



Strategy Conference 2010

Strategic management in law firms

Thursday 14th October
Venue: TBC

Timings

- **08.30 – 09.00: Arrival & Coffee**
 - **09.00 – 09.20: Context**
 - **09.20 – 09.55: The legal landscape and market place**
 - **09.55 – 10.30: Professional management of firms**
 - **10.30 – 11.00: Coffee**
 - **11.00 – 11.45: Strategic planning**
 - **11.45 – 12.30: Outcomes**
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- **Context**
 - Understanding the need for strategic management in any industry, and specifically for law firms
 - The elements of strategic management
 - Is there an option to ignore it and keep on with 'business as usual'?
 - Is it applicable to anyone other than Magic Circle and international firms?
 - Taking control instead of being at the mercy of the market, the regulators and your competitors
 - Inspiring the team
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- **The legal landscape and market place**
 - The Legal Services Act (coming into full force from mid-2011)
 - Legal Disciplinary Practices (LDP) – law firms involving different kinds of lawyers, and up to 25% of the equity owned by non-lawyers
 - Alternative Business Structures (ABS) – in the latter half of 2011, regulations will allow 100% external ownership of legal businesses – eg 'Tesco law' or venture capital companies looking to invest in existing law firms
 - Multi-disciplinary practices – firms or companies providing legal and other consultancy or financial services
 - Other new entrants – corporate companies in the service sector, which can easily add a legal division to their product offering, or private equity companies looking to invest in start-up law firms
 - Rationalisation – mergers and acquisitions – "eat or be eaten"
 - Basic rules of evolution will apply – adapt or die



- **Professional management of firms -**
 - The case for a professional executive team – lead cultural change and free the lawyers to deliver the service
 - More demanding client expectations on fees and service drives the need for a professional and proactively managed response
 - Financial management to stay solvent and drive performance
 - Collegiate and affiliate culture – the end of silo practices
 - Performance management – remuneration tied to required behaviour
 - Shared services for support functions or outsourcing volume business whilst retaining higher value specialist work
 - Corporate structures – less collective decision making – remove the power of partner veto
 - Internal communication – often neglected, but a must

- **Strategic planning – Nigel Bennett, Sterndale Associates**
 - Too often the best that professional firms seem achieve in the way of planning is to indicate an intent which implicitly says, “Let’s try do more of what we did last year”, and along the way they will create a operating budget based on utilisation of headcount. Very few firms step back and attempt to determine where they are going and why. Looking back at the wake is no way to steer a ship.
 - “Strategic planning is a process by which a firm determines its overall direction and what is important in conducting its business (the firm’s vision, its purposes, and its values), by reference to its desired aims; what must be done to achieve that defined direction; and how those strategic aims will be realised operationally. As such, strategic planning is the foundation for the discipline of managing proactively, which includes financial planning (both short term and long term), operational and resource planning, and marketing planning.”
 - Strategies and tactics are often confused. It is both the strength and the weakness of the legal mind that it constantly wants to identify the next action step. For this reason, lawyers usually want to skip discussion of strategies and move immediately to operational solutions.
 - Undertake an examination of a simple gap analysis process for achieving the above scenario, which demonstrates the need for looking at the big picture and gives a flavour of how to plan strategically.
 - In essence: where are we now; where do we want to go and why; how do we get there?

- **Outcomes – Richard Ferguson, Sensei, UKE Ltd.**
 - Understand the importance of engaging the whole organisation in your strategic intent.
 - Understand the critical success factors required to ensure that a well crafted strategy is brought to life in an organisation.
 - Generation of some ideas and insights on how you can overcome the challenges you face in bringing strategy to life.
 - The nature of strategic work and how it differs from leadership and operational work
 - Interactive exercise to explore the power of strategic alignment
 - The passion killers that exist in most organisations and how to remove them
 - Identifying the levers for engaging and aligning people behind strategic intent
 - Some practical examples and learning’s from other organisations