Helen Respass knows from experience the importance of collaboration, particularly in a global context. During her years at Sojitz Corporation of America, where she was a deputy general manager and assistant general counsel, one early task was to write the company’s first-ever global code of conduct.

“To roll that out globally, we had to look at every country in which Sojitz did business to see what we needed to do legally,” she says. This meant 47 different countries.

“We were trying to get a handle on local employment laws in every country,” Respass says. “We had to see what we needed to do to roll out that code without violating any employee rights, and how to make it enforceable against an employee if he or she violated the code—for example, could we terminate that employee?” Sojitz wound up having to retain outside counsel to do Q&As for each country in which it did business. Respass later realized that the information from roughly half the Q&As had been pulled from Practical Law, where she now works.

At Practical Law, “I work on resources that I wish I’d had when I was in-house,” she says. “Whether a resource falls under commercial, capital markets or finance, I touch on all of those areas in my practice. And I know that if there’s a gap, someone from one of our other services can fill in that gap for me. I collaborate with others to write across practice areas.”

After graduating from Columbia Law School, Respass worked at Kelly Drye & Warren as an associate. Because she spoke Japanese, she was asked to work in the firm’s corporate Asia practice, but she was also interested in employee benefits. So while she helped Japanese corporations and their U.S. subsidiaries with commercial transactions and corporate governance matters, she also represented and advised companies on benefits and compensation issues related to corporate acquisitions and divestitures, and compliance with reporting and filing requirements under ERISA, the Internal Revenue Code, HIPAA and securities laws.

During her eight years at Sojitz, she contended with the legal complexities of a global conglomerate that traded everything “from Nike shoes to Boeing aircraft and everything in between—frozen foods, chemicals, minerals. You name it, they were trading it.” She worked in the company’s legal department for the Americas, whose reach extended from Canada down to Argentina.

“All types of matters crossed my desk, from M&A to employment to finance to compliance.” By the time she left the company, she was assistant general counsel in charge of Sojitz’ trade compliance group, which was responsible for the company’s import and export compliance. As Sojitz was the middleman in an array of global transactions, this meant dealing with a world’s worth of compliance issues.

Not every company has business as far-reaching as Sojitz. But “[a]s the world gets smaller, the rules get more complex,” Respass says. “Even if you’re a U.S.-based company, you’re probably doing some cross-border transactions—your supplier might be overseas, for instance. There are a number of ways that your business can be impacted by the laws of other jurisdictions.”

Practical Law has expanded its cross-border efforts because in today’s global market with its increasing regulatory demands, companies need to take compliance more seriously than ever before. “More countries are implementing some form of anticorruption regulations, so that’s a continuing development,” she says. Two recent hires in the U.S. (an editor who handles cross-border M&A, and another who writes on cross-border commercial transactions) have deepened Practical Law’s bench on the subject. “When I write content, I make sure to consider the cross-border aspect as well,” Respass says.

It’s not just the cross-border regulatory environment that’s in a constant state of flux these days. Compliance trends, for example, are also changing. “There’s been more emphasis on individual accountability in terms of regulatory enforcement,” she says. Many companies try to “find a balance between securing cooperation credit with the government, and wanting to protect attorney-client privilege and work product.”

Respass is also working with colleagues to develop new content addressing non-profit organizations. “We’ve got a good number of resources now to help clients build and maintain a non-profit.” Another area of growth is the buildout of the Practical Law law department management center.

Client feedback is a great source for new content ideas. “When a subscriber has a question about something we don’t directly cover, we’ll consider adding it to the content plan.” Regularly attending legal and regulatory seminars and conferences is another way that Respass keeps aware of what’s happening. “You have to get out of your shell to know how things are changing,” she says.