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GC Influencers
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Programme
Introduction

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In-house legal departments are becoming increasingly significant within the Russian market. The demands of driving growth in international markets encourage the steady increase in the functions required of the legal department and the emergence of new structures to facilitate successful outcomes. The general counsel and legal division general managers highlighted in this list are recognised for the contributions they have made and the examples they have set in the development of in-house legal culture.

Research Methodology: Our GC Influencers have been chosen following research among private practice lawyers and other in-house counsel. We identified the key areas in which GCs have displayed substantial influence:

- Effective management and development of an in-house team.
- Navigation of substantial business projects and strategic business change.
- Understanding the pressures faced within industry.
- Ability to respond to regulatory change.

Our aim is to celebrate excellence within the legal profession. Our GC Influencers have created best practice pathways endorsed by both private practice and other in-house lawyers. In spotlighting their achievements, this list encourages collaboration among the in-house legal community.
Engaging content, networking and celebration with leading General Counsel and top ranked lawyers globally.

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Anna Serebryanikova currently serves as Chief Legal and Government Relations Officer at MegaFon. She joined the company in 2006 in the role of adviser to the CEO on international legal matters, subsequently being promoted to Chief Legal Officer until 2012, when she took up her current role. She has also been a member of the board for almost a decade.

Serebryanikova is highlighted as an influential counsel with impressive experience in corporate governance, business strategy and transactions, with sources emphasising her stellar work in the company’s IPO in the past.

A market commentator describes her as “very strong, very driven and with a strong strategic view, not just of the legal industry but of the digital economy as well: she is someone who inspires and thinks outside the box.”
Marianna Zakharova acts as First Vice President and Head of the Corporate, Shareholder and Legal Section of MMC Norilsk Nickel and is also a member of the board since 2010. She additionally serves as board member and Deputy Director of the Legal Department of Interros, a holding company that owns a stake in Norilsk Nickel.

Market commentators are swift to praise Zakharova’s skills, highlighting her ability and experience. One interviewee asserts that “she is a strong head of legal.”

Zakharova is recognised for dealing with complex matters such as restructurings and reorganisations and for her in-depth knowledge of the industry. Equally praised for her academic background, she holds a Master's in Law from the People’s Friendship University of Russia (RUDN).
Elena Borisenko, Chief Legal Officer and First Vice President of Gazprombank, is a highly-regarded general counsel with extensive experience in the field, recognised as an influential legal professional for her work promoting changes in regulations and in the evolution of the Russian legal market, as well as her team-management skills.

Market sources single her out as a top lawyer. One reports: “She was in charge of a number of changes and is a very strong head of legal. A lot of changes in the banking legislation were promoted by her involvement, which cannot be underestimated. She also managed to recruit very strong people.”

Another interviewee comments: “She is definitely a key person in reforming the Russian legal market,” also highlighting her role in creating an innovative legal forum: “She is one of the founders of the St. Petersburg Legal Forums, in charge of developing the agenda and making sure that speakers come and speak.”

“She certainly has very good experience and a good reputation,” concludes a final market source.
Igor Kondrashov is Vice President and Director of the Legal Department at Sberbank. Graduated from Moscow State University Lomonosov, he is a renowned counsel with extensive experience in the finance industry.

Kondrashov is considered an influential figure in the market for his involvement in regulatory issues and as a promoter of key changes in the sector. He is also adept at handling complex disputes and is praised for his knowledge of civil law and excellent management of his team.

A market source states: “He is a key figure within the organisation,” adding that “he is one of the leaders and pioneers in the market.” Another interviewee reports: “He is a fantastic manager and we like how he works with his department.”

Kondrashov is also a regular speaker at several forums and conferences, with experience presenting in subjects such as M&A, technology and legal protection of businesses.
Valery Sidnev
EuroChem

EuroChem General Counsel Valery Sidnev also serves as the company’s Legal Director. He boasts almost two decades' experience in the legal sector, having started his career as an associate at Baker Botts in 1999. Sidnev later moved into an in-house position at UC Rusal, followed by a stint at SUEK, joining EuroChem as Head of Legal in 2009.

He is a highly-regarded general counsel with experience in complex regulatory issues and transactions, as well as a sought-after speaker at different international legal events.

Interviewees highlight his influence and strengths, one noting: “He is one of the most highly-organised GCs – he manages issues ranging from antitrust to regulatory issues and big-ticket M&A as well as capital markets deals. He is someone who has got a lot of vigour and self-discipline in big issues.”

Another source concludes: “He is well-recognised, very experienced and a very strong guy. He is one of the leading Russian GCs.”
Tatyana Kuznetsova currently serves as Director of the Legal Department at Novatek, having joined the company in 2002. She also acts as Deputy Chairman of the Management Board.

Market sources are quick to recognise her as one of the most influential general counsels in Russia, and agree that she is a skilled negotiator and manager, as well as a crucial actor in the success of the business. One commentator reports: “She is one of the most impressive GCs: tough on negotiations, she is extremely strong and one of the best lawyers.”

Another interviewee comments: “She is very strong and the success of Novatek is undisputed, she has been with the company for 20 years and has a lot of experience in engaging either foreign or Russian law firms and managing all kinds of issues.”
Alexander Tarabrin is Managing Director, Legal at Dom.Rf. He joined the property developer and financing agency in 2017, bringing to the role his experience gained as head of legal departments at companies such as Gunvor and Otkritie. Prior to launching his in-house career, Tarabrin was an associate at international market-leading law firms White & Case and Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP regularly acting on complex corporate matters.

Market commentators single him out as an influential counsel, as one interviewee notes: “He is a great professional, extremely experienced with transactions and has been exposed to different sector. He is a strong player in the market.”

Another source reports: “He is very approachable, very clear-thinking and while quite young, he is able to handle a wide range of demanding tasks.”

Tarabrin is a graduate from the Moscow State Institute of International Relations and holds an Executive Master of Management in Law from the Higher School of Economics.
Alexey Nikiforov joined SIBUR as an associate of the legal department in 2007, taking the role of Director and Head of Legal in 2015.

With over a decade in the petrochemical industry, Nikiforov is a skilled lawyer with experience in M&A transactions, joint ventures, competition law and compliance as well as a proficient team manager.

He also demonstrates a strong academic background, with several publications and a PhD in Law from Tomsk State University, as well as holding an MBA from the University of Warwick, Warwick Business School. He is regularly invited to showcase his in-depth knowledge of the market as a speaker at international legal forums.

Sources highlight him his strong technical capabilities, one noting: “He is young and dynamic, very focused and very nice to work with.” Another source reports: “He’s been involved in very difficult projects and he is a fantastic professional.”
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