

WINNER

Vodafone

Rosemary Martin

Creativity and prudence combine to deliver first-class results

Martin has led this much-admired in-house team with aplomb. During a perfect storm of increased pressure to cut costs and headcount, a tough market for major telecoms operators and some extremely significant corporate activity, the Vodafone legal team, comprising 350 professionals spread across 24 countries, has consistently met targets and continued to innovate at the same time.

Work for the team in 2013 was dominated by two off-the-scale corporate deals: the \$130bn disposal of its stake in Verizon Wireless and the £6.6bn acquisition of German TV firm Kabel Deutschland. These deals came as Vodafone was still bedding down its takeover of Cable & Wireless Worldwide in 2012 – comparatively small fry at a value of around £1bn.

Achieving this level of support means that resources within the team need to be managed innovatively, which is why Vodafone signed a deal with the legal process outsourcing arm of Indian law firm Qui Prior Law Associates in March 2013, which fits with the 'layering' approach to external legal advice adopted by Martin, who was one of the first UK-based GCs to appoint innovative US provider Axiom to Vodafone's panel in 2011.



The Vodafone team with Michael Napier CBE QC of Harbour Litigation Funding

HIGHLY COMMENDED

BT

Dan Fitz

Not only did BT complete an overhaul of its global legal panel of 140 firms and launched its own ABS, BT Law – which the company intends to use to turn the legal department from a cost to a profit centre – but BT TV legal was instrumental in moving the telecoms company into broadcasting through BT Sport.

COUNTRYWIDE

Gareth Williams

This energetic legal team has consistently demonstrated proactive external law firm/cost management and cutting-edge legal work, at a time when the residential property market in the UK was hit hard. The strong abilities of the legal team were in evidence during Countrywide's IPO last year, which valued it at 50% above the original offer price.

HCA INTERNATIONAL

Jasy Loyal

Despite rarely instructing outside counsel, this compact team is noted for achieving a number

of successes for the company in 2013, including advising on more than 1,000 contracts and representing the company in more than 350 incidents, claims and complaints.

ITV

Andrew Garard

The broadcaster's legal team produced year-on-year internal and external cost savings in 2013, exceeding 10% of budget. This achievement is all the more impressive as it has contributed measurably to ITV's successes.

KENT LEGAL SERVICES

Geoff Wild

The trail-blazing local authority's legal arm, which is known for generating its own income as a result of offering its services to external councils, announced an increase in profits of 20% from £2m to £2.4m in 2012/13 – its highest-ever profit figure – and a 9% increase in turnover from £11m to £12m.

SHELL

Donny Ching

Shell completed a successful overhaul of its global legal panel in 2013, identifying between two and five suitable firms for each practice area in each jurisdiction to compete with each other for significant mandates.

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