

“Yes, And” to Pot, Trump and 2017

You are uniquely positioned to look beyond the cringe-worthy election and think about potential changes at every federal agency. Your role is incredibly valuable in 2017.

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So, did I draw you in with that headline? Good. But you won't be reading about my thoughts on legalized marijuana or the election. I'm not that stupid.



This headline actually refers to the recently concluded [In-house Innovates Superconference](https://www.eiseverywhere.com/ehome/156979) (https://www.eiseverywhere.com/ehome/156979).

My takeaway in a nutshell is that 2017 looks like a year of fabulous opportunity for inside counsel. And yes, pot and Trump are among the many reasons why I draw this conclusion.

The conference keynote address was delivered by [Michele DeStefano](http://law.miami.edu/faculty/michele-destefano) (http://law.miami.edu/faculty/michele-destefano), an expert on innovation in law and a proponent of "yes, and" thinking. "Yes, and" is the foundational principle in improvisational theater. It is essentially the right mindset for creative problem solving, collaboration, and teamwork.

Professor DeStefano interviews hundreds of inside counsel as part of her work, and she has reached the conclusion that General Counsel and their teams will be the agents of change within the legal profession.

At the very least, you will vote with your purse strings on which new service models, technologies and ideas are winners in the legal marketplace. You have the right incentives to keep an open mind on how law is practiced. So, in-house is the most dynamic place to be if you are an attorney.

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And what are some of the challenges that will make life in-house even more interesting in 2017? You know I have to tie this back to the headline. Mark Frissora (CEO) and Timothy Donovan (general counsel) of Caesars Entertainment gave us a great "fireside chat" during which the legalization of marijuana in Nevada got a lot of serious attention. It's a potential nightmare scenario for employers in the gaming industry.

But that's also what makes it even more fun and valuable to be an in-house attorney. There are unique and interesting problems to be solved. Caesars now employs 90 people in its money laundering compliance group, up from zero two years ago.

With respect to our president-elect: No matter your political view, one thing seems certain. Specifically, nothing about the 2017 legislative season will be certain. Many in-house counsel are already in overdrive, preparing their companies for opportunities and problems that might come along after the new Administration starts governing.

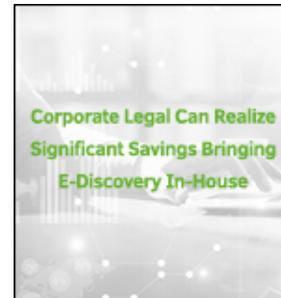
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