

Study Reveals Why Boards and General Counsel Agree on Outcomes—but Fall Short in Execution

BarkerGilmore Releases New Research on the GC-Board Alignment Gap

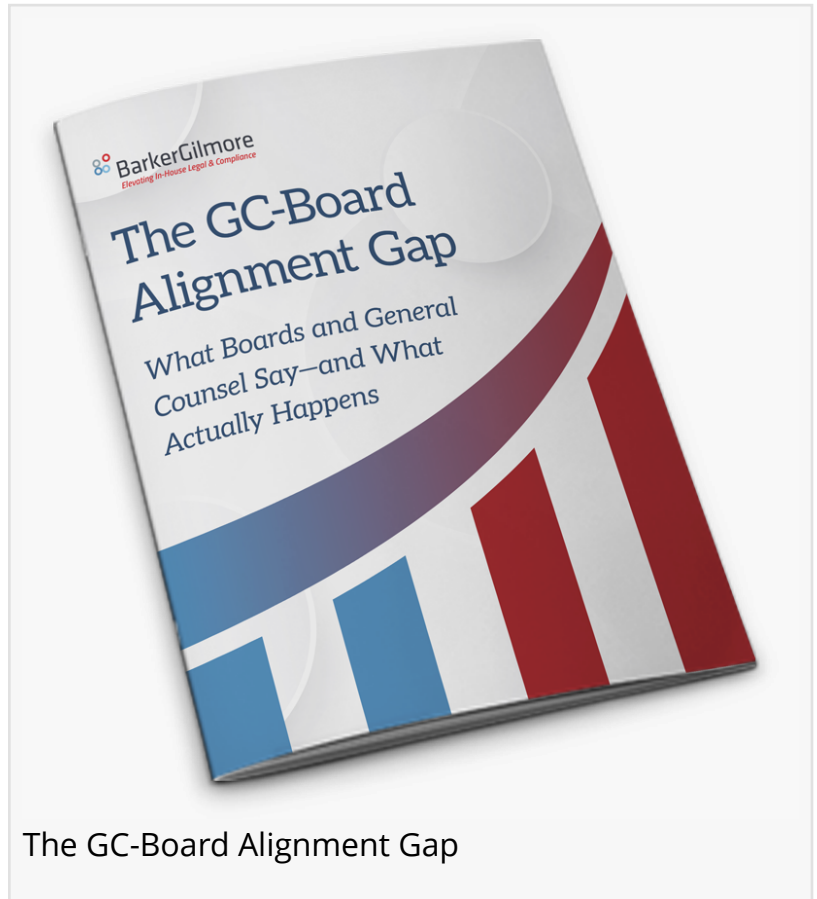
PITTSFORD, NY, UNITED STATES, February 4, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [BarkerGilmore](#), the leading executive search and advisory firm dedicated exclusively to in-house legal and compliance leadership, announced the release of a new research report examining alignment between boards of directors and General Counsel.

[The GC-Board Alignment Gap: What Boards and General Counsel Say—and What Actually Happens](#), the report is based on original survey data from 157 sitting General Counsel and 34 board members across a wide range of industries, company sizes, and ownership structures. The research

explores where expectations align, where execution breaks down, and which governance practices most effectively strengthen strategic partnership at the highest levels of the enterprise.

The findings point to a clear conclusion: boards and General Counsel are philosophically aligned on the modern GC role as a strategic, enterprise-level leader. Misalignment emerges not from disagreement, but from governance operating norms that have not evolved at the same pace as role expectations.

Across the data, boards overwhelmingly agree that General Counsel input should shape enterprise strategy at formation, influence material decisions, and inform high-impact risks before execution. General Counsel echo those expectations. However, interaction cadence, access models, and time allocation often constrain consistent strategic engagement.



The GC-Board Alignment Gap

“One of the most striking findings is how little disagreement exists between boards and General Counsel,” said John Gilmore, Managing Partner at BarkerGilmore. “Both groups want earlier engagement, clearer priorities, and stronger alignment. The gap lies in interaction design, how governance actually functions day to day, rather than intent or capability.”

The research also highlights a visibility gap around strategic legal value. While General Counsel report significant involvement in upstream strategy and enterprise risk, boards tend to recognize value most clearly in governance, litigation, and transactions—areas where outcomes are more visible within formal board processes. The result is under-recognition of strategic contribution rather than underperformance.

Among the most impactful findings:

- One-on-one engagement with committee chairs ranks as the most effective alignment practice for both boards and General Counsel.
- Pre-meeting discussions and clear post-meeting follow-through outperform formal structures such as role charters or standardized reporting alone.
- General Counsel time remains heavily weighted toward operational and execution-driven work, despite board preference for greater focus on strategy and enterprise risk.
- Feedback exists, but often lacks the specificity and clarity required to reinforce expectations for the modern GC role.

BarkerGilmore developed the study as part of a commitment to advancing governance effectiveness and legal leadership through data-driven insight, executive advisory services, and long-term relationship building. The firm’s senior advisors are former Fortune 500 General Counsel and Chief Compliance Officers, bringing direct governance experience to advisory engagements with sitting legal and compliance leadership.

The full report is available for download at <https://barkergilmore.com/research-report/the-gc-board-alignment-gap/>

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