

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT - THE BACFI MISSION

INTRODUCTION

Formed in 1965 at a time when in-house lawyers had no professional representation, the Association's aims included:-

- ¶ Representing the interests of employed barristers
- ¶ Achieving recognition of their professional standing
- ¶ Presenting their views on matters affecting their professional interests.

The scope of the Association's activity has developed over the years and has included some additional activities:-

- ¶ Maintaining high standards of competence and conduct of employed barristers
- ¶ The furtherance of legal education
- ¶ The development and reform of the law especially that relating to commerce, finance and industry.

Much has already been achieved in furthering these aims. The professional standing of barristers employed in business is widely acknowledged both within and outside the profession. Within the profession the Association is well represented on the General Council of the Bar. Outside the profession, it is clear that employed barristers are practising barristers and have professional duties and responsibilities essentially similar to those in independent practice. Against this background, a profound review was conducted by the BACFI General Committee in 1991 and 1992 of what BACFI's mission in the future should be.

THE NEW MISSION - "PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF IN-HOUSE COUNSEL"

The mission is intended to be a unifying framework for BACFI's activities. It will be not only a focus for energy but also aid decision making. It also helps provide the answers to questions such as:

- ¶ What is BACFI trying to achieve?
- ¶ Why should I join BACFI; what can it do for me?

THREE ASPECTS

The overall aim is development of the "profession of in-house counsel"; specifically employed barristers. Professional Development has three aspects;

- ¶ Career development; helping people develop in their careers.
- ¶ Business development; developing the role of in-house counsel in the business community.
- ¶ Development in the profession; developing the bridge between the employed Bar and the Bar in independent practice.

Each of these aspects expands into further distinct activities. In thinking about these areas, it can be helpful to distinguish between the aims and means.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Career development consists of 3 main areas:-

- ¶ Professional skills
- ¶ Business skills
 - Helping contribute to the objectives of the business.
 - Legal department leadership
 - Understanding the business context of legal work of in-house counsel particularly
 - Finance
 - Business strategy
- ¶ Careers; helping members develop their careers as in-house counsel

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The focus for external development is enhancing the influence and impact of in-house counsel on business and ultimately society.

- ¶ Communicating the value that good in-house counselling can provide to the business community at large.
- ¶ Helping business management to understand how to get the best out of in-house counsel and why inhouse counselling can frequently be superior to external counselling.
 - Why a business should have a top quality lawyer at Board level?
 - Who should the General Counsel/Legal Director report to?

DEVELOPMENT IN THE PROFESSION

Development of the profession of in-house counsel within the Bar and the legal profession more widely is the third and final aspect of the overall mission of Professional Development.

- ¶ Removing unnecessary professional restrictions
 - On barristers employed by accountants and others in a similar position
 - That seem likely to result in relation to rights of audience in the higher courts
 - Suffered by barristers compared to solicitors in relation to the ability to conduct litigation
- ¶ Developing the working relationship between the in-house profession and lawyers in independent practice
- ¶ Making a contribution to the development of the Bar

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