

In-House Team of the Year

WINNER

TELEFÓNICA UK

Ed Smith

At the forefront of a transformative and successful year

The past year has been a busy one for Telefónica UK's legal department. Led by general counsel Ed Smith, it has scored some impressive triumphs during 2012 against the backdrop of a global reorganisation of the legal function.

The team at Telefónica has taken on myriad issues during the year, working effectively with external counsel to land a number of remarkable wins on or under budget. This has meant that the telecoms giant's legal department has delivered year-on-year cost savings for the business. Standout work includes winning merger clearance from the European Commission with other mobile operators to secure a joint venture; managing the fallout from a major network outage; and negotiating with key stakeholders to secure improved position for the business following the Government's decision to grant EE a period of 4G monopoly.

All this was achieved while the legal function has been reshaped at the telecoms giant. A truly remarkable achievement.



Ed Smith of Telefónica UK (second left) and Brett Carson (centre) of Harbour Litigation with the Telefónica UK team

HIGHLY COMMENDED

COLT

Robin Saphra

Coming under increased pressure from the boardroom, Colt's general counsel Robin Saphra was tasked with streamlining the company's legal spend. As a result, he whittled down the number of external panel firms Colt uses from over 100 to just one lead adviser. The move saw Baker & McKenzie sign on to a three-year contract worth £3m.

CREDIT SUISSE

George Sebastos

Credit Suisse saved several million pounds in legal spend after the in-house team implemented a number of new strategies, including establishing outsourcing arrangements in locations where it previously had no footprint. The bank also recently launched the activity management programme, which is designed to monitor the use of legal resources and to apply alternative solutions where it's needed.

HEATHROW

Carol Hui

Described as the political football within the Heathrow Group, the legal team is praised for being particularly mindful of politics and shareholder interests in its advice. During the year, the team not only improved its governance standards but also provided legal support as the host airport to the London 2012 games, negotiating supply agreements with baggage handlers and air traffic controllers, and managing Heathrow's £1bn annual construction contracts.

PHOENIX GROUP

Jane MacLeod

The six-strong in-house team completed a number of major projects, including outsourcing its back office function to HSBC, the sale of a £5bn annuity portfolio to Guardian, the consolidation of Phoenix's life assurance business into two main life insurers and the sale of JP Morgan claims against Lehman Brothers.

ROCHE PRODUCTS

Funke Abimbola

Roche is the world's largest biotech group in the world and has been well served in the UK, Ireland, Malta and Gibraltar by its team of six in-house lawyers. This past year, the team has successfully cut back on its legal spend while maintaining the level of service provided by external advisers.

'Telefónica has scored impressive triumphs against the backdrop of a global reorganisation of the legal function.'

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