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## ACC Taps Bristol-Myers Squibb GC for Top In-House Honor

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Sandra Leung, general counsel and corporate secretary at global biopharmaceutical company Bristol-Myers Squibb Co., has been named the winner of the Association of Corporate Counsel's [Excellence in Corporate Practice Award for 2013](#).

The ACC award honors one senior in-house counsel each year who has made exemplary legal and business contributions towards their company's success, adding value in the areas of strategic vision, cost control, compliance, quality, law department management, innovation, and service to the profession.

Since she became GC in 2007, Leung has brought changes to the legal department at BMS (which was [one of Corporate Counsel's Legal Departments of the Year](#)). She streamlined the department, creating six practice groups and breaking down silos within the company.

She told CorpCounsel.com that some of her greatest challenges as a GC have come as BMS shifted from a diversified company with an emphasis on pharmaceuticals to a "pure play" biopharmaceutical company.

"Along with the strategy, we had to change the culture," she said.

To further increase the law department's efficiency, Leung cut costs and moved U.S.-based legal staff from their Manhattan headquarters to New Jersey, in order to be closer to business units. In addition, Leung helped the legal team at BMS add to their skill sets by creating in-house expert groups, in which attorneys from across practice groups focus on topics such as patents and exclusivity, pharmacodiagnosics, and electronic media.

"I think professional advancement for lawyers in the company is important," Leung said. "It's important for them to know that there is a career path in the company, and it's also important to support the company strategy."

Leung also created Law Forward, an internal think tank of attorneys working on ways to keep improving the BMS law department, as well as Attorneys Sharing Knowledge, a global network that allows in-house lawyers to share knowledge and expertise about the company's products and other topics globally.

Lamberto Andreotti, chief executive officer of Bristol-Myers Squibb, congratulated Leung on the ACC award and praised her contributions to the company.

"This recognition reflects Sandy's leadership in establishing a best-in-class law department that plays a critical role in supporting the mission and objectives of Bristol-Myers Squibb," he said in a statement. "Sandy's contributions to the company have been instrumental in our ability to deliver on our mission of developing innovative medicines to help patients prevail over serious disease."

Leung will officially accept the Excellence in Corporate Practice award on October 28 at the ACC Annual Meeting in Los Angeles.

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