Today, there are lots of M&A and finance forms on the web, but at the time, the web was just starting—it was hard to do then. And at the time, the web was just starting—it was hard to do then. In many cases, I had to go out and find a form. To hit the ground running in-house, "he says. "When I was given an assignment in-house, in many cases, I had to go out and find a form. Litigation. In many cases, that's all they've done before they have house lawyers that come up from working in finance or M&A or struggling that in-house lawyers face when it comes to preparing transactions. This diversity led to his focus on issues involving supply-chain resources, a topic that he's covered for Practical Law since joining in 2011.

One of his major areas of concentration is how goods and services move throughout the supply and logistics chain, from manufacturers, to wholesalers and distributors and finally to retailers and consumers. From his experience, he knows the struggles that in-house lawyers face when it comes to preparing supply chain-related documents. "I can empathize with the in-house lawyers that come up from working in finance or M&A or litigation. In many cases, that's all they've done before they have to hit the ground running in-house," he says. "When I was given an assignment in-house, in many cases, I had to go out and find a form. And at the time, the web was just starting—it was hard to do then. Today, there are lots of M&A and finance forms on the web, but reliable supply chain documents are still hard to find. For example, distribution agreements typically are not the kind of things that dealmakers attach to their EDGAR filings."

In most situations, lawyers would prefer to review model forms or rely on previous agreements they have used in the past, rather than draft from scratch. "It would have been really useful as a practicing attorney to have had access to the standard documents that we produce at Practical Law," Hsieh says. These standard documents cover a very broad range of transactions and include exclusive distribution agreements, terms and conditions for purchase orders and sales confirmations, and service agreements, plus an entire suite of boilerplate and risk allocation clauses. "All of our forms are annotated with drafting notes that highlight best practices, based on the team's collective experience, rigorous research, and a robust peer review process," Hsieh adds.

There's also the issue of "state-ification" Contract forms vary from state to state, which Practical Law addresses. For the sale of goods, almost every state has adopted Uniform Commercial Code Article 2. But the provisions of the UCC adopted and interpretations thereof may vary from state to state. Also, the UCC doesn't cover every part of a sales transaction. For example, the UCC does not cover critical deal terms like exclusivity, which implicates federal law. Nor does the UCC govern the sale of services alone, and the common law in this area can vary from state to state. "Some states are stricter than others as to what a seller or service provider can do," Hsieh says. "The supply chain includes not just the business-to-business part of the chain but the business-to-consumer part as well. Some states have far stricter consumer protections, which is an area that the Commercial Transactions team is currently hard at work developing."

The Practical Law content production calendar is based in part on the feedback that subscribers provide, which the team uses to determine what topics to cover next, both in resource development and Practical Law complimentary legal updates. The Practical Law editorial bench has grown deeper of late, with hires of specialists in advertising and marketing, consumer law, customs and international trade, outsourcing, and product liability law. For example, there has been a heightened focus on providing trade-related information. Thus the new "Trade Tracker" gets updated anytime there is a new political or regulatory development, whether it's the U.S. pulling out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, imposing new sanctions on North Korea, or possibly renegotiating NAFTA.

"It's a great place to be curious," Hsieh says of Practical Law. "It's made me become a better lawyer by working with the team to think through these complex issues and leverage our collective expertise."