

Axiom Subsidiary Taps Operations VP With Big 4 Background

Heather Jacobson said she was attracted to Axiom Advice & Counsel because it spoke to the roots of her clients' issues with the traditional law firm model while she occupied previous roles, citing limited access to partners and the ever-escalating billable hour.

September 26, 2023
Justin Henry, Reporter

What You Need to Know

- Heather Jacobson, former senior manager at Deloitte and practice lead at UnitedLex, joined Axiom Advice & Counsel as operations VP on Sept. 5.
- Axiom Advice & Counsel launched in January as a subsidiary of legal staffing solutions provider Axiom, taking advantage of liberalized rules in Arizona.
- Jacobson said she was attracted to Axiom Advice & Counsel because it spoke to her past clients' issues with the traditional law firm model.

Axiom Advice & Counsel, the subsidiary of the global provider of on-demand legal talent that operates in Arizona's liberalized marketplace for legal services, announced the hire of a new vice president of operations with a background in legal operations management at a Big Four accounting firm.

Heather Jacobson, who most recently served as senior manager of law department consulting at Deloitte, has been tasked with overseeing "strategic operations" at Axiom Advice & Counsel (AA&C), with a focus on "enhancing efficiency and leveraging technology to deliver the best possible client experience," according to Axiom's announcement Tuesday morning.

Prior to her time at Deloitte, Jacobson served as practice lead for spend optimization and law department consulting at alternative legal service provider UnitedLex.

Given her background in operational management, Jacobson's goal at AA&C can be summarized in one word: efficiency.

"My objective is to make every interaction with AA&C as efficient and client-centric as possible, implement and continuously enhance technological solutions that align with our commitment to efficiency ... ensuring that we remain at the forefront of innovative legal practices," Jacobson said in an email statement.

Jacobson's appointment comes after a period of growth for AA&C since it launched in January under Arizona

rules that allow lawyers to share profits with nonlawyer professionals, said Catherine Kemnitz, chief strategy and development officer of parent company Axiom and managing director of AA&C.

A provider of legal talent to companies with in-house legal departments, Axiom was previously unable to work with clients that don't have an in-house legal department, according to Kemnitz. But the [launch of AA&C](#) under the new Arizona rules opens up "a new kind of client base that AA&C can serve," by acting as their outside GC, Kemnitz said.

"Given AA&C's growth, we reached the point where we could more clearly identify the skill set most valuable to the AA&C partners," Kemnitz said. "We're the firm that our clients would create if they were to design a model from scratch, and Heather's appointment is the natural evolution of the growth of this style of firm. Legal operations leaders are uniquely focused on enhancing the client experience, which is one of our highest priorities."

Axiom lawyers, who are engaged as independent contractors by AA&C, work under AA&C's oversight, according to AA&C's website.

Jacobson said she was attracted to AA&C because it spoke to the roots of her clients' issues with the traditional law firm model while she occupied previous roles, citing limited access to partners and the ever-escalating billable hour.

"Because our lawyer partners have unique access to Axiom's ecosystem of over 14,000 legal professionals, clients get the intimacy of a small firm and the reach of a big firm," Jacobson said.

Jacobson said her legal industry background encompasses the intersection of "new legal models," tech implementation and financial management, all of which align with AA&C's mission to drive efficiencies in legal operations.

At Deloitte, Jacobson said she honed skills in developing innovative solutions for legal departments.

"This experience equipped me with a deep understanding of the complex challenges that law firms and legal departments face in today's rapidly evolving legal landscape," Jacobson said.

While at UnitedLex, Jacobson said she "further fortified my expertise in optimizing legal spend and delivering cost-effective legal services."

"UnitedLex is renowned for its innovative approach to legal solutions, and I played an integral role in devising strategies that allowed organizations to access high-quality legal support at lower price points," she said. "This experience not only enhanced my understanding of cost containment but also exposed me to cutting-edge technologies and tools that streamline legal operations."