



Dan Fitz with Lee Ranson of Eversheds Sutherland

GC OF THE YEAR

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DAN FITZ BT

AN INDUSTRY GIANT LEAVING BIG SHOES TO FILL

Dan Fitz joined BT as group general counsel in 2010 just after the company had gone through some tough times, including shedding 20% of its workforce in 2008 and 2009. Since then, his reputation as both one of the most respected GCs in the business and a role model for a new generation of thought leaders among in-house counsel is unquestionable. Widely cited as one of the most influential and admired GCs since *Legal Business* began covering the in-house legal market in earnest more than five years ago, he stepped down in April to be replaced by former Anheuser-Busch InBev legal chief Sabine Chalmers.

While remaining a board-level figure, staying on as company secretary, in a GC capacity he leaves behind a strong legacy for Chalmers. Last year, Fitz told *Legal Business* technology and de-regulation would change the role of the GC dramatically and that he wanted to do other things in the long-term, such as teaching about the management of legal services.

At the time, he commented: 'Places like BT will see increasingly fewer in-house lawyers doing crank-the-handle work. We'll be focused on higher value-add work where knowledge of the company will be married with legal expertise.'

COMMENDED

ROB BOOTH THE CROWN ESTATE

A one-time Rising Star, Booth has quickly transitioned from being one-to-watch to become a big player in the real estate industry since taking over from well-regarded former GC Vivienne King in 2016. He and a lean team of five lawyers have certainly stepped up: supporting more than £2bn worth of property trading in the last two years.

MAAIKE DE BIE ROYAL MAIL

Particularly cited by both private practice firms and peers, De Bie's strong reputation partly comes from her effective guidance of the legal team after Royal Mail's 2015 IPO. Her work in taking an archaic institution

and transforming the legal function as the business changed in the face of agile competition is noteworthy.

CAROLYN JAMESON SKYSCANNER

Under chief legal officer Jameson, Skyscanner has become a testing ground for new ways of handling legal work. Most matters are dealt with internally by a team of eight lawyers, each with specific technical skills. Jameson is lauded for driving a commercial approach which, far from a back-office function, means legal informs and drives the company's commercial strategy.

ALISON KAY NATIONAL GRID

Led by Kay, the in-house legal team at National Grid has transformed itself over

the last three years, realigning the function as a partner to the business. As part of this, Kay refreshed the external panel, cutting the number of firms from 15 to 12 and changing the emphasis to ensure it was an extension of the in-house team, delivering a more agile service.

HUGH PUGSLEY HSBC

Pugsley and his 60-strong team have helped HSBC rise to the very formidable challenge of ring-fencing, showing himself to be an indispensable part of the bank's senior leadership at a very difficult time for the sector. As a result, the much-respected Pugsley has been able to develop one of the UK's outstanding financial services legal teams.



Celebrating excellence Legal Business Awards 2018

Eversheds Sutherland would like to congratulate BT's Dan Fitz for winning General Counsel of the Year at this year's Legal Business Awards.

We wish Dan and all of the other nominees the very best for the future.

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