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One definition of leadership in the workplace is to have the ability to inspire people to work together towards a common altruistic goal. The In-House Community Counsels of the Year awards (99 submissions) proved that true and inspiring leadership is alive and well among the in-house teams in Asia, the Middle East and Africa.

Stand-outs include our In-House Counsel of the Year, Andrew Cooke, general counsel of Flash Entertainment, who when faced with the perfect storm of a headcount and spend freeze, and an exponential increase in work volume due to a major cross-border dispute, dug down and sought inspiration from Taiichi Ohno’s ‘Toyota Production System’ and implemented the Six Sigma approach to perfecting processes through eliminating waste.

As inspiring was the Schneider Asian team’s immediate response, led by general counsel Paul Fredrick, to assist the 12 teenage boys trapped in a cave in Thailand’s Chiang Rai province. The Schneider Southeast Asia team immediately mobilised employees to send multiple sets of electrical load and generator equipment...
upon the request of the Energy Authority of Thailand and proved to be a game changer during the two-week period that resulted in the inspiring and widely reported rescue of all 12 boys.

Such leadership does not have to be so dramatic to prove successful over the long term. The winning Asia Team of the Year, MTR Corporation, led by Gillian Meller, has consistently stayed ahead of the game when it comes to providing a multi-disciplinary legal team of 70 members of staff, including engineers and risk managers. The legal team has proved instrumental in their ability to service immediate stakeholders, as well as people at large, as MTR becomes a truly international company, exploring business opportunities in major world cities including London, Stockholm, Sydney, Toronto, Beijing, Shenzhen and Hangzhou.

In the context of legion award ceremonies in the legal sector, many of the participants of the In-House Counsel Awards — whether winners or not — expressed appreciation for the consistent criteria used in determining the winning teams, namely: dedication; innovation; efficiency and value-add; integration; encouragement and improvement; corporate social responsibility; and diversity.

In addition, the In-House Team and In-House (individual) Counsel of the Year awards are adjudicated by an independent panel of judges that includes reclused practitioners that have done the hard yards themselves and therefore can accurately assess the merits of the in-house teams, as well as sympathise with the challenges that the function is inevitably beset by.

Smart use of technology in the legal space was evident in Beijing-based Taikang Group, which registered 461 patents, thus helping the insurance company become increasingly technology-driven, as well as Korea Gas Corporation’s creation of a multi-disciplinary energy and natural resources eLegal community (incidentally one of our increasing number of submissions from Korea).

It has become abundantly clear over the years that in-house teams in markets other than North America and Europe tend to be much smaller in terms of head count and therefore inevitably have to do “more with less”. This became apparent for Small Team winners DNV GL (Asia) and AFGRI (Africa) — both five-person teams with coverage over multiple and various jurisdictions and diverse business groups.

In-house teams are taking increasing internal responsibility for complex transactions, including first-time nominee and winner Grab, in Other Industries - Asia, relating to its US$3 billion series H fund; and multiple returnee Melco Resorts & Entertainment’s successful completion of the US IPO of Studio City with a pre-IPO synthetic Up-C structure.

Legal teams can constructively change societies and the multiple victories of Abu Dhabi Global Markets, one of the world’s most innovative and new financial centres, proved that a multi-national and dedicated team can prove to be an inspiration to other regulatory regimes around the region, not least by applying the common law of England and Wales directly to its legal regime (a first in Mena, but also “firsts” in both fintech and crypto-currency regulation).
Numbers matter — and CIMB once again showed its integration with its other stakeholders in winning the Banking Industry award with its across-the-board coverage assisting the parent with a record net profit of 30 percent year on year. The final number perhaps matters most of all — the US$10,000 that the assembled in-house and private practice lawyers raised for our worthy charity, Children’s Cancer Therapy Development Institute. Thank you to all who generously contributed gifts and donated money to help save children facing life-threatening cancer.

VISIONARY CLIENT SERVICES PROVIDERS

Once again, the In-House Community research team set the challenge for New Silk Road-based legal service providers to demonstrate that they can truly stand inside the shoes of their clients and provide inspiring service. Our Visionary Client Service Providers 2019 identify the very best examples of client excellence. To do so, we canvassed legal providers and asked them to provide examples of budget-orientated project management for a client; advice to a client regarding productivity and efficiency; and exceeding client expectations.

In the non-law firm category, three-year-old Australian startup Lawcadia impressed with its innovative cloud-based legaltech platform that combines RFPs, e-billing and analytics. The platform was built in direct response to the frustrations experienced by in-house teams and has been designed to be intuitive, easy to use and simple to implement in legal teams of all sizes.

In the international law firm category, Clifford Chance demonstrated real commitment to the region, devoting significant resources to initiatives aimed at ensuring its clients in Asia have the best possible experience. In partnership with the Economic Development Board in Singapore, the firm has launched the region’s first legal innovation lab, Create+65, to identify, incubate, test and pilot new legal technology solutions. The lab is part of Clifford Chance’s innovation and best delivery hub in Singapore.

In a difficult decision for the visionary law firm award in the Middle East, the judges eventually
selected Galadari Advocates & Legal Consultants, which demonstrated its willingness to go the extra mile for clients. In Dubai, the firm made an extremely rare request for the recusal of three judges and set an important legal precedent in a high-profile case. The judges commended Galadari for striving to operate at a high standard and in some cutting-edge areas.

DEAL FIRMS OF THE YEAR

Latham & Watkins was named International Deal Firm of the Year thanks to its role on a host of impressive transactions across the whole region, including the first Cambodian issue of offshore bonds, Vietnam’s biggest ever equity offering and the first infrastructure project finance securitisation in Asia.

South-East Asia Deal Firm of the Year went to Allen & Gledhill, with notable roles on Temasek’s US$3.6 billion MTN programme that facilitates retail access to debt securities, Posco ICT’s SIAC arbitration proceeding against Hitachi, the first true IPO in Myanmar and Grab’s acquisition of the Southeast Asian operations and assets of Uber, among many others.

Jingtian & Gongcheng won China Deal Firm of the Year, having helped clients to raise more than US$9 billion during the year, including on Pinduoduo’s US$1.6 billion Nasdaq IPO, Xiaomi’s US$4.7 billion Hong Kong IPO and iQiyi’s US$2.25 billion Nasdaq IPO.

In addition to being named our Visionary Client Service Law Firm of the Year for Asia, Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas also won India Deal Firm of the Year. It played key roles on a number of significant transactions during the year, including India’s first national highway project undertaken on toll, operate and transfer basis, Monnet Ispat & Energy’s corporate insolvency resolution process and Essar Steel’s auction and acquisition by ArcelorMittal.

Alain Charles Veloso from Quisumbing Torres was named External Counsel of the Year and his firm, Baker McKenzie, was once again named Most Responsive Firm of the Year.

Many thanks to everyone who joined us on the evening and to all those who took part in the process.

A message from Michael Lin, Board Director of the Children’s Cancer Therapy Development Institute (CC-TDI)

CC-TDI wishes to express our great and sincere appreciation to the many individual and corporate donors, Patrick, Tim, Rahul and the entire In-House Community for recognising us as their charity for 2019. The total of HK$74,000 raised in a single night was significantly more than we expected and will go far to keep the lights (and refrigerators/freezers!) on and running at our Portland Oregon facility.

On a personal note, I was especially touched with the many personal stories that event attendees shared with me. Cancer is a truly terrible disease taking many forms — and is consistent only in how it destroys lives and families. I am deeply honoured and appreciative of the trust and kindness bestowed upon CC-TDI and I that evening.

We at CC-TDI will endeavour to be eternally worthy of your complete trust and support. CC-TDI is continuously seeking to improve our facilities and processes to achieve our long-term goal of making all childhood cancers survivable and to help preserve lives and families.

Once again, our sincerest thanks for your incredibly generous donations and support.

For more on CC-TDI, visit https://www.cc-tdi.org/
WINNERS: IN-HOUSE COMMUNITY AWARDS, 2019

IN-HOUSE COMMUNITY LEGAL TEAMS OF THE YEAR, 2019

Asia In-House Team of the Year, MTR Corporation Limited, Successful opening of High Speed Rail, West Kowloon & bids for rail projects in London, Stockholm, Sydney, Toronto, Beijing, Shenzhen & Hangzhou

Middle East In-House Team of the Year (Joint Winner), Abu Dhabi Global Market, Registered more than 1200 companies & authorised 80+ financial services firms; First FinTech regime in ME

Middle East In-House Team of the Year (Joint Winner), Flash Entertainment, Elimination of waste in legal supply chain through 6 Sigma implementation

Africa In-House Team of the Year, AFGR Group, Coverage including handling landmark Silico financing; Team of 5 covering 11 jurisdictions: coverage includes Agriculture, Food, Banking & Finance

IN-HOUSE COMMUNITY INDUSTRY LEGAL TEAMS OF THE YEAR, 2019

Retail & Healthcare – Middle East, Seddiqi Holding LLC,
Retail & Healthcare – Asia, AEON Co. (M) Bhd,
Technology, Media & Telecoms – Middle East, Gartner,
Technology, Media & Telecoms – Asia, Telstra International Limited,
Retail & Healthcare – Africa, Life Healthcare Group,
TNT / FedEx integration prone to international sanctions

Property, Infrastructure & Logistics – Middle East, FedEx Express International BV,
London, Stockholm, Sydney, Toronto, Beijing, Shenzhen & Hangzhou

Other Industries – Middle East, Aujan Group Holding,

Financial Services (ex-Banking) – Asia, ICBC International Holdings Limited,

Banking – Middle East, Abu Dhabi Global Market,

Travel & Leisure – Middle East, Flash Entertainment,

Other Industries – Asia, Grab,

Life Science & Pharma, Sanofi (China) Investment Co., Ltd.,

Financial Services (ex-Banking) – Middle East, SHUAA Capital Psc,
Exchange consultation

Other Industries – Asia, DNV GL,

Insurance, Manulife (International) Limited, eClaim Project for customer-friendly medical claims

Other Industries – Asia, Grab, Assisted in raising USD3 billion Series H fund

Other Industries - Middle East, Aujan Group Holding, Working closely with Management to ensure compliance in challenging jurisdictions especially prone to international sanctions

Property, Infrastructure & Logistics - Asia, MTR Corporation Limited, Successful opening of High Speed Rail, West Kowloon & bids for rail projects in London, Stockholm, Sydney, Toronto, Beijing, Shenzhen & Hangzhou

Property, Infrastructure & Logistics - Middle East, FedEx Express International BV, Negotiated 140 sales contracts & 1100 procurement contracts & TNT / FedEx integration

Retail & Healthcare - Africa, Life Healthcare Group, Multi- Billion Rand Cross-border deal with India healthcare conglomerate

Retail & Healthcare - Asia, Aeon Co. (M) Bhd, Launch of Aeon Member Plus Visa Card and Aeon Wallet Mobile app

Retail & Healthcare - Middle East, Seddiqi Holding LLC, Standardization of processes for pre-contracting and contractual legal terms with commercial team

Technology, Media & Telecoms - Asia, Telstra International Limited, Project Morpheus - Implementing automation in advising clients

Technology, Media & Telecoms - Middle East, Gartner, Business alignment through 360 Risk assessment

Travel & Leisure - Asia, Melco Resorts & Entertainment Limited, Successful completion of US IPO of Studio City with pre-IPO synthetic Up-C structure

Travel & Leisure - Middle East, Flash Entertainment, Elimination of waste in legal supply chain through 6 Sigma implementation

IN-HOUSE COMMUNITY BEST PRACTICE LEGAL TEAMS OF THE YEAR, 2019

Change Management, Swiss Re Asia Pte. Ltd., Advising Singapore Govt. on the proposed introduction of re-domestication

Compliance, COSCO SHIPPING Ports Limited, Corporate wide training re US sanctions & coordination with SASAC companies

Corporate Social Responsibility (Joint Winner), Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Rehabilitation of Wetland 4, Barangay with Dept of Environment & Natural Resources

Corporate Social Responsibility (Joint Winner), Schneider Electric, Essential assistance by providing power generators to rescue the trapped 12 young Thai boys, July 18.

Diversity, Hyundai Engineering & Construction Co., Ltd., Team comprised engineers and lawyers, thus breaking business silos

Innovation - Asia (Joint Winner), Korea Gas Corporation, Creation of multidisciplinary & international Energy & Natural Resources eLegal Community

Innovation - Asia (Joint Winner), Malayan Banking Berhad Group, Collaboration with GRAB for eWallet

Innovation - Middle East, Abu Dhabi Global Market, First FinTech regime in ME

Integration, MERALCO, Road shows on basic legal principles for internal stakeholders, including ‘Let’s keep it private’

Small Team - Africa, AFGR Group, Team of 5 covering 11 jurisdictions: coverage includes Agriculture, Food, Banking & Finance

Small Team - Asia, DNV GL, 5 lawyer team in Singapore, Shanghai and Dubai coverage includes: Maritime, Oil & Gas, Business Assurance & Digital Solutions

Technology - Asia, Taikang Insurance Group Inc., Registered more than 1200 companies & authorised 80+ financial services firms

Technology - Middle East, Accenture Middle East, Utilization of DP chatbot directing users to tools, people and know-how on data privacy

Transactional, Asian Development Bank, Advised on US$21.3 billion over 130 loans in 2018
VISIONARY CLIENT SERVICES FIRMS OF THE YEAR, 2019

Visionary Client Service Law Firm of the Year, Asia, Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas, Firm-wide effort to drive new ideas focused on legal service delivery and client focus, including pioneering use of AI

Visionary Client Service Law Firm of the Year, Middle East, Galadari Advocates & Legal Consultants, Commended for striving to operate at a high standard and in some cutting-edge areas

Visionary Client Service Law Firm of the Year, International, Clifford Chance, Demonstrated real commitment to the region, devoting significant resources to initiatives aimed at ensuring its clients in Asia have the best possible experience

Visionary Non-Law Firm Legal Services Provider, Lawcadia, Impressed with its innovative cloud-based legaltech platform that combines RFPs, e-billing and analytics

Most Responsive Firm of the Year, 2018, Baker McKenzie, Voted most responsive international firm of the year in the most jurisdictions by members of the In-House Community.

DEAL FIRMS OF THE YEAR, 2018

International Deal Firm of the Year, Latham & Watkins
South East Asia Deal Firm of the Year, Allen & Gledhill
China Deal Firm of the Year, Jingtian & Gongcheng
India Deal Firm of the Year, Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas

The above firms advised on the most winning deals in our 2018 Asian-mena Counsel Deals of the Year.

EXTERNAL COUNSEL OF THE YEAR, 2019

Alain Charles Veloso, Charles Veloso is responsive, diligent and knowledgeable. The thing that stands out the most about Charles is that he offers practical legal advice … working with me to strategize and provide guidance on the appropriate response

COMMENDED EXTERNAL COUNSEL OF THE YEAR, 2019

Nominated entirely by in-house counsel and corporate decision-makers in the In-House Community, the following external counsel all received the outstanding recommendation of their clients. From our Commended Counsel we also announced the In-House Community External Counsel of the Year (above). Congratulations to all those below:

China
Annie Wu (Guohua), Jincheng Tongda & Neal
Bangmin Wang, Tianyuan Law Firm

Hong Kong
Alvin Ho, Pinsent Masons
Anthony Wong, White & Case
Asha Sharma, Reed Smith
Charmaine Koo, Deacons
David Watkins, Slaughter and May
Donovan Ferguson, King & Wood Mallesons
KK Cheung, Deacons
Lilian Chiang, Deacons
Mabel Lui, Withers
Hartin Rogers, Davis Polk
Pattie Walsh, Bird & Bird
Simon Deane, Deacons

India
Cyril Shroff, Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas
Hemanth Sahai, HSA Advocates

Indonesia
Emir Pohan, Suhardiman Kardono Swadiri
Hazwar
Melli Darsa, Melli Darsa, PwC
Dr. Mohamed Idwan Ganle, Lubis Ganle Surwijodojo
Theodoor Bakker, ABNR
Dr. Yozua Make, Makes & Partners

Japan
Akiko Munden, Endeavour Law Office
Lucas Oliver-Frost, TA Lawyers

Malaysia
Dato’ Andy Low, Low & Partners
Deepak Sadasivan, Adnan Sunda & Low
Lee Shih, Skrine
Shannon Rajan, Skrine
Tan Sri Dato Cecil Abraham, Cecil Abraham & Partners

Myanmar
Chris Hughes, SCM Legal

Pakistan
Mansoor Khan, Khan & Associates

Philippines
Alexander Poblador, Poblador Bautista & Reyes Law Offices
Antero Jose M. Caganda, ZGLaw
Alain Charles Veloso, Quisumbing Torres
Danny Bunyi, Divina Law
Jose Cechingyan III, Cechingyan & Partners Law Offices
Lynn Alicantara, Esquerra & Blanco Law Offices
Patricia Prodigalidad, ACCRA Law
Ramon Esquerra, Esquerra & Blanco Law Offices

Singapore
Gareth Deiner, Clifford Chance
Gerald Singham, Dentons Rodyk
Josephine Choo, WongPartnership

South Korea
Andrew White, Yulchon
Keun Woo Lee, Yoon & Yang
Sun Chang, Lee & Ko
Sungjin Kang, Latham & Watkins

Thailand
Ampika Kumar, Baker McKenzie
Athistha (Nop) Chitrakanokh, Tilleke & Gibbins
Peter Shelford, DLA Piper
Weerawong Chittmittrapap, Weerawong, Chinnavat & Partners

United Arab Emirates
Andrew Greaves, Addleshaw Goddard
Christopher Gunson, AMERELLER
Robert Flaws, CMS
Sara Khoja, Clyde & Co

Vietnam
Bu Ngoc Hong, LNT & Partners
Chi Anh Tran, LCT Partners
Dang The Duc, Indochine Counsel
Hoang Anh, Mayer Brown
Dr. Net Le, LNT & Partners
Our panel of independent judges

Doreen Jaeger-Soong, Managing Director, Hughes-Castell (HK) Ltd.
Michelle Gon, Partner, McDermott Will & Emery, former general counsel in China and the US
Peter Connor, Founder & CEO of AlternativelyLegal, former GC and global compliance head
Clinton Swan, Experienced law firm business development and management professional
Nigel Francis, Senior Consultant, YTL, former head of Addleshaw Goddard’s Hong Kong office

In-House Community Judges:
Patrick Dransfield, Director, In-House Community
Nick Ferguson, Managing Editor, Asian-mena Counsel

Alexander Forbes Group won Financial Services (ex-Banking), Africa
Life Healthcare Group won in Retail & Healthcare, Africa
Chris Gunson presents MERALCO with their Integration Award
Melco Resorts & Entertainment – Travel & Leisure Team, Asia
Grab received the Other Industries, Asia award
Vincent Connor of Pinsent Masons picking up the Diversity Team award on behalf of Hyundai Engineering & Construction
FedEx Express – Property, Infrastructure and Logistics Team, Middle East
COSCO Shipping Ports – Compliance Team of the Year
Manulife (International) celebrate their Insurance Team award presented by Michael Parker (centre)
Korea Gas Corp were joint winners for Innovation

Aboitiz Equity Ventures were joint winners for CSR Asia

AEON Co. – Retail & Healthcare, Asia winners

Asian Development Bank – Transactional Team of the Year

Sanofi (China) won the Life Science & Pharma Team award

Swiss Re won for Change Management

ICBC International won for Financial Services (ex-Banking), Asia

Our attending 2019 In-House Community Commended External Counsel of the Year take a well-deserved bow

CIMB won the award for Banking Team of the Year, Asia

Joint winners for Innovation, Malayan Banking Berhad

Taikang Insurance won the award for Technology