

## In Conversation:

# Olga Rodstein, General Counsel, *BrightSign*

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**Going digital has always been a top priority of Olga Rodstein but finding the right tools has been more difficult. Now, she says, legal tech is finally ready to enter the mainstream**

I have always been an early adopter of legal tech and have embraced new technology from very early in my career. Before joining BrightSign, I was a litigator in a commercial disputes and property team. I would often move between New York and Silicon Valley, the global centre for tech and innovation. It is no surprise that when I decided to shift my career to in-house, I was destined for the tech startup world.

I now lead legal operations at BrightSign, a global company that specialises in digital signage media players. Like many companies, BrightSign was hit hard by the pandemic. Fortunately, as an organisation we were very innovative and were able to pivot our business operations and create solutions. For example, many of our applications became touchless. We implemented QR codes and voice recognition technology to make our tech Covid safe. Although business has picked up again and we are able to revert to working with more traditional digital signage, touchless solutions will remain the way of the future.

In the last few years, I have seen an explosion of new legal tech apps that have made a positive impact on in-house legal departments. New technology has enabled general counsel to maximise efficiency whilst minimising costs, enabling general counsel to keep legal teams lean.

At BrightSign, we use a range of legal technology to improve our own legal operations. We have embraced applications such as DocuSign, Box and other contract management tools. Before lockdown, I had made it a priority to digitalise and organise all contracts by storing them in the cloud. This made the transition to home working very smooth for everyone.

Legal tech has come a long way. In just two years, it has undergone a transformation in utility.

It is amazing how efficient our legal operations have become with the introduction of the right type of technology. For instance, by storing documents in the cloud team members are no longer bogged down in finding or filing legal documents. If you need to share a document, you do not even need to email it. You can just send a link and if you no longer want the

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Technology has also made collaboration more efficient. Documents in the cloud can be edited by different departments easily. People from different areas of the business, such as finance, can share their comments on a particular contract effortlessly. This collaborative approach has transformed legal work.

Going digital has also been great for the environment. Technology today has made legal documents more easily stored and accessible. By embracing electronic filing, titles and images of documents can be scanned by a simple search. This is particularly useful if you are looking for a clause or sentence in a large contract. Legal tech eliminates clutter and the need to organise physical files.

Electronic signature technology has been incredible. Documents no longer need to be printed and can be signed from your phone. Within our legal team we try not to print documents to reduce our paper usage.

Although I am a big believer in legal tech applications, GCs need to be honest with themselves that not all tech is useful. As general counsel, you have to be smart about which application you choose to use. You should never blindly rely on technology, as applications are designed by humans, and humans are prone to error. For example, we use a HR compliance tool and even though it is great we have to ensure that its functions comply with California law. The application could be designed to meet the legal requirements of another state or jurisdiction, so blindly trusting an application can be problematic.

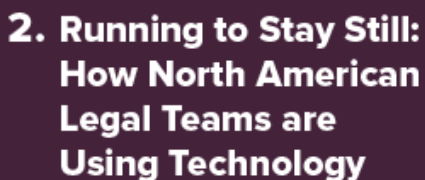
That means the human oversight piece will never vanish from the picture, but the likely trend is that legal teams will continue to become leaner. It is a major cost saving benefit for companies to auto-mate labour intensive tasks such as filing or locating contracts. As a result, corporate lawyers will be able to spend their time focusing on more sophisticated legal work. For the future I am exploring tech applications such as Ironclad, Parley Pro and other existing contract software. The future is digital and the potential for legal tech to move business operations forward are limitless.

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