

# Briefing

**THE PEOPLE ISSUE**

NOVEMBER 2012

*Interviews*

**Law firm leaders, in their own words**

We talk to directors from Bird & Bird, DLA Piper, Berwin Leighton Paisner, Clifford Chance, Lewis Silkin, Herbert Smith Freehills, Osborne Clarke and Hogan Lovells about legal business's more challenging and competitive future

*Industry views*

**Tom Wood, Barclays' new man**

The bank's new head of professional services on the challenges ahead, and how to deal with them

**Briefing jobs:**

Senior roles in finance, HR, client services, BD and risk and compliance

**In search of  
excellence**

**Eight business services leaders that are leading their firms into the future**



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# Here's looking at you



Law firms, famously, are people businesses. That always used to refer to the fee earners – but not any more.

Business services people are the new stars of legal,

in our opinion – so for this issue we asked our community who they thought represented legal business services brilliance. I hope you enjoy reading the results.

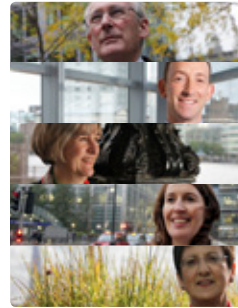
Those we've featured represent, to me, business services people at their best: they understand the challenges law firms face, they're meeting those challenges head-on, and they're more clued into how competitive the near- to mid-term future is going to be than many, if not most, law firm partners.

**Briefing** is now fully a print and digital magazine, and we'll continue to develop it so that it represents you, the law firm management leader, in the years to come. Want to get **Briefing** every month delivered to your desk? Then register online at [www.lsn.co.uk/Briefing](http://www.lsn.co.uk/Briefing), or email me at [rupertw@lsn.co.uk](mailto:rupertw@lsn.co.uk) – it's that simple.

We'll be doing **Briefing People** again next year –perhaps we'll even see your face in it. In the meantime, enjoy this issue. I think it's our best yet.

**Rupert White**, editor of **Briefing**

## **Briefing People: You recommended them, we interviewed them**



Rachel Davies interviews leaders from Bird & Bird, DLA Piper, BLP, Clifford Chance, Lewis Silkin, Herbert Smith Freehills, Osborne Clarke and Hogan Lovells about the future of law firms and their roles

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*Sponsored editorial:* **Briefing** speaks to Barclays' new head of professional services about the challenges ahead in the legal sector, and how the banks can help firms become better businesses

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Senior roles in finance, HR, client services, business development and risk on the **Briefing jobs** page

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# Briefing People



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*Briefing People*



# The strategy man

Bird & Bird's director of corporate development, Alastair Graham, on the competitive future ahead for law firms – and what they can do to succeed in it

**Alastair Graham, Bird & Bird’s director of corporate development, is responsible for implementing the firm’s strategic goals. He must be doing something right – over his 22 years there Bird & Bird has grown from a single office in the UK with 30 lawyers to 1,000 lawyers in 23 offices in 16 countries.**

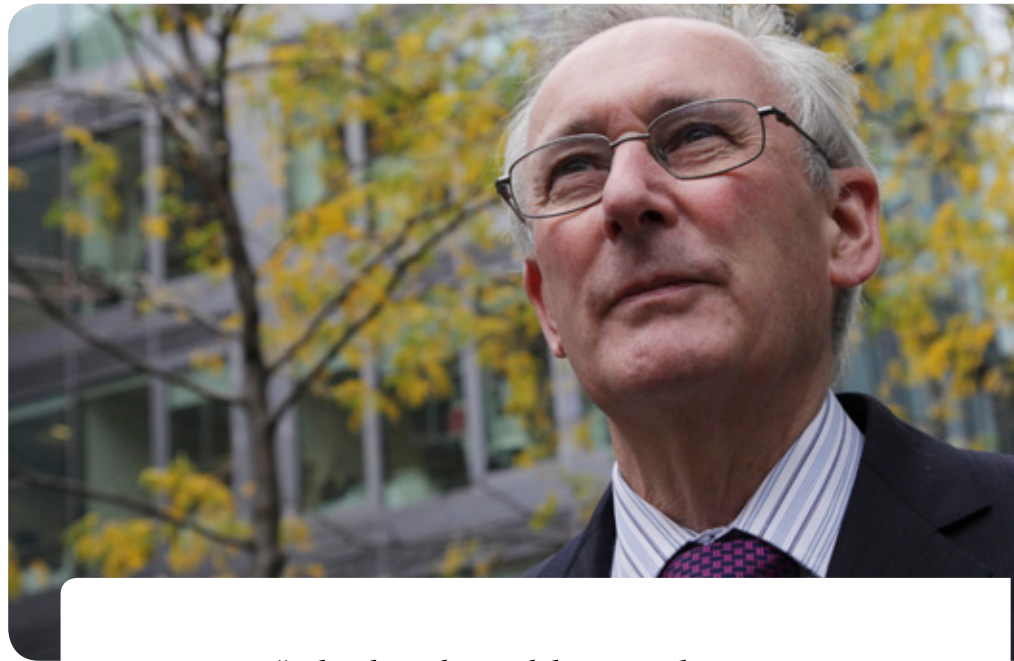
The key to Bird & Bird’s success, says Graham, was an “early willingness to have initially just myself and then my team dedicated to the strategic development of the firm – rather than the partners trying to do it on an ad hoc basis”. What can law firms learn from his firm’s success? Answer: with ABSs and new competitors coming into the market, it’s essential to develop a competitive edge.

“The legal world as we know it will change enormously by 2020, and there will be winners and losers.” Something that will be vitally important in future will be how law firms deliver their services, he says, perhaps also using standard business tools for project management. Law firm service delivery involves “a lot of unnecessary toing and froing”, he says, which creates a very interesting opportunity for new entrants. “[They] can see through the mystique of what lawyers do and recognise that the vast majority of it is just a specialised form of consultancy – and a lot could be done in a much more streamlined and efficient way”.

Law firms might also want to see if outsourcing can help deliver more cost-efficient service delivery, he says. If you were starting

a firm from scratch today, “you’d see how to strip the serious cost and overhead out of the business. Outsourcing hasn’t really made the inroads into the industry in the way one might have expected it to by now”, he says. But that’s got to change.

“Routine and low-level work can be subject to much tighter process control, but where



*“The legal world as we know it will change enormously by 2020, and there will be winners and losers.”*

Alastair Graham, director of corporate development,  
Bird & Bird

lawyers are really adding value is in advisory roles. And because, as an industry, we have become obsessed with chargeable hours, not only do I think at times we over-charge or charge highly for relatively routine work, I also think that we seriously underestimate the value of some of the advice we give”.

But it’s important not to be afraid of competition, he says, and to educate partners

about the new threats and respond positively – turning threats into opportunities.

“There are competitive threats there for all firms, even if they are quite comfortable continuing to give advice the way they have done and don’t want to change. I think the world will change around them. One has to monitor the marketplace very closely and take partners along with the rapid pace.”

Where’s the growth for firms like Bird & Bird? One of the most interesting legal market developments is geographical, with a shift from European to Middle Eastern money in the wider economy, he says. This has seen the creation of the two largest law firms in the Asia-Pacific region this year – King & Wood Mallesons and Herbert Smith Freehills – which represents, says Graham, “a different type of merger, with a different power [and] geographical base”.

Norton Rose’s expansion into South Africa, South America and Canada is another example of a shift in the geographic business legal models. “The view that being European or US-based was what was needed is probably no longer valid,” explains Graham. “Those firms still stuck in one or two jurisdictions are going to find it very difficult to deal with the firms that are rapidly changing and growing.”

Diversification is a lesson law firms are learning late, but the emergence of new markets and new competitors is forcing them to look harder at what law firms do and whether it’s time to offer more services, says Graham. “The vast majority of law firms only have lawyers – why don’t they have tax advisers, strategic analysts, high-level economists? Why aren’t we

pooling our professional talents as an industry?”

Another challenge is that there’s going to be increasing focus on firms’ ‘balance sheet strength’, says Graham. Most are “100% or very substantially owned by the banks”, and that’s not necessarily a viable future model.

“Partners will have to have real money in the business – and if they can’t raise that, that’s

*“Those firms still stuck in one or two jurisdictions are going to find it very difficult to deal with the firms that are rapidly changing and growing.”*

Alastair Graham, director of corporate development,  
Bird & Bird

where external investment is going to have to come in.”

Over the next few years, something’s got to give in the market, says Graham. “There are too many small, region-size law firms – particularly in London – and I think therefore either early consolidation or significant collapse is going to happen [in that market section].”

Graham’s tips for success in this squeezing market is to know your differentiation points and be very clear about the firm’s direction.

“We know at Bird & Bird that we want to be seen as ‘original thinking’ lawyers – we act for more than half the world’s 100 most innovative companies. That’s a space we are very comfortable with. It’s crucial for every firm to know very precisely what they want to do, and to stick with their strategic plan.” ●



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**Briefing is now a print magazine as well as a digital one. If you qualify (and our rules are pretty straightforward), you can get Briefing sent to your office or home address, every month.**

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*Briefing People*

A man in a dark suit, light blue shirt, and striped tie stands with his arms crossed in front of a large window. The window looks out onto a city with buildings and a blue sky. The man is smiling slightly.

# Future visions

DLA Piper's chief information officer, Daniel Pollick, on tablets, BYOD, enterprise IT, desktop video, cloud printing and reformatting the law firm

**Daniel Pollick is chief information officer for DLA Piper, and he's responsible for IT across the whole international firm. However, in the spirit of the multi-role modern age, since January 2011 he's also been director of business infrastructure, responsible for IT, facilities, KM, risk and procurement.**

That's no small brief, but it gives Pollick an interesting role – providing the business services that enable the firm to operate, and ensuring the infrastructure is as cost-effective as possible.

People like him increasingly have to balance delivering the services lawyers want with the need to more aggressively shape and deliver those services at the lowest possible cost.

This can give rise to “difficult discussions” he says. “Many internal customers have not been used to making choices about what services they receive.”

Mobility is a 2013 challenge for Pollick. His team wants to let people use their own devices (the ‘bring your own device’ or BYOD ethos), which is a big challenge but “also a huge opportunity”, he says. Recording time on an iPhone or reviewing board papers on an iPad, for example, are huge productivity drivers, he says.

But BYOD isn't cheaper than a firm buying its own kit – instead of just supporting Windows, DLA now has to support many platforms, increasing complexity and costs.

DLA is one of the biggest firms in the world, and has tried hard to keep its nose in front when it comes to IT. The firm now has world-wide unified communications, giving everyone in the firm desktop-to-desktop video, instant messaging and audio file sharing. Lawyers can give presentations over the web and take phone

calls on any computer, wherever they are in the world, he says. But giving people opportunities doesn't mean they'll use them – you need to make that happen.

“The challenge is to deliver the business process changes so that meetings start happening in different ways, or that we're doing things online that previously we were doing face to face,” says Pollick. This challenge even extends to business processes like billing

*“The challenge is to deliver the business process changes so that meetings start happening in different ways, or that we're doing things online that previously we were doing face to face.”*

Daniel Pollick, chief information officer, DLA Piper

– which DLA has the capability to automate, he says, “but we have so many manual break points that sometimes we can make life harder for ourselves by not being willing to adopt standardisation in our business processes”.

A large and longer-term infrastructure challenge, says Pollick, is property. Most firms' second biggest spend is on renting office space, and “long-term, law firms have to ask themselves if they want to continue sustaining that level of expenditure”.

The question, he says, is whether clients want lawyers tucked away in offices rather than coming to see them – and whether lawyers want this, too.

“Maybe we need to move towards a model



more like that employed by management consultants and other professional services businesses, which has much lower levels of office space. I don't know the answer, but I do know that with my responsibility for the costs of the firm, when I look at the components of cost, property leaps out at me."

Pollick is focusing "ruthlessly" on the cost of the IT team, partly by locating IT operations away from expensive places – DLA's global IT operation is based in Leeds, not London. This creates two interconnected benefits, he says: lower staff costs, but also more reasonable expectations in staff and suppliers alike.

"Instead of being seen as a wealthy law firm in a flash office that could pay anything to a supplier, you are seen as a normal corporate business in the north of England – and the impact that has on your supplier relationships and on the state of mind of the people who work for you is enormous."

And in a great mix of cost-efficiency and green thinking, DLA is moving to a 'cloud-based' printing model. You will only get documents printed when you visit the printer and 'wave your card' at it, he says. This has

already delivered "huge" cost benefits for DLA in the UK because, he says, a significant proportion of print jobs never get printed – that's a lot paper saved.

Most firms accept that using better processes and professional managers to drive efficiencies is essential, but Pollick says they've not come to terms with what that means in practice.

"Law firms need to accept that the way in which services are delivered and the content of those services needs to change," he says, pointing out that a future that requires lower costs might also require less high-end lawyering. "Maybe we're going to have change our expectations of what services a law firm can realistically deliver to its lawyers."

Being in a position to help make these changes is down to relationships, not hierarchy, says Pollick. You have to build relationships and contribute views on subjects outside your specific area, he explains, so that you're seen as the go-to person for opinions and guidance.

"That is how you do it in a law firm," he says. "I don't think you succeed by saying 'Please take me more seriously.'" ●

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*Briefing People*



# Knowledge is power

Berwin Leighton Paisner's director of knowledge management, Lucy Dillon, on why KM now plays a central role in generating revenue and value in tomorrow's law firm

**Lucy Dillon is director of knowledge management at Berwin Leighton Paisner. KM is one of those areas in legal that's had to fight its way out of the back office and into the light – but the journey has been worth the wait. KM is increasingly seen as a vital part in delivering legal work and creating value for the firm – not just the document makers.**

Dillon's been at BLP for 10 years. Before that, she was a commercial litigator at Linklaters, whence she moved into a PSL role. BLP has also gone through a more recent transformation – from a London-based, UK-centric firm to an international operation. “The size and complexity of the practice now bears no relation to the firm I joined,” says Dillon.

Dillon comes highly recommended, and she represents well the value-creating KM world we write about in Briefing. “I've always said to my team: ‘You've got to be very visible,’” she says. “I think that's one of the ways in which the team have really supported the development of the firm, by staying very close to what people are doing, and making sure that they can support it.”

And it's this pushing KM into the light that matters so much. “You get the profile you deserve, frankly,” explains Dillon. “It's up to everyone in the KM team to be out there talking to the lawyers, to make them realise the PSLs are the technical experts, the go-to people. Initiatives in themselves won't work –

you've got to have the right people, and we've worked quite hard at that.”

## Learning, listening and creating value

Identifying partner-potential people who don't want to be partners – a growing trend, some



*“It's up to everyone in the KM team to be out there talking to the lawyers, to make them realise the PSLs are the technical experts, the go-to people.”*

Lucy Dillon, director of knowledge management,  
Berwin Leighton Paisner

would say – is one way to do this. “For the partners who won't necessarily understand exactly what KM is, seeing one of our top lawyers saying: ‘Actually this is what I want to do for the rest of my life’.. It's fantastic for the profile of KM.”

KM also needs to be better at listening, she

says. “We’ve spent a lot of time working out exactly what the lawyers want [and how to make it easy for them to find information], so we try to be responsive. We haven’t got any special wizard technology that other people don’t have, but [what we have] we use in a very creative way.”

In keeping with the kind of KM that is creating value, not just documents, Dillon says she’s seeking out client-facing KM people for the team. “When my people say: ‘We’re going out to talk to these clients about this particular legal development’, the partners love it. That’s fantastic for the team’s profile, and it’s something that we’re doing more and more of.”

The big challenge for the BLP KM team, she says, is to do more with less – which means finding better ways to efficiently allocate work. This is compounded with the fact that the kind of people who are attracted to the PSL role are helpful by nature but don’t like to say ‘no’, she says. “I think we need to start being a bit more robust about our own position, because it’s not just about doing what everybody wants us to do – we have to do what’s going to advantage the firm.”

### **KM’s strategic role in tomorrow’s firm**

What sets her KM team apart from most others, says Dillon, is the time and energy they’ve invested in developing their PSLs. “People are now moving into the PSL function as a career change, and we owe it to those people to give them an exciting career and invest in their development.”

When it comes to how BLP can better

compete with new entrants and more competition, Dillon says KM has an “absolutely fundamental” role to play. “KM is right there: looking at how our processes work and re-aligning them to put the right people on the right level of work. PSLs are perfectly positioned to play a key role in that [change].”

One of the things she wants to help BLP work on and improve, she says, is getting the

*“I have the best job in the firm, but the worst title – ‘knowledge management’ does not reflect the dynamic, creative and strategic role the function performs today.”*

Lucy Dillon, director of knowledge management,  
Berwin Leighton Paisner

lawyers to participate in KM activities. “We need to find a way to tap into our lawyers in a way that they won’t feel that they’ve got a mountain to climb, but which will help us.” To help get up that mountain, Dillon’s team has two big projects on: moving to a SharePoint platform, and re-developing the firm’s website. “Technology is a massive part of what we do,” she explains, “and those two big projects really show that.”

KM is now rapidly growing into as important a business function as it is a support function, but there’s still a way to go. As Dillon says: “I have the best job in the firm, but the worst title – ‘knowledge management’ does not reflect the dynamic, creative and strategic role the function performs today”. And it’s people like Dillon who will help to change all that. ●

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*Briefing People*

# Putting clients first

Clifford Chance's global head of client focus and strategic opportunities, Claire Offord, on why client account management is the future of legal business



**Claire Offord is Clifford Chance’s global head of client focus and strategic opportunities – which means she’s behind the client account management and BD that CC is known for, heading up the team that manages the important client relationships.**

So embedded in client account management is she that she founded the Account Managers Network back in 2008. Over her years of BD practice across several law firms (though she’s a lawyer by profession) there’s been a real shift from generalist BD into more client relationship management responsibilities, she says.

“The importance of managing relationships in law firms has really shifted, and we’ve seen that translated into more resources going into business development to help develop those relationships.”

Her role is largely about opportunity spotting, she says – being proactive, and looking at where there’s opportunity for revenue generation.

“We’re trying [as a function] to shift to being more advisers to partners, to being proactive in suggesting solutions and ways in which we can develop the relationship. Business development is also becoming more client facing, and that’s largely down to building trust with partners.”

But not all legal BD is like this, and client account people still face challenges. BD

isn’t as client facing as it could or should be, yet, nor is it always seen as important as it is – it’s always a challenge for BD people to get all the partner time they want. Plus, says Offord, BD has to take the long view of client development. “When you’re managing and developing relationships, it’s often



*“The importance of managing relationships in law firms has really shifted, and we’ve seen that translated into more resources going into business development to help develop those relationships.”*

Claire Offord, global head of client focus and strategic opportunities, Clifford Chance

something that’s relentless for a number of years, sometimes without instant returns. So keeping the momentum and the energy around developing those relationships is sometimes quite a challenge.”

But firms need BD people more now than ever. Big ticket issues like the Eurozone crisis and the impact of increased regulation, as well as the general economic malaise, mean that creating more valuable relationships with clients is now incredibly important.

“One of the big challenges is really getting under the skin of our clients, and in a climate where you have quite a number of people changing jobs, the challenge is that you’ve built up relationships with people and then they leave.”

Creating these more valuable relationships can not only keep more clients – it also helps to differentiate your firm. Standing out often comes down to long-term relationship management with key client stakeholder, says Offord.

“Relationships will differentiate you as a firm, so my team help partners develop those relationships. This has raised the importance of having business development [doing even more to] support partners.”

The challenges of the alternative business structures era will be “interesting” to see as the legal market changes, she says, but there’s great promise for law firms out there.

“There’s huge growth in Asia and in the emerging markets. The legal sector is exciting but it’s also quite difficult to say what it’s going to look like.”

This uncertainty is partly because clients face an accelerating market globalisation and an ever more complex regulatory environment – and they need more help from

firms to face those challenges.

Offord predicts though that there will be even more emphasis on building relationships and differentiation in the future, which should lead to more investment and growth in the BD role.

And client account people are the ones who can find out what the client needs, suggesting actions and supporting their objectives, she

*“It’s about making the client look good, helping the client with their internal profile and making their jobs easier. That’s one of the ways you can differentiate yourself as a firm.”*

Claire Offord, global head of client focus and strategic opportunities, Clifford Chance

says. “It’s understanding what makes them tick, and people aren’t always forthcoming about that. Sometimes you have to think ahead and suggest things that they should be thinking about.” Law firms can add real value in this, she says, because they have a broader market perspective as they work with so many kinds of clients.

What helps firms stand out in the end is making a personal connection, she says. “It’s about making the client look good, helping the client with their internal profile and making their jobs easier. That’s one of the ways you can differentiate yourself as a firm.” ●

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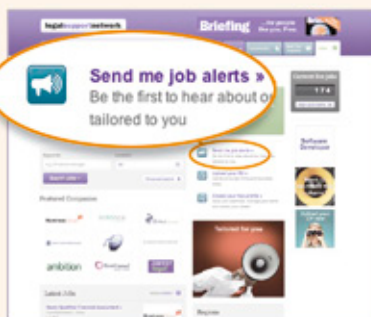
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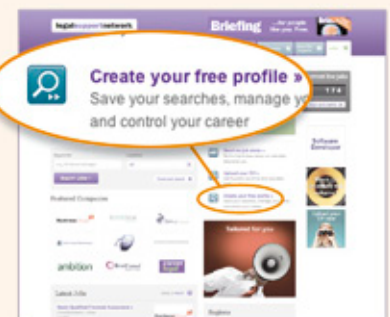
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*Briefing People*



# Risk, managed

Lewis Silkin's risk and compliance counsel, Richard Curtis, on handling a more uncertain regulatory world for law firms, and how IT can make risk management a whole lot easier

**Richard Curtis is risk and compliance counsel for Lewis Silkin and will, if January’s regulatory regime change goes according to plan, be the firm’s compliance officer for legal practice (COLP). A former litigator who moved into risk and compliance in 2006, he graduated to his current role in early 2012.**

It’s a long way from the ‘old days’ of risk. Since 2006, when risk and compliance was still a slowly developing area in terms of headcount within law firms, the advent of the Legal Services Act (LSA), the move to entity based regulation and now outcomes focused regulation (OFR) has brought about a gradual centralisation of risk processes and recognition that risk and regulatory issues need to be pushed higher up the list of firm priorities.

Curtis says this has happened partly because the SRA wants to make sure that ABSs and traditional firms have good enough arrangements in place to protect customers properly. A significant part of this is the introduction of COLPs and COFAs (compliance officers for finance and administration). “As time goes on, no doubt we will all learn a lot more about the SRA’s expectation of those roles,” says Curtis.

Like many in the top 100 might say, Curtis says outcomes focused regulation helps legal businesses rather than hinders them. “It allows us to achieve certain outcomes in a way we feel fits within our business. It will be interesting

to see how the SRA responds as to these approaches, and how they decide when these outcomes have been achieved – and when they haven’t.”

But the concomitant challenge is truly Rumsfeldian: one of the big hurdles for risk heads, says Curtis, is a known unknown. “This is such a new regulatory environment,



*“This is such a new regulatory environment, it’ll be interesting to see how the SRA deals with enforcement and supervision, because everyone may be doing things in a slightly different way.”*

Richard Curtis, risk and compliance counsel, Lewis Silkin

it’ll be interesting to see how the SRA deals with enforcement and supervision, because everyone may be doing things in a slightly different way.”

Lewis Silkin has always had very robust risk and compliance processes and procedures, says Curtis, and part of his role is to build upon these. Being a lawyer-turned-risk manager



has helped with that, he says. “My role is to see where I can add value in terms of my experience,” he explains. “I can see [things] from a fee earner point of view because of my years as a litigator, and from a regulatory SRA/ law firm management point of view. So I can balance up the issues.”

OFR is unlikely to make risk managers’ lives any more predictable, he says, and his focus is now on continually improving what the firm does. Curtis is looking at using more IT to drive compliance, and is rolling out risk and compliance training across the firm – Lewis Silkin uses a mix of online and in-person training, which is being pushed out across the whole business. Best practice on risk might even arise from observed behaviour, he says, as firms look at how other firms are managing risk under OFR. The success of this, of course, somewhat depends on how the leading firms do things.

One of the IT systems that Lewis Silkin is deploying for compliance is KnowledgeMill, a system that collects all the firm’s email into one place so it’s accessible and therefore manageable for risk. “I think firms are moving towards a centralised filing system [like KnowledgeMill],” says Curtis. “We’re also looking at developing our client matter inception system to make it more user-friendly for people here. By doing that, we’ll also be more compliant – because people will be doing what they are supposed to.”

Whatever they do, it’s going to be an interesting journey as firms develop their risk and compliance functions while they get used to OFR.

“It’s possible that, in five years – or even much sooner than that – larger firms will have processes and procedures in place that form common ‘market practice.’ In the meantime, it’s a question of adapting, learning and trying to find out what works.” ●

A man in a dark suit, white shirt, and bright green tie is sitting on a wooden bench. He is wearing glasses and has a serious expression. The background features a modern building with large glass windows and several trees with green leaves. The scene is outdoors on a paved area.

# He's calling it a revenue<sup>etion</sup>

Herbert Smith Freehills' head of revenue, Nick Murphy-Whymark, on reforming the way law firms bill and collect to make them a lot more efficient



**Nicholas Murphy-Whymark, head of revenue for UK, US, EMEA and Asia at the newly merged Herbert Smith Freehills, manages the complete contract to cash process at the firm – and he’s convinced his team is doing business in a genuinely different, more efficient and more profitable way.**

The Herbies/Freehills tie-up is one of a possible future surge in UK/Aus mergers – Slater & Gordon/RJW had a lot of media attention, but the Herbies-Freehills move was bigger, creating Asia-Pac’s biggest law firm.

It’s a new world order, and one in which the Australians are, in terms of regulation, ahead of the UK – they’ve been able to have full-spectrum non-lawyer ownership for some time. Murphy-Whymark says the merger was “an incredible development and very exciting” that will accelerate the firm’s global presence.

Of course, to operate more efficiently in a much larger firm, everything in the new business has to be super-efficient. The challenge for Murphy-Whymark’s team is to “become the most forward-thinking revenue department in the market”, he says.

Top management at the new Herbies is “agile” enough to encourage people like him introduce fresh ideas and new approaches, he says, which should help make this happen.

So far, the firm has had some interesting success in trying to reformat the revenue side of the business, including what they call the ‘revenueation’ project. The main idea behind this is the thinking that “revenue should be

dealt with as a single point of focus,” says Murphy-Whymark. “Treating billing and cash collection as separate processes creates problems.”

‘Revenueation’ is a finance-led project that connects the revenue team to partners and key business stakeholders in an effort to understand how revenue’s service can be

*The main idea behind ‘revenueation’ is the thinking that “revenue should be dealt with as a single point of focus, treating billing and cash collection as separate processes creates problems”.*

Nicholas Murphy-Whymark, head of revenue for UK, US, EMEA and Asia, Herbert Smith Freehills

improved. “It’s quite straightforward,” says Murphy-Whymark. “But a lot of processes are just over-engineered, which doesn’t allow you to move swiftly.” In other words, Herbies is looking for agility in stripping away complexity and seeking constant improvement.

This has great development and morale knock-ons, he says. “We’ve proven a range of successful innovations to the partnership, including the ‘revenueation’ project, which [itself] breaks new ground. This [in turn] helps individuals to flourish within a team



environment – they are encouraged to look for innovative ways to improve process.”

One of the changes he’s made is that Herbies fee earners now regularly come into contact with ‘revenue patrollers’, using iPads to capture and analyse WIP data in real time and monitoring how work, billing and collection are delivered. It’s highly likely that we’ll increasingly see this kind of attention to global process and change in legal in the future. Why? Because it’s what drives consistency and improvement – and profitability.

“Revenue needs to continue to drive innovation around financial performance and efficiencies, while boosting the level of service to both internal and external clients. This continuous audit, review and improvement

places us in an excellent position to influence the world of revenue.”

Legal is learning the lessons of big business, and cash flow and revenue is a key area that law firms can improve (see our Briefing Industry Interview with Tom Wood at Barclays in this issue for why).

But to be agile, he says, you need to have senior sponsorship within the business to back up what you are trying to achieve.

“Our new CIO, COO and the FD listened to the approach we wanted to take. They understood it and encouraged us to take it forward. Being agile is not about trying to write long manuals and to overcome every problem – it’s about having an open mind, and a team that can challenge but also act quickly.” ●



# HR in a new new world order

Osborne Clarke's HR director, David Shufflebotham, on how law firms must change the way they deliver legal services, who should be doing it – and why

**David Shufflebotham, Osborne Clarke’s HR director, is responsible for identifying, recruiting and developing talented people. HR has shifted its focus, he says, from retaining staff to satisfying clients that want more for less. “Our people have got to be adept at delivering our services in a more efficient way,” he says.**

During his 18 months with the firm, he says, Osborne Clarke has been concentrating “pretty heavily on making sure we’ve got the right level and style of resource to meet those changes, making sure all the work is done at the right levels, and that we’ve got the right people to support that”.

“It’s no good saying we should be doing work at a different level if you haven’t got people who are working at that level. The focus is on getting the right shape of resource for our clients’ needs.” Legal business now starts and ends with the client, says Shufflebotham. “Everybody in the organisation, top to bottom, is going to be focused on delivering top-quality services as efficiently as possible. There is no room for any slack in the system anymore.”

That’s certainly the case in mid-market firms like Osbornes, which has seen some tough times. And reforming law firms isn’t just about processes and products – people are also affected. “That’s always very sensitive, time-consuming and ultimately involves some pretty difficult decisions,” he says. He says Osbornes is supported in this by having “a really clear sense of where we’re going”, making it easier to make some of those

decisions and follow them through.

Osborne Clarke was the first firm, back in 2009, to outsource a chunk of business services to Integreon. Before the jaws of the recession closed, it looked to some a little mean-spirited to outsource those jobs. Now, it might seem prescient, certainly strategic, in the face of what happened.

*“It’s no good saying we should be doing work at a different level if you haven’t got people who are working at that level. The focus is on getting the right shape of resource for our clients’ needs.”*

David Shufflebotham, HR director, Osborne Clarke

And that’s one of the big changes Shufflebotham expects to see in legal – law firms will need to have more explicit and better strategies. “If you have clear high-level strategies it makes addressing difficult issues more straightforward and more readily understood. That’s one of the changes that really comes out of the [current] change environment.”

Shufflebotham plays an active part in the executive board and says that what sets the firm and his team apart is an egalitarian culture. “People within the firm are able to



be themselves, and are encouraged to be innovative and voice their opinions when there are things that we could be doing differently.”

Of course, there’s always something that could be done better. Shufflebotham’s team is pushing the quality assurance of their lawyer’s technical experts, as well as embedding a “planned and deliberate talent management infrastructure”.

“If you are going to deliver legal services more efficiently, you need to get your people focusing on the right things at the right time, and be able to accelerate their development as quickly as you possibly can.”

Shufflebotham says Osbornes will move to a new “career framework” in mid-2013 for lawyers, and is already using assessment to get a better idea of development needs.

“Assessment can be quite scary,” he admits, “but you can’t tailor development to people’s needs unless you can assess what they are.”

The recession, he says, has made clients much more discerning and firms must therefore act similarly. “You’ve got to be clear about the talent you’re recruiting and developing, and the impact it’s having.”

This is going to be crucial in future when it comes to winning high-level work and competing in a tougher crowd, he says: “You have to have really good and efficient management processes in place to bring the best things through in your organisation,” he says.

So, times are going to stay competitively tough, and HR is at the heart of how to win. So, HR people, bring your A game – or you won’t be playing long. ●

*Briefing People*



# Going global

Hogan Lovells' chief marketing officer, Serena Simmons, on post-merger marketing, global BD challenges and earning the right to be heard at the top

**Serena Simmons, is one of Hogan Lovells’ chief marketing officers, and has responsibility for the firm’s BD and marketing operations in London, continental Europe and Asia. Simmons was appointed in 2006 as part of a strategy spearheaded by then managing partner David Harris to place greater emphasis on BD and develop client relationships in a more structured way at the firm.**

“It was enormously attractive,” says Simmons, “to come into a role that was seen as being strategically key, with an opportunity to make a significant difference to the business.” This sadly isn’t how all firms see BD, but it’s indicative of a trend in firms to push more client-facing work to business services.

Her wealth of experience outside legal has proved extremely valuable in her current role. She worked at KPMG for seven years, starting out as a consultant and ending up heading the marketing consultancy group there. This helps her understand the pressures on partners, she says, and it also gave her exposure to a very wide range of marketing challenges. After KPMG, Simmons was responsible for BD in the finance and capital markets practice at Clifford Chance.

There are currently two very clear marketing and BD priorities for a newly merged Hogan Lovells right now, she says. The first is developing client relationships across the firm. “Post-merger there are absolutely huge

opportunities, and we in BD have a vast role to play in setting up client teams, analysing opportunities, ensuring that there are action-focused plans and that those plans are properly implemented.”

Alongside that, there’s a need to raise profile – the marketing mecca. “We need to do more to get our name and our messages into the



*“Post-merger there are huge opportunities, and we in BD have a vast role to play in setting up client teams, analysing opportunities, ensuring that there are action-focused plans, and that those plans are properly implemented.”*

Serena Simmons, chief marketing officer, Hogan Lovells

market, and increase our visibility. There are a number of strategic priorities for BD, and that is at the heart of the strategy of the firm,” says Simmons.

Her biggest challenge at the moment, she says, is resources. There’s a general shortage of good BD people, particularly at the middle level of seniority, she says. “Our team is a reasonable

size but, because it's good, partners use them more and the work load goes up and up. We have to balance the things that are going to shift the needle and make a difference to our success with the day-to-day work.”

Communicating the team's goals clearly is vital to overcoming this challenge, she says, as well as connecting the local teams into the global business. And it's important to manage internal expectations, she says:

“Although it would be lovely to do everything all at once, you can't.

Post-merger we've done quite a lot to build our infrastructure and get better processes in place to allow us to work more efficiently, and that means we're in a better position to change our focus and find time for some of the other projects.”

Getting BD into a very close relationship with central management is a big part of how making BD work really well, she says. “If we find ourselves between a rock and a hard place on delivering on different priorities, we can and will go to management to discuss the best way of dealing with those things – whether that means getting some additional resources or external people to work with us on projects.”

The really big trends in the legal market now, she says, are moves towards outsourcing and increasing globalisation and consolidation. “It is quite an exciting time in the legal market, actually. It's interesting to watch how events unfold.” There are competitive challenges that come with this consolidation, but Simmons views these as areas in which marketing and BD can do a lot to create success. “These competitive challenges fall right into the BD space, and we need to look at them and work

out what they mean for us.”

One big positive business services change in the legal sector market, she says, is that there's now a much greater recognition now that law firms need to be very professionally managed and have high-quality finance, IT and business development people.

At Hogan Lovells, she says, “the willingness of the firm to allow non-lawyers to contribute

*“There are firms where business functions are kept in their little box, and that used to be the case much more commonly 15 years ago. I think we're not like that.”*

Serena Simmons, chief marketing officer, Hogan Lovells

and be listened to is pretty good”.

“There are firms where business functions are kept in their little box, and that used to be the case much more commonly 15 years ago. I think we're not like that,” she says.

Simmons wants a team that challenges and shapes what the firm does across all its marketing and BD. Crucially, she says, the experience of the individuals within the team, the skills they have and their calibre should give them the right to do this.

“You can't just come along and tell people what to do,” she says, succinctly. “You have to earn the right to do that.” ●



# It's a vision thing

INDUSTRY VOICES



## Turning law firms into legal businesses



Briefing magazine speaks to Tom Wood, Barclays' new head of professional services, about the challenges and opportunities ahead in the legal market

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*Briefing Industry Interview*

# Turning law firms into legal businesses

Briefing speaks to Tom Wood, Barclays' new head of professional services, about the challenges and opportunities ahead in the legal market

**Are the banks betting on legal? If you believe the tabloid press, they're not betting on anyone – but that's not the case, says Barclays new head of professional services, Tom Wood. Legal is a growth area. But how can you be a part of that growth?**

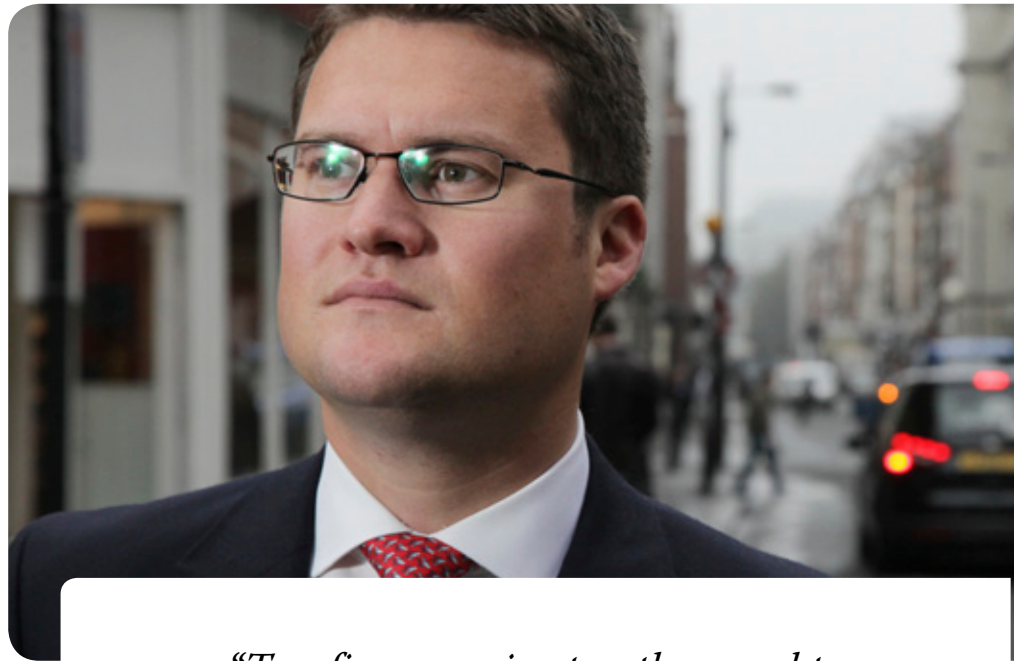
Wood takes over from Jane Galvin, and he's keen to get involved in helping the legal sector as it moves into a much more competitive future. One of the biggest issues of the day, says Wood, is whether firms should be big, or be niche. "Are the mergers that are happening in the market being done to make better firms, in terms of specialisms, or are they simply to make firms larger?" asks Wood. "Two firms coming together need to create a bigger and more successful firm – there is no point in bringing two firms together to create a larger firm that still has no unique identity."

There is an over-abundance of 'multidisciplinary', or full-service, firms in the market, says Wood, which is as much a problem in the silver circle as much as it is in the regions. This doesn't mean there's no future for them, he says – get the model right with effective cost management, a clear vision focused on the client, even perhaps a different model of service delivery, and it could still be a very successful business.

There are opportunities behind these challenges, says Wood. "If you have the right strategy there is great opportunity in the

current climate to pick up other firms, for example. Economies of scale [in growing through mergers] do work – if it is the right merger."

New entrants are also going to be a challenge for many firms, but, says Wood, if you have the right kind of firm, "you could couple with a new entrant". This opportunity



*"Two firms coming together need to create a bigger and more successful firm – there is no point in bringing two firms together to create a larger firm that still has no unique identity."*

Tom Wood, head of professional services, Barclays

has so far only been seen at the scalable, commoditised end of the market so far, though.

There's also the chance to move away from the partnership model. "It's a fairly flexible model, but it's quite old-fashioned," says Wood. "If you can be adaptable and change the way you run your business to keep or retain top talent, this is an opportunity."

One way to do this is through pricing and communication, says Wood. “A different pricing structure, fee structure, flexibility, is a key differentiator for firms. One way of interacting with the client is what options you give for paying or structuring the bill. The key word here is flexibility – the firm that is most flexible in terms of interaction, cost, communication and people is the firm that’s going to win the business.”

And of course there’s the new opportunity to take external funding. “For the right firm such as the commodity end of legal, a private investor or private equity house may be able to get a good return from a firm and help these businesses grow,” says Wood. Using outside money to scale these businesses should generate a decent return on the investment. For more traditionally structured firms, however, external investment won’t on its own be able to do that, and the threat of the ‘exit route’ will be more of a problem.

So, what can law firms do now to be more competitive? Grow the client relationship management side of the business, says Wood, and get a proper grip on the financials.

“There’s an argument to say that the people you want to recruit, the stars of the future, are the same stars that the banks and the accountants and the management consultants want – people who can truly win business. Business development needs to be a higher priority in any law firm in the current climate – but are your technical lawyers the best people to do business development? Probably not. The people you’re looking for are those with the ability to open a door, generate an opportunity to win the business from the competitor.”

As for financial health, it’s simple – really. “Probably the number one conversation that our relationship directors have with firms is: How is their cash flow management? Without doubt, if law firms got better at collecting their debtors and converting their WIP to debtors – and this has to happen from the most senior partner all the way down to the most junior fee earner – it can make a huge difference to

*“Without doubt, if law firms got better at collecting their debtors and converting their WIP to debtors it can make a huge difference to the financial stability and to the efficiency of converting work to profit.”*

Tom Wood, head of professional services, Barclays

the financial stability and to the efficiency of converting work to profit.” It also naturally saves firms money, because it means less funding from banking partners.

As always, it’s really down to strategic thinking whether firms will thrive in the next couple of years – it’s not enough to be reactive any more.

“Innovation will be the winner, so the firms who are prepared to think outside the box, think about what they offer to clients – not only about client service but also added value and increased opportunity – will be the winners.”

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