from an in-house perspective, why clients prefer fewer outside lawyers, and how to make sure your marketing pitch is heard. A 22 Tweets interview with in-house lawyer Melanie Hatton



Melanie Hatton

Head of Legal at Latitude Digital Marketing Limited

Author of In-House Lawyer legal blog

Social Media Enthusiast

Today we're excited to be tweeting w/ @in_house_lawyer, Head of Legal at an online digital mktg co. Our 1st in-house interviewee!

1. **@in_house_lawyer thank you so much for joining us today on Twitter. Tell us: who is @in_house_lawyer?**

I'm Melanie Hatton. In-house counsel for @Latitude_Group. I'm also a mum to a 5 year old son and a social media enthusiast

2. **Tell us about @Latitude_Group. What does it do?**

@Latitude_Group is leading the digital revolution! We provide PPC SEO display and other online marketing solutions. (1/2)

We make our clients visible on the web and target their online customer base effectively. Its an exciting industry

3. **Sounds like interesting work. How do you describe your role at @Latitude_Group?**

I wear many hats. I'm the lawyer, but I also manage the HR, training & development and office services for the company

4. **What are your company's typical legal needs?**

I cover the co/co, employment, and litigation; and use externals for corp finance, property, an occasional second opinion

5. **How many outside firms do you generally work with? Is that the right number?**

Just 2 and I'd like to get that to 1! Its cost-efficient and makes for a better relationship with more value-add (1/2)

Some in-house teams operate a 'horses for courses' approach, but that doesn't work for us

6. **Let's talk about your selection of lawyers. What type of sales / marketing pitch do you respond well to?**
One which demonstrates a quality and dynamic service, with experts who are enthusiastic about our industry
7. **And what type of sales talk is guaranteed to send you running? How often do you hear it?**
Any pitch which doesn't recognise need to work in a co-ordinated way with in-house team. Not seen too often , but happens
8. **Does social media enter into the equation when you're evaluating outside counsel? How?**
I warm to any firm/lawyer using soc med; I'd worry if the firm I'd chosen for its position in a technology industry (1/2)
.. started to fall behind the field. Like I said before, I like lawyers who are enthusiastic about my industry
9. **Makes perfect sense... What about fee arrangements? Hourly billing, alt fees, etc: what's typical for your company?**
Fees based on value of product/service delivered, and not the time it takes to deliver it is important. So fixed or capped
10. **Finally, how important are personal relationships in the hiring process? Do you hire lawyers you've never met?**
I've never hired a lawyer whom I've never met. Personality and cultural-fit are very important factors
11. **What does the Legal Services Act mean for you as a client? Better service? Lower costs? Something else?**
More competition in the legal market place I hope. Lawyers finding more creative ways to provide their services (1/2)
Not just creativity in terms of fee structures, but the services themselves and how they're delivered
12. **Let's talk about you. When did you become active on Twitter? What were your objectives then? Have they changed?**
12 months ago. 1st obj was to obtain a daily legal know-how stream. Now, I share my own know-how, develop my niche & network
13. **You blog (<http://bit.ly/bdXlay>), are active on Twitter, etc. Where do you draw the line between public and private?**
I blog/tweet law, work & my perspective of both. I've a separate twitter acc for personal tweets & I never tweet about what I eat!

14. You were in private practice before you went in-house. What led you to make the switch?

I trained 50/50 in-house/pp. When I was in pp I was on secondment in-house most of the time. I've always thought it...(1/2)

...an honour for a company to put their faith in an employed team of lawyers to be their preferred legal resource.

15. What's a typical day for the Head of Legal at an online digital marketing company? How much law does it involve?

Signing off client/supplier contracts, ensuring the company has a corporate "memory", keeping up with industry developments. 1/2

I use my legal skills 100% of the time, but my legal knowledge 50%. The other 50% is running the business support team

16. What is the most significant issue currently facing lawyers in commerce and industry?

The ECJ Akzo case on #privilege is the biggie. We're no longer afforded privilege in EU competition matters. (1/2)

The decision devalues inhouse lawyers and we work so hard to bring value to our companies. Disappointing

17. And what is the most significant legal issue currently facing the digital marketing industry?

Behavioural advertising is in the spotlight for its privacy implications in a huge way, legally & ethically... (1/2)

The exchange of personal data for online advertising and information is shaping the digital landscape we live in

18. Indeed. What would you do if you weren't a lawyer?

A journalist or magazine editor. And if I didn't have to work at all, I'd put back into the local community/village/school

19. How do you want to be remembered?

This is the toughest question! I'd just like for the people who matter to me to remember me in a positive way

20. This one should be easier: what do you do when you're not working?

I've recently taken up photography but mainly I keep my 5yo entertained: swimming, walks in forest, building lego star wars

21. **What advice can you pass along to lawyers currently under- or unemployed due to the economic crisis?**

Be creative & adventurous about how you apply your knowledge & skills to keep a profile in the profession. Soc med helps

22. **Finally, what advice do you have for people going to law school today?**

Find an entirely unrelated interest too. That & your legal wisdom will connect in future & make you stand out in the crowd

Thank you v much for this great interview. I truly enjoyed tweeting with you and getting your in-house perspective!

I've had a brilliant time this evening too, thank you for having me on your twitterview, and thanks to everyone who followed



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\twən-tē tü twētz\ (*noun*)

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