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Personal and Career Development Tips for In-house Counsel

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During a webcast on 12 May 2020, former General Counsel Rich Cohen shared his personal career development tips, including how he leveraged his ACC membership.

1. Meet, learn from, and forge friendships with global in-house counsel. Whatever your challenges may be, there is a member who has successfully navigated the issue. Attend the ACC Annual Meeting each year in October.
[[Register here](#) for the virtual 2020 ACC Annual Meeting, 12-16 October 2020.]
2. Find your balance by focusing on what matters most to you in work life and personal life (*i.e.*, spending time with your family, reading that book you've always wanted to read, learning a new aspect of law that interests you, or giving back to your community). Finding balance can help you weather troubled times.
[Visit the [ACC Wellness Center](#) for more information.]
3. Be the best in-house counsel you can be by taking your interests and

experience outside the office. That can mean volunteering with a local non-profit organization, getting involved with a reading group, or starting a meet-up with community members. Not only can you learn something new, but you can help others learn as well.

4. Find a group or a service that speaks to you and engage in it.
[Join an [ACC Chapter](#) or [ACC Network](#).]

5. Be a better lawyer and community member by meeting new in-house counsel, engaging in working groups, and offering your ear and experience.
[Join an [ACC forum](#).]

6. Pay it forward to lift other lawyers in the in-house counsel community by serving as a mentor.
[Contact [Rich Cohen](#) for information on the ACC member mentoring program.]

7. Share your knowledge, expertise, and experience by speaking at an event and/or authoring an article.
[For speaking roles, contact education@acc.com.
For authoring an ACC article, contact legalresources@acc.com.]

8. Engage in different sources of information or take a quick course on a new subject.
[Register for an upcoming [ACC In-House Counsel Certification Program](#).]

9. “Live the business but love the law.” While in-house counsel should learn the business and take a seat at the table when it comes to decision-making, you were hired to be the lawyer. Your job is to

protect the company.

10. Master the business and industry that you are involved in.
[Join one or more of the nineteen industry-specific [ACC Networks](#).]

11. Learn what makes your business succeed.
 - Understand and learn all about what the challenges are of the business beyond a legal perspective, including how the Human Resources department works; how budgets are created, etc.
 - Understand the big picture of your industry by asking executives what they read and allocate time each week to read those business journals.[Visit the [ACC Resource Library](#).]

12. Your job as an in-house lawyer is not to be the hero, but to make those who you work with the hero. Your role is to be so understanding, and so integrated, that your support allows your colleagues to succeed.

13. When giving business advice, you must clearly bifurcate when you're giving "business advice" and when you're giving "legal advice." Even saying something like "you're asking me for my business opinion, not my legal opinion" can clearly demarcate your role in decision-making.

14. Figure out what type of career you want and then pursue it through your current role.
[Visit the [ACC Career Development Center](#).]

15. Don't wait for the final two-minute warning of your career to start thinking about your legacy in both your work life and personal life.

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