IN-HOUSE COUNSEL COMMITTEE
REPORT PREPARED FOR THE JUNE 2, 2026 COUNCIL MEETING
Gerard Mantese

1. Next Scheduled Meeting of the Committee.

Next meeting of the Committee: July, 2026 (date still being scheduled)

2. Council Approval.

None at this time.

3. Membership.

See paragraph 5.

4. Accomplishments Toward Committee Objectives.

See paragraph 5.

5. Meetings and Programs.

I was appointed Chair of the In-House Counsel Committee in December of 2025, tasked with the responsibility of expanding, energizing, and elevating the Committee's visibility and membership.

I believe I accomplished these goals over the last five months.

First, I contacted numerous in-house counsel to generate interest in the Committee and I quickly grew the Committee to over 50 members. I have been in contact with the membership on a regular basis, to discuss goals and projects.

Second, I designed a Seminar focused on topics that would specifically appeal to in-house counsel. I conducted considerable research on the legal issues that in-house counsel were grappling with on a daily basis, and decided upon these topics:

Protecting Trade Secrets.
Drafting and litigating non-compete agreements.
Drafting documents relating to succession planning, and litigating owner disputes.
Data Privacy.
Employment Law Issues.
Artificial Intelligence.
Internal Investigations.

Litigating in the Business Courts.

After deciding on these topics, I enlisted speakers for each of these topics. I also asked that the Commercial Litigation Committee, LLC & Partnerships Committee, and Business Courts Committee co-sponsor and help publicize the event.

This Seminar – "Hot Topics in Business Law" -- took place on May 7, 2026 from 3:30 – 7:30 PM at the Troy, Marriott. The program was very well-attended (about 165 registered) and was well-received, with a significant amount of positive feedback. This was the specific content:

In-House Counsel Panel Discussion: Topics covered regulatory compliance, risk management, tariffs, retaining outside counsel, and health and wellness. Ian Williamson moderated a panel of in-house counsel consisting of: Jason Brainer, Alisha Cieslak, Gloria Hage, David Jaffe, Jacquelynn Kittel, Deanna Kossaras, and Thomas Shaevsky.

Trade Secrets, Non-Compete Agreements, Data Privacy, Drafting Corporate Governance and Succession Planning Documents, and related litigation: I presented on these issues.

Artificial Intelligence, Data Security, and Recent AI Case Law: James Sherer, of Baker Hostetler, presented.

Litigating in Michigan Business Courts: A panel discussion and dialogue among in-house counsel and business court judges, including Judges David Allen, Judge Matthew Antkoviak, Judge Curt Benson, Judge Annette Berry (unable to attend but submitted written comments), Judge Chris Christenson, Judge Victoria Valentine, Judge Jon Van Allsburg, Judge Kathyrn Viviano, Judge Michael Warren, and Judge Chris Yates. The judges served on a panel with in-house counsel Jessica Fleetham, Brendan Frey, Brett Miller, and Victoria Policicchio. The panel was moderated by Doug Toering.

Employment Law Update: This included the most recent case law on the at-will doctrine and employment discrimination, drafting strategies, and internal and people management. Aaron Burrell, of Dickinson Wright, presented.

Internal Investigations: Former Assistant US Attorneys Tom Cranmer, of Miller Canfield, and Andrew Goetz, of Miller Johnson, presented.

The third significant action I tackled as the new Chair was to act as editor for the upcoming issue of the Business Law Journal. Here, I solicited articles from in-house counsel, to appear in both the Spring and Summer issues of the Business Law Journal, with the In-House Counsel Committee being the editor of the

Summer issue. (I secured two articles for the Spring issue and four for the Summer issue.)

All of this is to say, the In-House Counsel Committee is doing well and brimming with an energetic and motivated membership. It has been a pleasure to lead us forward.

6. Publications.

See Paragraph 5.

7. Methods of Monitoring Legislative/Judicial/Administrative Developments and Recommended Action

None at the present.

8. Miscellaneous.

Gerard V. Mantese, Committee Chair
Mantese Honigman, PC
1361 E. Big Beaver
Troy, MI 48083
(248) 457-9200

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