



General Counsel Report Finds Legal Leaders Facing Increased Complexity, Unpredictability, Regulatory Activity and Costs

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 18, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- FTI Consulting, Inc. (NYSE: FCN) and global legal technology company [Relativity](#) today announced findings from the seventh-annual edition of [The General Counsel Report](#). Legal leaders reported more than 20 areas as driving increases in work volume for their departments. During the past year, risk, demand and operations have become more complicated for 60% of respondents and more unpredictable for one-third.

The General Counsel Report features results from qualitative and quantitative surveys. Together, the data pools examined how organizations have responded during the past year of technological, policy, geopolitical and economic disruptions.

"General counsel are meeting the current moment with composure, resourcefulness and a keen sense of the impact they have within their organizations," said [Sophie Ross](#), Global Chief Executive Officer of FTI Technology. "According to this year's study, legal department leaders have been steadfast in balancing the increasing demands of risk mitigation against pressure to enable innovation, even as they experience a higher volume of work across more than 20 unique categories. Importantly, as general counsel become more sophisticated in using technology to enable efficiencies, they remain focused on the value of trusted relationships and outside expertise to help them navigate unpredictability and new challenges."

Key findings covered in part one of *The General Counsel Report* include:

- 87% said the continually increasing rate of risk and demand is accelerating within their organization.
- Leaders' confidence in their readiness for handling top risks improved over the previous year, and 77% said they are being proactive about information governance across technology and the business.
- 39% of respondents cited use of artificial intelligence and generative AI as part of their strategy for handling increased risk and demand, a 10% increase from last year's survey.
- 97% of general counsel interviewed reported increases in work volume in one or more of the categories. The addition of new regulations and laws was the most frequently cited driver of work increases, with tariffs and contract management tied for second.
- Regulatory activity and data privacy persist as top risks, consistent with the previous year, and 30% of respondents have experienced more regulatory activity this year.
- 37% attribute their disputes and investigations work to regulatory investigations and other criminal matters; 34% noted data breaches were among the primary drivers.
- The cost of disputes and investigations has increased for 57% of respondents.
- New areas of legal work have emerged for 33%.
- CIO respondents agree that risk, demand and operations have increased in cost, complexity and unpredictability.

"Robots and regulations have topped data privacy and data protection in the minds of general counsel — at least for the moment," said [David Horrigan](#), Discovery Counsel and Legal Education Director at Relativity. "Compared to the immediate post-GDPR days, regulation and AI have taken center stage. In fact, 87% of chief legal officers reported that their departments used generative AI for legal functions over the past year, and generative AI was not even one of the top legal risk concerns."

Ari Kaplan, Principal of Ari Kaplan Advisors, added, "An interesting aspect of this year's study was the nuance in how general counsel view AI in the context of risk. While generative AI wasn't ranked as a top five risk by most respondents, 70% did discuss concerns anecdotally during interviews. This finding provides insight into how pervasive AI has become across every aspect of the legal department and the way legal leaders approach it: they're scrutinizing it but also view it as an opportunity for improving their work."

The General Counsel Report is based on one-on-one interviews between Ari Kaplan Advisors and chief legal officers at large corporations around the world, as well as a separate quantitative survey of more than 200 general counsel in a dozen countries. For the first time, this year's findings include insights from c-level technical leaders, including chief information officers and heads of transformation within large organizations, providing commentary on the dynamics between legal department leaders and their cross-department counterparts. Part one of *The General Counsel Report* is available for download [here](#). Part two will be released in March.

Demographics and Methodology

In September 2025, Ari Kaplan conducted personal interviews with 30 leaders serving as general counsel or chief legal officers of their organizations. Sixty-three percent have a role with global responsibilities and 59% work in organizations with more than \$500 million in annual revenue. He also interviewed technology and digital transformation leaders at global organizations for anecdotal insights into how their responsibilities and views overlap with the general counsel. Separately, in the summer of 2025, Censuswide conducted a quantitative survey of 224 general counsel and chief legal officers at organizations with more than \$100 million in annual revenue and more than 1,000 employees in South America, North America, Europe and Asia Pacific.

About FTI Consulting

FTI Consulting, Inc. is a leading global expert firm for organizations facing crisis and transformation, with more than 8,100 employees located in 32 countries and territories as of September 30, 2025. In certain jurisdictions, FTI Consulting's services are provided through distinct legal entities that are

separately capitalized and independently managed. The Company generated \$3.70 billion in revenues during fiscal year 2024. More information can be found at www.fticonsulting.com.

About Relativity

[Relativity](#) is a leading legal data intelligence company that builds technology to help users organize data, discover the truth, and act on it. Its extensible, AI-powered cloud platform, [RelativityOne](#), transforms complex data into actionable insights at massive scale for litigation, investigations, regulatory inquiries, data breach responses, and other legal use cases. The world's largest law firms and corporations, government agencies, and a robust network of channel partners rely on Relativity's legal AI software to securely surface and manage the most relevant and impactful information in their matters. The company also expands access to technology by providing its platform at no cost to academic institutions through its [Relativity Academic](#) program and to organizations supporting pro bono legal work through its [Justice for Change](#) initiative.

FTI Consulting, Inc.

555 12th Street NW
Washington, DC 20004
+1.202.312.9100

Investor Contact:

Mollie Hawkes
FTI Consulting
+1.617.747.1791
mollie.hawkes@fticonsulting.com

Media Contacts:

Ashley Allman
FTI Consulting
+1.206.369.5209
ashley.allman@fticonsulting.com

Mia McGee
Relativity
+1.773.519.6529
mia.mcgee@relativity.com



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