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TOP INNOVATOR

**THE IMPORTANCE OF 'OPEN INNOVATION' AT
FRAGOMEN'S KNOWLEDGE GROUP**



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Gwendolyn Robosson



The Importance of ‘Open Innovation’ at Fragomen’s Knowledge Group

The Knowledge Group at Fragomen, Del Rey, Bernsen & Loewy has received a Law Journal Innovators honor.

The below responses were provided by Gwen Robosson, partner and executive committee member at the firm, and edited lightly for style.

What are some of your proudest achievements in 2019?

Among our top achievements in 2019 was the release of our Worldwide Immigration Trends Report, which is published quarterly and provides a detailed view of current and emerging immigration trends. Our Knowledge group also supported the firm in delivering a rapid response to client requirements stemming from Brexit and other global events. In addition, our Knowledge group had a strong collaboration in 2019 with our data analytics team to make available to clients vast data regarding global immigration actions and trends.

Innovation often refers to technology, but means more than that. What are some routes to effective innovation that might be overlooked?

One route that can be overlooked or avoided is the model of open innovation. Rather than limit the ability to innovate to what can occur within one’s own business or firm, we explore and embrace opportunities to collaborate with service providers or suppliers that touch our service and with organizations that the market, and we internally, would consider to be competitors. Open innovation can lead to a better client

experience, greater speed to market, faster and stronger access to knowledge and hopefully an attractive new service offering.

The legal industry isn’t always known for its ability to innovate. Is that reputation fair or unfair, and why?

The reputation is fair and unfair—unfair in that the legal industry has made great strides in innovating for clients. For example, alternative billing arrangements to hourly billing provide clients with greater transparency and predictability of legal spend. Also, the use of OCR technology to read contracts and other understandable content reduces the time expended on a matter. The reputation is fair in that the legal industry may have a development cycle that is not as robust as what we see within other sectors. In fairness, we are not trained as engineers or as technology consultants. These disciplines need to be part of the core innovation team.

What must the leaders of law firms and other organizations do to ensure they are being receptive to new ideas?

In my opinion, listening to the voices of the clients is critical to the ability to hear, absorb and advance new ideas. To that end, the firm established a Client Advisory Board that is comprised of a cross-section of clients from different industries. This Board provides essential guidance to the work and innovation that takes place within our Immigration Technology Innovation Lab. ■