

Contents

Foreword	xi
By Carlos M. Brown, president, Dominion Energy Services	
Acknowledgments	xv
About the authors	xvii
Introduction	xix
Chapter 1: What is the Exponential Age and why should legal professionals care about it?	1
The pace of change is unprecedented	3
Faster, faster – AI scaling	4
AI scaling in law	5
Interconnected systems amplify ripple effects	6
Shifting power dynamics	6
Societal and ethical uncertainty	7
Shorter feedback loops, higher stakes	8
The Exponential Age Mindset Attributes in practice	9
The ingredients – the Exponential Age Mindset Attributes	10
The tools to mix the cake	15
The Six Dimensions of Business Risk	16
The Six Dimensions of Business Opportunity	16
The Four Zones of Curiosity	18
The Can If Problem Solving Framework	19
An adventure for everyone	19
Chapter 2: Setting the stage – exponential change and human identity	21
The neuroscience of the Exponential Age	21
From the Industrial Revolution to the Age of AI	22
The neuroscience of AI use	23

Human value at risk – the legal profession as a case study	24
The identity of the lawyer	25
The lawyer as survival prediction machine	26
Training for the Exponential Age	28
Joy and creativity are necessary	28
Redefining value	29
Part One: The Mindset Attributes	31
Chapter 3: Zoom Master – taking strategic oversight and focusing on detail	31
The need for Zoom Mastery in the Exponential Age	32
Zoom Master combats cognitive bias	33
Lawyers struggle with the Zoom	34
What's so hard about the Zoom?	34
Cultivating your Zoom Master	34
Starting with why	36
Accessing your strategic mind	36
Why we are doing what we do	37
Asking the right questions	38
Lawyers and questions	39
Unlocking your Zoom Master with the Four Zones of Curiosity	39
Chapter 4: Joyful Tightrope – being comfortable with ambiguity and not knowing all the answers	45
Understand your own relationship to uncertainty	45
Embracing uncertainty – acknowledging the elephant	
in the room	47
Finding the joy in your Joyful Tightrope	48
Cognitive flexibility and adaptability	50
Why cognitive flexibility matters	51
How to develop cognitive flexibility	51
Decision-making under stress	53
How to improve decision-making under stress	54
Empathy and psychological safety	55
How to foster empathy and safety	57
Continuous learning and growth mindset	59
How to cultivate continuous learning	60

The Joyful Tightrope summary	62
What this means for you – as a lawyer and a leader	63
Joyful Tightrope mindset and behaviors	63
Chapter 5: Chaos Converter – understanding the opportunity in chaos and crisis	65
Opportunity in chaos #1: Development and growth	65
Opportunity in chaos #2: Innovation and creativity	65
Opportunity in chaos #3: Action and reflection	66
Reframing challenge and opportunity	66
A beautiful constraint	67
Constraint and creativity	68
The power of Chaos Converter	69
Cognitive reframing or shifting perspective	69
Post-traumatic growth theory	70
Neuroplasticity and learning from uncertainty	71
Complexity and chaos theory	72
Techniques to convert chaos	74
Chaos or opportunity? Embrace the moment	76
Navigating crisis and seeing the bigger picture	77
Toolkit for lawyers to convert chaos	78
Chapter 6: Agile Juggler – balancing consistency and ability	83
The Exponential Age requires both stability and speed	83
Ambidexterity – exploit vs explore	85
The neuroscience of adaptive thinking	86
Leaders – VUCA and strategic responsiveness	87
Practical implications for leaders	88
The Agile Juggler mindset in in-house legal teams	89
What this looks like in practice	91
Organizational ambidexterity in legal	93
Agile legal operating models	93
Cognitive readiness in legal leadership	94
Legal Agile Juggling tactics	95
Why the Agile Juggler Attribute matters	95
Chapter 7: Supreme Storyteller – the value of a good story	97
Why storytelling matters in the Exponential Age	98
Why do leaders need storytelling?	99

Not fluffy or frivolous	100
Managing vs leading	101
Storytelling and the general counsel	102
How Supreme Storytelling enhances business relationships	103
What do we mean when we talk about storytelling?	104
How to tell a good story	106
Who is your audience?	106
The purpose – why am I telling you this?	108
The rule of three	109
Alliteration	110
Metaphor	110
More than facts	111
Reinforce it with rhetoric	111
Brutus versus Mark Anthony	112
Storytelling and influencing	113
Change management – influencing and storytelling	113
Examples of storytelling in a GC's role	114
Key takeaways for GCs:	115
Chapter 8: Duality Master – looking outside of your area of expertise	117
Divergent thinking	118
Reframing the problem to release creativity	119
How does Duality Master apply to lawyers?	120
Going wide	120
Can If – harnessing the power of Duality Master	121
How legal departments can use Duality Master	122
The Duality Master in practice	123
Doing things differently	124
Chapter 9: Champion Chameleon – the empathic part of communication and influence	125
Champion Chameleon in action	125
Why we need the Champion Chameleon skill	
in the Exponential Age	126
Tailoring your communication to your audience	127
“Don’t lawyer me an answer”	127
Champion Chameleon equals champion influencer	128
The hostage negotiation perspective	129

SAFE communication	131
Toolkit: Techniques for supercharging your Champion Chameleon	132
Practical ways to boost your Champion Chameleon	135
Implementing the training program	139
Chapter 10: Bias Jiu Jitsu – different ways of understanding	141
The Gentle Art	141
Understanding our own biases	142
Bias is the enemy of adaptability	142
Innovation requires cognitive diversity – bias blocks it	144
Exponential change triggers threat responses – bias intensifies under stress	145
AI and data reliance can amplify bias	145
Empathy and inclusion are strategic imperatives	146
Exponential change demands a learning mindset – bias fights it	148
Bias Jiu Jitsu tools	150
Chapter 11: Supreme Synthesizer – getting to the point	153
Synthesization in the Exponential Age	153
Cognitive overload – too much information	153
Accelerated decision cycles	155
Interdisciplinary collaboration	155
Building and sustaining trust	156
Adding AI to the mix	156
Strategic sensemaking	156
The conciseness conundrum for lawyers	157
The psychology of lawyers	157
Tell me more, tell me more	159
Why clarity and conciseness are essential for in-house lawyers in times of ambiguity	159
The distinct role of in-house lawyers	161
Clarity as a strategic asset	161
Summary: Core arguments	162

Part Two: Exponential Age Tools	165
Chapter 12: The Six Dimensions of Business Risk and The Six Dimensions of Business Opportunity	165
Integrating risk and opportunity thinking	165
The Six Dimensions of Business Risk	165
The Six Dimensions of Opportunity	167
The interconnectedness of risk and opportunity	168
Risk, opportunity, and resilience in the Exponential Age	169
The new risks	170
The Six Dimensions of Business Opportunity	171
The wheels	172
Linear versus associative thinking	173
How the six dimensions of business risk and opportunity work together in practice for legal teams	174
The new breed of general counsel – opportunity spotters	183
Risk and opportunity toolkit for legal leaders and legal teams	185
Mindset shift: From “What could go wrong?” to “What could we make possible?”	185
Practical strategies to integrate risk and opportunity thinking	186
Chapter 13: The Four Zones of Curiosity	189
Why the Four Zones of Curiosity are important	
in the Exponential Age	190
Life in the different zones	192
An example of the Zones in practice	194
The Four Zones of Curiosity in action	195
Using the Four Zones of Curiosity in legal	
department training	196
Paralegal process example	197
Four Zones of Curiosity and your career	197
Aligning the Four Zones of Curiosity with the	
Exponential Age Mindset Attributes	201
Asking the right strategic questions	202
The coaching opportunity with your CEO	203
Chapter 14: The Can If Framework – paths to opportunity	205
The department of no	205
The influence piece	206

A unique problem solver	207
Saying and thinking	208
Why Can If is so powerful	208
Applying Can If	209
How we apply it	210
The possible versus the impossible	210
Taking a diversion	211
How it works in practice with legal teams	212
Disrupting the triggers	216
The impact of Can If	217
Lawyers do need to use their “no” words	217
Part Three: Putting it into practice	219
Chapter 15: Lift Off – propelling legal leadership into the Exponential Age	219
Program philosophy – from legal or operations expert to enterprise leader	220
Kick-off experience – ignition in New York City	221
How this worked for legal operations	223
Coaching insights	224
Capstone presentations – applying strategic vision	225
Core competencies developed	225
Becoming sherpas for legal transformation	227
Chapter 16: Upskilling paraprofessionals for the Exponential Age – the Paraprofessional Leadership Development Academy (PLDA)	229
Program overview and impact	229
The genesis of the PLDA	231
Creating the Paraprofessional Leadership Development Academy	232
The Six Criteria for Success	234
The paraprofessional program	234
The bigger picture	237
The sessions	238
The presentations	242
The learning journey – from discomfort to mastery	243

Chapter 17: Beyond law – training leaders for the Exponential Age	245
Outcomes and impact	245
Program 1: Developing future-ready legal leaders	246
Program structure and progression	247
Impact and outcomes from the Next Generation	
Leadership Program	250
Changing mindset and impact – participant feedback	251
Program 2: Developing an entrepreneurial mindset	253
Core frameworks and competencies	254
The genesis of the Entrepreneurial Mindset and the Five Lenses	255
The five lenses – resources, people, capability, technology, and transformation	256
Bringing it all together	260
Impact on participants	260
Conclusion	261
Chapter 18: Leading humanly in the Exponential Age	263
From expertise to influence	263
Discomfort as the doorway to growth	263
Reframing risk and redefining value	264
The human advantage	264
From tools to transformation	265
A call to lead differently	265
The future is human	265
About Globe Law and Business	267

Foreword

By Carlos M. Brown

When I first encountered the phrase *Exponential Age*, I paused. It perfectly captures what so many of us in business are experiencing – a moment of breathtaking transformation where the pace of change is constant, technology is reshaping every dimension of business, and leadership itself is being redefined. Yet amid this acceleration, what remains most vital is not the technology, but our humanity.

That belief is why this book resonated so deeply with me. *The Exponential Age* is not simply a guide to innovation; it is a reminder that people – our capacity to connect, learn, and lead with purpose – are at the center of sustainable transformation. Catherine McGregor and Lloyd M. Johnson have built a framework that helps businesses and their lawyers and legal professionals strengthen the very qualities that make us distinctively human – curiosity, creativity, empathy, and courage. It echoes my own thinking: how do we provide a blueprint for leaders to lead authentically and effectively in a time of unprecedented change?

Leadership as a collective mindset

Across my career, leading legal and compliance teams and latterly a much broader range of business teams, one truth has remained constant – meaningful change begins with mindset. I've talked about that as "dreaming in color" and *The Exponential Age Mindset Attributes* that Catherine and Lloyd describe reflect this notion. This is the leadership shift the legal profession needs – from control to collaboration, from narrow legal analysis to broad enterprise perspective.

Concepts like *Zoom Master*, *Joyful Tightrope*, and *Agile Juggler* may sound poetic, but they capture the practical reality of what it means to lead today. I see this in my teams – when lawyers begin to think beyond legal risk and engage with business, community, and societal impact, everything changes. We move from asking, "Can we do this?" to "How can we make this work

responsibly, inclusively, and with integrity?" We become not only better lawyers, but more influential business leaders and trusted partners.

Reclaiming the human advantage

One of the most powerful insights in this work is that our greatest competitive advantage in an age of AI is not speed or scale – it is humanity. The lawyers who will thrive are those who combine analytical rigor with empathy, narrative, and connection.

I share this conviction that deep listening – to colleagues, clients, and communities – builds the foundation of trust and influence. The frameworks in this book give structure to that belief. They remind us that compassion and creativity are not “soft skills” but essential capabilities that power resilience and innovation.

The integration of neuroscience is especially resonant. It validates what I have seen as a leader – joy and curiosity are not luxuries, they are catalysts. They create the mental agility needed to lead with clarity and courage amid uncertainty.

From risk managers to strategic enablers

This book addresses one of the central challenges facing modern in-house counsel – the evolution from gatekeeper to growth partner. The *Six Dimensions of Business Risk and Opportunity*, *Four Zones of Curiosity*, and *Can If* frameworks equip legal teams to reframe how they engage with their organizations.

These tools encourage lawyers to translate complexity into clarity, and fear into forward motion. They help us guide our teams to anticipate where the business – and the world – is heading, and to shape that future with integrity and imagination.

At Dominion Energy, I have seen that the most effective leaders are those that unite technical excellence with a shared sense of purpose and service. We need subject matter expertise aligned with mindsets that allow us to think differently and keep learning. This book builds that capacity from the inside out.

The work of being human

Transformation is not merely procedural – it is deeply personal. True leadership is the work of being human – holding our values steady while stretching into new frontiers.

The Exponential Age offers tools and language for that journey. It challenges us to lead with presence rather than certainty, to stand with confidence amid ambiguity, and to help others find their footing there too.

In my work leading the services division at Dominion Energy, I have witnessed how these ideas can energize teams – unlocking not only performance but also optimism, creativity, and belonging. In a time when automation and algorithmic thinking dominate headlines, the courage to lead with heart is more essential than ever.

A call to courageous, human-centered leadership

This book is a call to action for our profession. It challenges every general counsel, legal leader, and aspiring professional to redefine success – not by output alone, but by impact, inclusion, and humanity.

We cannot slow the pace of the Exponential Age, but we can choose how we meet it. If we lead with empathy, curiosity, and courage, we will not only keep pace with change – we will help shape a more just, creative, and connected future.

Carlos M. Brown

President, Dominion Energy Services, executive vice president,
chief administrative and projects officer and corporate secretary,
Dominion Energy, Inc.

Acknowledgments

This book is the result of many conversations, collaborations, and moments of insight along the way. While I cannot name everyone who has influenced this work, I want to acknowledge those whose contributions were fundamental to shaping the thinking behind it.

My co-author and creative partner, Lloyd M. Johnson, has been on this journey with me from the beginning. Bringing these ideas to life together – through countless coaching engagements, workshops, and experiments – has been both intellectually stretching and deeply rewarding. Our shared curiosity and commitment to impact sit at the heart of this book.

My husband, Andrew, unknowingly set this entire project in motion. After reviewing the Exponential Age Mindset Attributes, he remarked – entirely unprompted – that these ideas were strong and worth writing about. Sometimes the clearest signals come from those closest to us. I must also mention my son Matthew and the dog, Peter – both are less interested in what this book is about but provide valuable emotional support!

Carlos Brown at Dominion Energy continues to be a powerful source of inspiration. His innovative mindset and constant encouragement to “dream in color” have influenced not just this work, but how I think about possibility more broadly.

Tracey Sinclair is an exceptional copy editor and a treasured friend. Her ability to help me find clarity, coherence, and my own voice – especially when navigating complex ideas – has been invaluable.

Dominique Ashby of Neuro at Work played a critical role in sharpening my thinking on the connection between neuroscience and the Exponential Age Mindset Attributes. Beyond her intellectual contributions, Dominique has been an unwavering supporter and champion of this work.

Larry Stublings generously shared his deep expertise in the craft of storytelling. Having taught Larry many years ago, it was a particular privilege to learn from him in return.

Kenny Robertson, head of innovation and technology, legal and regulatory affairs at NatWest Group, has been an invaluable sounding board on how

innovation and creativity can genuinely take root within the legal profession. He exemplifies what it means to walk the walk, not just talk the talk.

Similarly, Kevin Van Tonder, director of consulting at Consilio, has been a consistent source of insight and inspiration in both the development and application of these ideas.

My fellow University of Huddersfield alum, Chris Fowler, chief operating officer legal, governance and corporate affairs, Rio Tinto has also been a steady source of encouragement and support.

Lesley Wan, founder of the Eagle Club, has always had my back. Her belief in this work – and her partnership in developing programs and training that further shaped my thinking – has meant more than she knows.

Somewhat fittingly, the concept of Bias Jiu Jitsu emerged just as I began my own Jiu Jitsu journey. Becoming a beginner again – embracing humility, discipline, and continuous learning – proved to be the perfect mindset while writing about technological change in a world where we are all learning in real time. My thanks to Sensei Anthony Billings and my fellow students at Tiger Schulmann's Martial Arts in Princeton, who remind me of the power of progress over perfection.

Above all, my deepest thanks go to the participants and clients in our coaching and training programs. They brought these ideas to life, stress-tested them in real-world contexts, and revealed possibilities for application far beyond what Lloyd and I initially imagined.

Finally, this book is dedicated to the memory of my dear friend Lawson Crawford, who left us far too soon. His support, curiosity, and thoughtful conversations consistently helped expand my thinking while keeping me grounded. He is deeply missed.

Dr Catherine McGregor

February 2026

About the authors

Catherine McGregor is an author, executive coach, and management consultant. She has worked for a range of legal publications and now coaches and consults for legal departments and law firms around the world. She is the author of the successful book focused on the business of law for legal departments, *Business Thinking in Practice for In-House Counsel: Taking Your Seat at The Table* (Globe Law & Business 2020). The book focuses on the application of human-centred business skills by legal departments and has received numerous accolades.

Catherine spends most of her time working with executive leadership and chief legal executives, where she leads professional and executive development and executive coaching efforts, working with many Global 100 and Fortune 500 legal departments. Much of her work in talent development is now focused on developing the skills that professionals will need to master opportunities in the Exponential Age in blending human work with AI and other technologies. Together with her colleague, Lloyd M Johnson Jr, she has developed the nine Exponential Age mindset attributes and uses these as the basis for her leadership development and training programs.

After running 60+ leadership workshops over the past six years, executive coach **Lloyd M. Johnson** has developed a 360-degree view on the specific leadership development challenges faced by top legal department leaders – and those who would aspire to such positions. These insights – as well as others built over a career publishing magazines and running leadership conferences for general counsel and other law department leaders – inform Lloyd's work with clients as he provides them with integrated talent development, leadership development, and succession strategies through both group and individual coaching. His goal: building trust and rapport that allows his clients to be more open throughout the process, giving the work they do together more impact – not only on the executives themselves, but throughout the organizations they serve.

Introduction

The meeting

Interior boardroom; daytime; a group of executives sit around a table. One of them looks uncomfortable. It is the general counsel – who is not meant to be the most anxious person in the room.

Yet here they are, seated at the executive table, listening carefully while the conversation accelerates around them. The CEO is enthusiastic. The chief technology officer is already several steps ahead, outlining how a new AI-enabled platform will transform decision-making, compress timelines, and unlock value across the business. The CFO wants to know when the benefits will show up on the balance sheet. Someone mentions a competitor who has already moved.

Then the room turns – subtly, but unmistakably – towards the general counsel, towards legal.

Can we do this?

What's the risk?

What do you think?

The general counsel takes a breath.

There is no clear precedent. Regulation is evolving. The technology is advancing faster than guidance can be issued. The data inputs are imperfect. The ethical implications are real but not yet fully mapped. The business wants speed. The board wants assurance.

This is no longer a question of legal correctness.

It is a question of judgment.

In that moment, the general counsel is not being asked for a memo or a footnote. They are being asked to help the organization decide who it wants to be in a world where technology is reshaping power, responsibility, and risk. They are being asked to balance innovation with trust, ambition with accountability, and progress with principle – without the comfort of certainty.

This moment is now becoming routine.

Across boardrooms and executive meetings, legal leaders are finding themselves in similar positions. Not because they lack expertise, but because the nature of decision-making itself has changed. The questions arriving at Legal are broader, faster, and more strategic than before. They demand synthesis, not just analysis. Perspective, not just precision.

Welcome to the Exponential Age.

The rules have changed

The legal profession is facing a quiet reckoning.

Not because the law is disappearing.

Not because lawyers are no longer needed.

But because the way value is created – and recognized – has fundamentally shifted.

Technology is no longer knocking at the door of legal departments. It is already inside, embedded in workflows, shaping decisions, accelerating timelines, and exposing gaps in how lawyers think about risk, judgment, and leadership. Artificial intelligence, data-driven systems, and automation are not future concerns. They are present realities – often adopted faster than legal teams are prepared to understand, govern, or lead them.

And yet, much of the conversation in law remains strangely misplaced.

We debate tools instead of mindsets.

We focus on efficiency instead of judgment.

We talk about risk controls while ignoring the deeper question: what is the lawyer's role when technology changes the nature of thinking itself?

The uncomfortable truth is this: technical excellence alone is no longer enough.

In the Exponential Age, the lawyers who thrive will not be those who know the most, but those who can think most effectively under conditions of speed, uncertainty, and ambiguity. The ones who can zoom out as easily as they zoom in. Who can influence without defaulting to “no”. Who can balance innovation with ethics, and pace with trust. Who can lead when the answer is not obvious – and may not even yet exist.

This is not a skills gap.

It is a mindset gap.

Embracing the tension

The Exponential Age is defined by compounding change. Progress no longer moves in straight lines – it accelerates, amplifies, and cascades. Small decisions create large ripple effects. Systems are deeply interconnected. Feedback loops are shorter. The cost of hesitation is higher.

For lawyers, this creates a collision between how they were trained and how they are now expected to operate.

Legal training prizes certainty, precedent, and precision. The Exponential Age rewards adaptability, synthesis, and strategic judgment. The law evolves slowly; technology evolves at speed. Regulation lags innovation. Ethics are tested before frameworks are in place.

In this environment, waiting for clarity is not a neutral act – it is a strategic choice, and now it is often the wrong one.

General counsel and legal leaders know this instinctively. Many feel the pressure daily – faster decisions, broader stakeholder expectations, technology-led business strategies that raise questions the law has not yet answered. Teams are being asked to move quicker, think more commercially, and engage earlier – often without additional resources or guidance on how to do so.

At the same time, lawyers are rightly wary. Over-reliance on technology introduces new risks – hallucinations, bias, opacity, and ethical blind spots. The solution is not blind adoption – but nor is it resistance. The real work lies in learning how to stand confidently in the tension between progress and caution.

That tension is not a problem to be solved.

It is a capability to be developed.

This book is written for lawyers who sense that the ground beneath them is shifting – and who want to lead, not retreat. It is for those who recognize that influence now matters as much as expertise, and that human judgment is becoming more – not less – valuable as machines grow more capable.

The Exponential Age does not need lawyers who cling to certainty. It needs lawyers who can think expansively, decide wisely, and lead humanly in the face of accelerating change.

That requires a different mindset.

The chapters that follow introduce the Exponential Age Mindset Attributes and their related tools – practical, developable ways of thinking and behaving that enable legal professionals to operate credibly and confidently in this new reality. These have been tried and tested through training

we have undertaken with a range of general counsel and their legal teams. These are not theoretical ideals. They are patterns we have seen repeatedly in legal leaders who succeed at the enterprise level.

In our work with legal departments across industries, we have seen that the most effective legal leaders share a common set of mental habits. They are comfortable toggling between detail and strategy. They can sit in ambiguity without freezing. They tell compelling stories about risk and opportunity. They adapt their communication to the room. They recognize bias – both their own and others. They synthesize complexity into clarity.

But these are not personality traits. They are developable capabilities. This book takes you through them.

This is not about becoming more technical.

It is about becoming more strategic.

More influential.

More human.

The rules have changed.

The opportunity is deciding how you will play.