C/M/S/ Cameron McKenna

Why don't law firms listen?

The challenge of getting client service right

November 2006

Listen.
Times are changing.

The legal landscape is shifting. The role of General Counsel has evolved in recent years to encompass more and more commercial responsibilities. In turn, this has changed what is expected from law firms. Excellence as lawyers is seen as just the starting point in the relationship. Law firms now have to compete in areas where traditionally they have little experience, in order to win and retain business from an increasingly discerning and sophisticated purchaser.

We've been listening to our clients. Back in 1998 we started a client feedback programme to find out what our clients were thinking, and it's been growing ever since then. In 2005 we interviewed well over 100 client organisations. And this substantial body of data has helped us to understand how we can better service their needs and build lasting relationships. Our objective is to deliver excellence in client service.

Over the last three years we've observed the accelerated pace of change in our clients' expectations. They want advisers who understand their business, who deliver on time, on budget, and "remove themselves from the fence." Our findings show that clients want their lawyers to be as commercially focused as they are. They also demonstrate that law firms have been complacent about service.

These findings are consistent with the conclusions reached by recent research carried out in the legal services industry. Research by Winmark Limited shows that there are many ways in which law firms can unintentionally undermine even the strongest of client relationships. Research by Nisus Consulting shows that, although law firms have made efforts to focus on client service in recent years, they have yet to close the yawning gap between performance and client demand.

The overwhelming majority of feedback we receive is positive, and we act on every piece of it. Because even when we have a satisfied customer, we need to consider what else we can be doing to improve the relationship and to add further value in this increasingly competitive market. We know that the rules of the game have changed, and the new paradigm presents both risks and opportunities.

The conventional career path for lawyers has not kept up with the pace of change in the industry. There is no compulsion on lawyers to become skilled in client service, nor is there any attention paid to it in pre-qualification. Law firms have buried their heads in the sand rather than address this.

We at CMS Cameron McKenna want this report to provoke thinking amongst our peers, and in the legal profession in general, about what we can and should be doing to develop lawyers who accurately reflect the face of the market they serve. We genuinely believe that this will be good for both the client and for us, because it will be good for business.

Richard Price
Senior Partner

Dick Tyler
Managing Partner

"Technical expertise is the norm, as is the ability to deliver to deadline whatever it takes. The same cannot be said for management of relationships. The ability to demonstrate value or, better still, demonstrate better value than competitors is still largely to be addressed."
'Seeing the world through the client's eyes'
Nisus Consulting, July 2004

"Client service is set to become the key battleground in the fierce competition for FTSE and AIM clients. As the technical abilities of law firms increasingly converge, the key point of difference for law firms will be how they deliver their legal advice – its commercial relevancy, clarity and speed of turnaround."
'Client Satisfaction Survey'
Legal Week Intelligence, 2006

What's this report for?

Research shows that there is a gap between the level of client service that law firms should be offering, and that which they actually attain. Websites may proudly proclaim their 'client-focused approach', but what does this actually mean for the client?

In an increasingly competitive legal market, client service is becoming an area in which law firms compete. The discrepancy between expectation and reality actually presents an opportunity for pioneering firms to differentiate themselves from the herd – by rising to the challenge and bridging the gap.

Through our comprehensive client feedback programme we have learnt a good deal about what our clients want. This knowledge, which is supported by the external analysis of organisations such as Nisus and Legal Week Intelligence, has informed our thinking, behaviour and strategy.

By sharing our knowledge we hope to stimulate debate within the legal industry about how to deal with these current issues, and to provoke thinking around the service challenges of the future. We will also demonstrate how CMS Cameron McKenna has chosen to tackle these challenges.

How the profession is changing

The manner in which companies choose law firms is altering in a number of ways. Decision makers are working closely with procurement specialists to introduce greater rigour to the selection process. While personal relationships are still important elements in the decision, there is an increasing focus on objective measurement of performance. Some organisations are reviewing the optimum mix of in-house and outsourced arrangements, often seeking to expand and develop their own legal capabilities. In many cases, organisations are seeking to limit the number of external relationships they have in place. For law firms, the squeeze is definitely on.

The role of General Counsel is expanding to accommodate areas previously considered to be beyond the scope of the in-house lawyer. Risk management, commercial management, corporate governance and even corporate social responsibility are all subjects that may fall under the remit of the modern General Counsel. In some companies the General Counsel has a dual role, reporting to both the CEO as normal, but also directly to the Board on risk and corporate governance issues.

As in-house counsel build closer relationships within their businesses, so the pressure on law firms to adapt increases. The services that we deliver should address their changed responsibilities. We need to understand their industry, their business drivers and the internal environment in which they operate. At the same time we have to demonstrate that we are becoming more commercially minded too.

"The increasing influence of the financial director / CFO and the upwardly mobile procurement departments in these large companies will ensure that the pressure on in-house counsel to reduce costs and demonstrate competitive value will remain on the agenda for the foreseeable future."
'Seeing the world through the client's eyes'
Nisus Consulting, July 2004

It’s all about good service

What does ‘good service’ mean?

It can be tempting to think that, when an organisation hires a law firm, it is only interested in one thing – the quality of our legal advice. And of course, this is the primary service that we provide. But the difficult truth is that clients expect us to be more than top quality lawyers. They expect us to be business people.

Our extensive client feedback programme shows us that there are certain behaviours and ways of thinking that are highly appreciated by our clients – when they happen. Getting these things right is important. It can mean the difference between winning repeat business or getting badmouthed all over town.

We need to be proactive communicators, attentive project managers, dedicated relationship partners, strong team members and all the while we must keep an eye on the final bill. Clients expect this from law firms because this is the way they behave towards their internal clients. They want to feel valued too.

Talking money

Clients like to know how much their legal advice will cost long before the bill arrives on their desk. They want to keep their costs to a sensible minimum without cutting corners, and may also need to manage expectations internally. A nasty surprise can really damage the reputation of a law firm. Clear and open communication about fees, on the other hand, is a mark of quality client service.

We find that clients always respond well to timely and regular fee updates, especially when the original estimate has been breached, or the fees are rising rapidly. They want to understand what it is they are paying for, and how much the final total is likely to be.

How often, and in what format, these updates should be varies from client to client, so partners should tailor their communication strategies according to the specific requirements of the client.

Our research shows that law firms are not consistent in providing clients with clear fee communication. So, we’re focusing on getting this right for the client. To this end, we have run workshops for our partners on the importance of clearly estimating price, and communicating fee levels during the matter.

“None of the firms are cheap, but that’s the nature of what you’re getting. Compared to competitors, I think they’ve been a bit more focused on avoiding surprising bills than some of the others would be.”
Client Feedback, 2006

Thinking like the client

Becoming familiar with a client's business and industry is key to providing tailored and relevant advice. If we can understand their commercial objectives, then we can avoid wasting time negotiating over issues that are not important to them.

There is increasing pressure on law firms to justify the time spent working on a matter, and optimising the use of resources has a direct effect on cost. So, if we really care about our clients, then we need to make the effort to understand what makes them tick.

Clients appreciate lawyers who can give a commercial recommendation, rather than just presenting them with two or three options. We add value when we aid and inform their decision making process. Clients also benefit from avoiding a costly 'learning curve' when they use that firm again.

It also helps if lawyers can explain themselves in layman's terms, without resorting to legal jargon.

It is unfortunate, from the client's point of view, that too many firms are unable to take into account the commercial context when giving advice on the legal issues.

At CMS Cameron McKenna we have organised ourselves into seven 'industry groups'. These bring together teams from differing practice groups under the umbrella of one specific industry, such as Consumer Products, Financial Institutions or Energy & Utilities. Their objective is to enable the firm to offer a range of integrated, industry-specific services to our clients. They allow us to build industry knowledge amongst our people – something we know our clients value. Our partners are also adept at getting to understand the business drivers of individual clients.

"CMS Cameron McKenna are excellent in terms of giving advice in the context of our commercial objectives. It's because they are so knowledgeable about the industry now."
Client Feedback, 2006

The right people

It sounds obvious, but matching the right lawyers to appropriate tasks is fundamental to delivering value to the client. The lawyers must have suitable experience and skills. Over-resourcing will affect the client's bill, while under-resourcing will put strain on the entire process. Both reflect badly on the law firm.

It is important to get the split between partner and associate involvement correct, and then communicate the reasons why partners have attended particular meetings. Of course, some clients prefer to have greater visibility of the partner and are prepared to pay for it. So, once again, it is key to have a dialogue with the client and understand their expectations.

A client's relationship with the firm is often based on the confidence that they have in a handful of individuals. If one of these people takes some time off for a holiday, maternity leave or even resigns from the firm altogether, then the client's objectives and our relationship with them are put at risk.

Planning for team changes and introducing replacements well in advance will make sure that our clients have confidence in their skills and experience. Comprehensive handovers are crucial.

This is a common sense commercial approach, which law firms struggle to get right. Our client feedback programme gives a clear indication of what the client thinks of the current team, and we can respond to their comments immediately.

"It's the people that make all the difference in this business."
Client Feedback, 2006

Taking charge

Some clients prefer their lawyers to act as the project manager. All clients expect them to be proactive in ensuring that things get done. Legal firms have to provide people who have the necessary skills to efficiently control a matter from beginning to end.

Communication between the two teams is vital. Project plans should be developed in conjunction with the client, taking into account their aims and objectives. Regular progress updates should pass back and forth. Providing one central contact may well be appropriate.

On larger matters involving different teams within the firm, it is important to present a co-ordinated service to the client. The internal communication between teams is crucial to providing an efficient service. All members of the team need to be fully briefed.

A smoothly managed process and a deadline-focused approach is exactly what every client wants.

We recognise the need to develop our junior lawyers to have a comprehensive range of skills to meet the needs of our clients. That's why we include a compulsory project management module in our 'Excel' training programme (see below).

"We want a law firm that can manage us to make sure that we do what we need to do at various times and not to rely on us to be the project manager."
Client Feedback, 2006

The Excel Programme

The Excel Programme is targeted at lawyers that have between two to five years' post qualification experience. Attendance in this programme is a factor considered in accession to the partnership. Topics covered in this programme include:

- Planning your development
- Understanding our business
- Interpreting financial information
- Finance for lawyers
- Building competitive advantage through people
- Project management
- Developing business

Demonstrating that we care

Clients want to build long-term partnerships with trusted advisors. Law firms that proactively support the business objectives of their client with innovative solutions will be rewarded with a deep and lasting relationship.

Clients want lawyers who care about their strategy, pointing out issues that may be of interest, suggesting tailored seminars and training sessions, and forwarding relevant marketing materials. They want to be offered secondees that add value to their business. They like to be able to call up for an opinion at any time, and they don't like to be billed for the pleasure. They want to be listened to.

Law firms need to go beyond simply satisfying their minimum contractual obligations. They need to remain focused on the client even after the end of the transaction. They need to understand what relationship management entails. It's about putting the needs of the client first.

Law firms need to have the flexibility to give each individual client the service they require. Above all, law firms need to produce senior lawyers adept in the skills of relationship management.

Everyone talks about 'forming partnerships' and 'sharing goals' with their clients, but our research has taught us that law firms struggle to adopt a partnered approach to relationships. CMS Cameron McKenna actually has to deliver on these promises, because we've made it part of our strategy and our brand.

We run training sessions for our partners in Client Relationship Management (CRM), bringing in recognised external experts who have themselves excelled in a professional environment through focusing on client relationships. We appoint Client Relationship Partners (see case study, pg12) to take responsibility for the overall satisfaction of our clients. Our Excel programme is also designed to imbue our junior solicitors with the skills to deliver proper client care.

We've also invested heavily in our feedback programme and analysis tools, in our client relationship management system, and in educating the firm in the principles and rationale behind CRM.

In fact, we never stop thinking about it.

Gathering feedback

How did we find this out?

CMS Cameron McKenna has put client relationships at the heart of its strategy. In order to deliver the highest levels of service to the client, we needed to understand what the clients valued and how they wanted us to improve. So, we implemented a formal, structured client feedback programme.

How does it work?

Let's be clear – we're not in the business of gathering huge amounts of data for market research, or mindless number crunching. We're focused on our relationships with individual clients and the things they say about us, and the programme supports this.

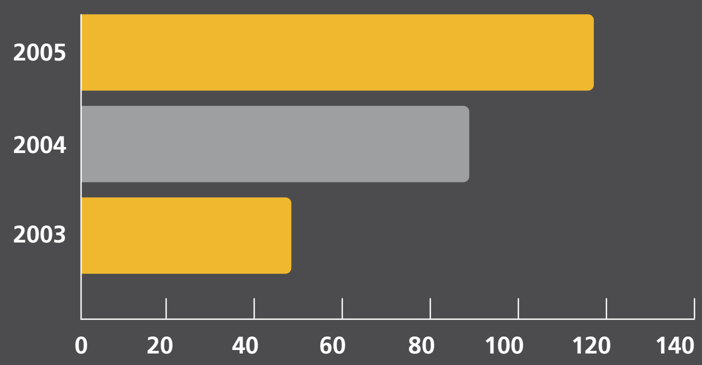
We use independent researchers to gather feedback from our clients according to an interview template that deliberately focuses on client service. The interviews take between thirty minutes to an hour and provide a rich source of **qualitative** information about the priorities of our clients.

Each report is used to tailor the service that we provide to that particular client, by taking action at the partner level to respond to their comments. But we also pick out themes and trends which recur across a large number of reviews. It is only by looking at the feedback as a whole that we are able to draw conclusions about how to improve our service across the entire firm.

We conduct two types of interview: **matter reviews**, which focus on the specifics of one particular matter; and **relationship reviews**, which take a broader look at the overall history with a longer-term client.

Since 2003, we have interviewed over 450 people at more than 200 client organisations.

Number of completed reviews per year 2003-2005



Keeping score

We have also devised 10 **quantitative questions** which, measure our performance against service factors that we believe are key aspects of client service.

Each client is asked to rate the firm against these 10 core questions. These scores are recorded on a scale of 1 to 5, which corresponds to a value from the following scale:
1 Very poor
2 Poor
3 Average
4 Good
5 Excellent

The firm has set a target of 4.5 out of 5 to aim for, as part of our strategy to achieve client service excellence.

This approach provides a snapshot glance of our overall relationship with individual clients, as well as allowing us to compare the performance of the firm against our target.

Right now, we are reviewing the list of questions to see if we can update it to be more relevant to the changing needs of the client.

The 10 core elements of service
(in our opinion)

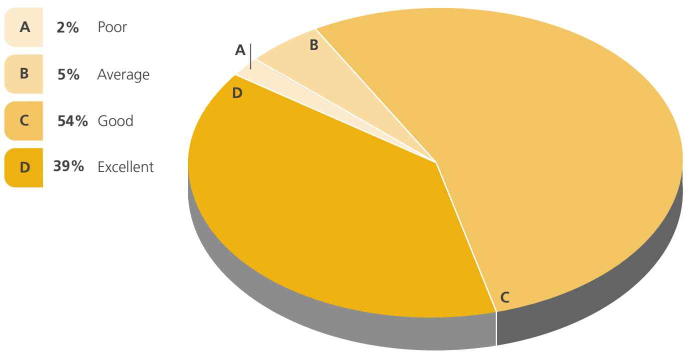
These are the factors we measure ourselves against:
- Responding to your needs quickly and effectively
- Talking to you proactively about legal issues affecting your business
- Giving advice in the context of your commercial objectives
- Problem solving ability
- The accessibility and availability of the team
- Working constructively with your team
- Managing the work overall
- Providing value for the fees paid
- Being clear about fees so that there are no surprises
- Your overall satisfaction with CMS Cameron McKenna

How are we doing?

At first glance, CMS Cameron McKenna is doing pretty well. We've listened, learned and responded. And now the things that our clients say, and the scores they give us, support the conclusion that we have gone a long way towards our goal of delivering client service excellence.

Of the 332 people who rated us between January 2003 and December 2005, 93% of them gave us an overall satisfaction rating of 'good', or 'excellent'. And each year our scores have been getting better and better.

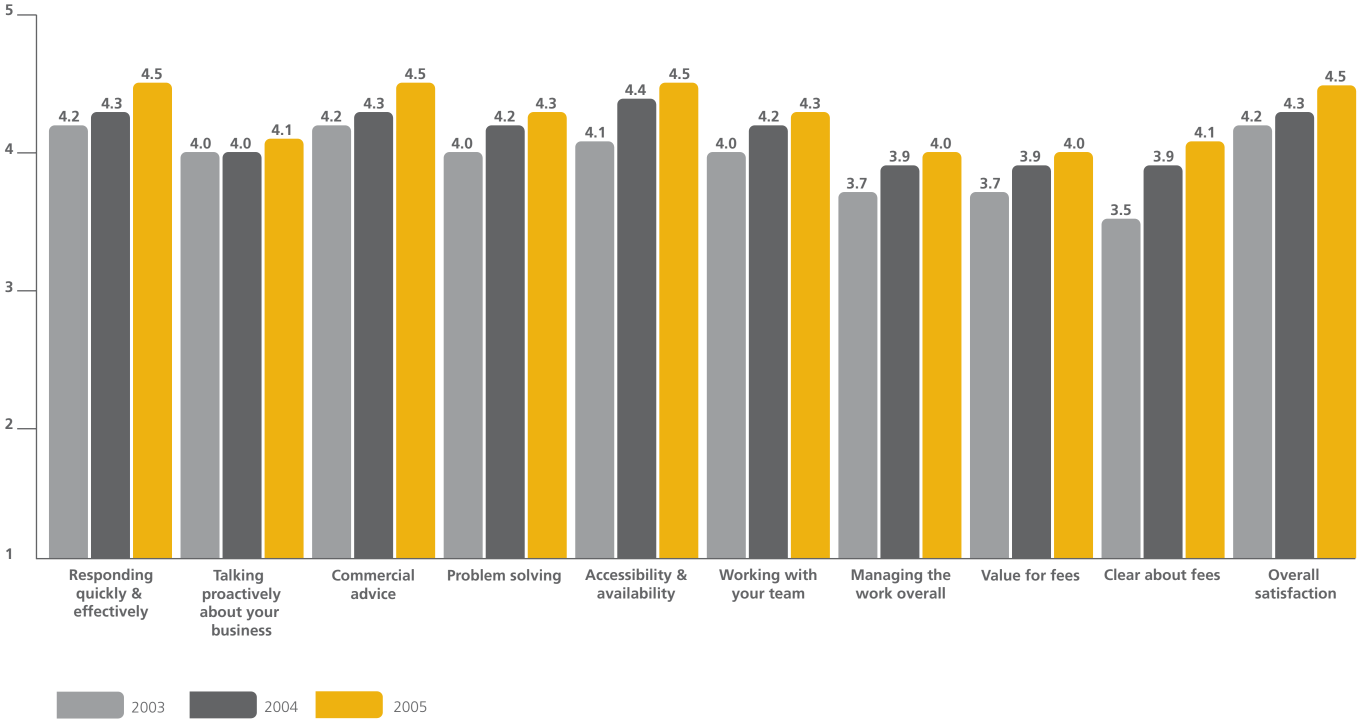
How our clients rated their overall satisfaction



But complacency would be dangerous, not just for us, but for any legal firm. We may have reached our target of 4.5/5 for 'overall satisfaction', but that doesn't mean our clients will necessarily remain loyal. Furthermore, our competitors are also collecting their own feedback and endeavouring to improve their service, so standing still and patting ourselves on the back is simply not an option.

The level of expectation of client organisations is changing. Services that we now consider to be innovative will soon become standard. The challenge for us and for all legal firms is to maintain our momentum and develop solutions to the new challenges that are just around the corner.

Client feedback average scores per year 2003-2005



Average score calendar year	Responding quickly & effectively	Talking proactively about your business	Commercial advice	Problem solving	Accessibility & availability	Working with your team	Managing the work overall	Value for fees	Clear about fees	Overall satisfaction
2003	4.2	4.0	4.2	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.0	3.7	3.5	4.2
2004	4.3	4.0	4.3	4.2	4.4	4.4	4.2	3.9	3.9	4.3
2005	4.5	4.1	4.5	4.3	4.5	4.5	4.3	4.0	4.1	4.5

What's behind the numbers?

As well as demonstrating a general improvement in client service over the last few years, these figures also prompt some interesting questions about the way our clients think.

For instance, it is very hard to get the highest scores for the questions relating to fees. This is because the market rate for legal services is, as one client put it, "very hard to stomach".

But that doesn't mean our clients aren't satisfied. In fact the scores for overall satisfaction are relatively high. Unpicking the relationship between value, fees and satisfaction is at the heart of what we are trying to achieve with our feedback programme. We aim to truly deliver value for money.

We're disappointed that clients are much more likely to give us relatively lower scores for "talking proactively about legal issues affecting your business". We provide a free online information service, Law-Now, to address this issue, but unfortunately it is not enough for clients to rate us as excellent.

We may receive lower scores because this is a client management skill rather than a core legal skill, and therefore we do not do it instinctively. This suggests we require further training to influence our lawyers' behaviour.

Client feedback works on several levels

The individual client

Each piece of feedback results in bespoke action planning, building on the positive and addressing the negative, resulting in a better, tailored service for that client.

Overall strategy

We use specialist software, previously used only in academic circles, to store and categorise the qualitative data. We can then perform powerful analysis on a wide range of issues across practice groups, industry groups or the whole firm, and use our findings to inform our strategy.

Performance measurement

The 10 quantitative questions allow us to measure our performance against a target.

As a cyclical process

We listen to the clients; they inform us of what's important, we then reflect this in our questions so we can measure how well our improvement initiatives are taking effect.

We have taken many steps and introduced a range of services and initiatives across the firm in response to what the feedback tells us.

Case study

The client relationship partner

"He's totally focused on client service. He'd go to the moon for us."

This is how the legal manager at one of our clients describes the working relationship with a partner at CMS Cameron McKenna.

It's the sort of client feedback we dream of. A valued client who is satisfied with the degree of emphasis we have placed on service. A client who knows we care about their interests. A client who feels we go to great lengths to keep them happy. It's the kind of success story we are striving to achieve with all of our clients.

It's all thanks to the partner's focus on building the relationship. And we expect this from all our Client Relationship Partners (CRPs).

This particular client, a major multi-national company, was interviewed earlier this year as part of our feedback programme. During the interview, we gathered a wealth of information about what makes this relationship so special.

Key points:

- The easy communication between our team and theirs provides "a huge advantage to the business," – so much so that our lawyers are considered to be an integral part of the in-house team.
- The CRP has worked hard to "really understand our business drivers, the way we do deals and our approach". He has encouraged his team to do the same.
- He has achieved a good balance of partner and assistant involvement, and provided strong assistants so that there is less need for partners to get involved.
- "All the lawyers have a very proactive approach," and this is seen as a key differentiator, helping the client to manage risks.
- We have responded to a previous issue over invoice format, and we now provide the client with a tailored billing procedure that delivers the right information at the right frequency.
- We provide the client with high quality secondees.
- They have integrated our free email update service, Law-Now, into their own business processes and bring the articles to team meetings to discuss the issues raised.

Of course, even with a client as satisfied as this, the feedback still suggested a few areas for improvement, as it always does.

The legal manager was keen to be assured that we could continue to provide "good, bright, high quality lawyers," as the client grows and their demand for legal services increases.

We also needed to continue to pay attention to how we could demonstrate 'value'. Secondments, training and innovative fee structures are all initiatives we can use to reward loyalty from our clients.

Finally, we received some useful development tips for our junior lawyers, which is helpful in building the partners of the future. For example, suggestions were made as to how one lawyer could improve their communication style.

It is the responsibility of the CRP to act upon these issues, and by doing so to continue to service the client to the highest level.

Putting service into everything we do

Location, Location, Location

Clients like to know that they can get hold of their advisers. Access is important and shouldn't be restricted to telephone and e-mail. We have offices in key locations around the UK to allow our clients closer access to our people, as often as they need.

Feedback in our Insurance group showed that face-to-face contact was valued at an unusually high level. One of our responses has been to open an office in the City EC3, to allow our clients closer access to our people, "on their home turf".

CMS Cameron McKenna also has offices throughout Central and Eastern Europe. And, as part of the CMS alliance of firms, we have strong partnerships with respected and trusted firms across Western Europe. Our international clients require this capability from us. They need legal advice that is sensitive to the local markets.

Standardising service levels across national boundaries presents a major challenge. We have embraced our Central and Eastern European offices into the feedback process so that their clients can also benefit from an improved and tailored service. Furthermore, we are working with the CMS alliance member firms to share our knowledge and introduce the client feedback process into Western Europe.

Valuable Additions

What on earth is value and how do you 'add' it? Every client we interview has their own definition. But there are a few simple 'add-on' initiatives that clients have responded well to in our feedback (if they are customised to meet their requirements):

Secondees – Clients appreciate this additional resource. The benefits work both ways: it's a young and talented resource, and it provides important experience for our people. The things they learn on the ground in turn helps us to understand the client better.

Training – Targeted training courses build the relationship with the client through giving them useful skills and knowledge whilst also demonstrating our commitment to them.

Seminars – We run regular free seminars at our offices for our clients, based on developments within specific industries or areas of the law. Clients are keen to attend seminars that are relevant to their business.

Library & Knowledge Management – Our clients benefit from direct access to our extensive range of international legal and business resources in our library. We provided a knowledge management resource to one of our major clients to help them pull together information for their panel review.

Law-Now – We provide a free online information and news alert service, which allows our 25,000 subscribers to keep up to date with legal developments (www.law-now.com). Users subscribe to their own areas of interest and we do the rest.

Future-proofing

Making it to partner in a law firm takes time. A lot of time. And being a successful Client Relationship Partner means more than being an exceptional lawyer. That's why we've invested time and money in educating and training for our legal staff at all levels in client service, business development, financial planning and project management.

We have an assistants programme rolling out across the firm, which trains our junior lawyers in the planning and development of accounts they are involved in. We recognise that our future depends on our ability to provide lawyers who understand our clients' businesses, as well as they understand ours.

What should the profession be doing for the future?

Our goal is to change the everyday behaviour of lawyers, now and in the future, to meet the needs of the market. To make this happen, four areas of the profession have their own part to play: the governing bodies, the educators, the buyers and the providers.

The governing bodies have an opportunity to directly influence the education that young lawyers receive. The introduction of client care training at an early stage in their career will ensure that the lawyers of the future have a broad and deep understanding of the relevant skills, and their importance to the profession.

The Law Society is currently reviewing the content, length and definition of the LPC. We are lobbying the Law Society to bring client service into the LPC formally, making it an integral part of the qualification.

"Work is already underway to redefine the LPC with improving service to clients one of the key aims. There is a debate to be had with Regulation Board about making client service training a compulsory part of the LPC. We look forward to further discussions with the profession about how we can raise standards to ensure that new solicitors are not just experts in the law but also excel at client care."
Fiona Woolf CBE , Law Society President

The educators develop the lawyers of the future, and will implement the decisions of the governing bodies. At the moment, trainee solicitors are not required to spend a single hour of their training programme focusing on client service. Instead, law firms take responsibility for educating their lawyers in client service and business development, further down the track. While this is positive and should continue, the gap between a client's expectation and experience suggests that we should be starting a little earlier.

CMS Cameron McKenna have agreed with BPP, the sole provider of our Legal Practice Course, that we will add a Client Service Module to compliment the traditional course. We want our trainees to embark on their career in law knowing that client service is a very real part of what's expected from the firm and their clients.

"The Legal Practice Course at BPP is highly interactive, using detailed client portfolios that integrate the strands of law and business in a transactional context. The course is designed to facilitate a real understanding of how and why business decisions are made and how to work effectively with clients in the business environment. The new Client Service Module we are designing with CMS Cameron McKenna will build on this and develop trainees' appreciation of the centrality of client service in their professional lives."
Peter Crisp, Dean, Law School,
BPP College of Professional Studies Limited

BPP Law School was formed in 1992 and offers training for lawyers at all stages of professional life. The Law School offers postgraduate law training for those intending to qualify as either a Solicitor or a Barrister.

The buyers demand a certain level of service from law firms. They are the driving force behind change. They have already started to influence the industry through their raised expectations for service delivery. Lawyers can respond to this demand either proactively or reactively.

Through the introduction of objective measurement the buyers can influence the way law firms perform. Against measures set and agreed with their clients, lawyers can demonstrate value that they deliver over and above their technical legal advice. To assist with this, we have developed a scorecard which highlights key areas that the buyer should prioritise and then measure. This scorecard can be used to establish what measures should be set when selecting legal advisors, and help to build performance targets into the relationship.

The legal providers will ultimately be responsible for implementing change. The firms that take proactive steps to understand and address the needs of the clients will have greater success than those that take a reactive approach to changes in the market. Seeking feedback and responding to the findings is one way of being proactive.

Our feedback tells us that we have to innovate on fees. Price is not something lawyers generally boast about, nor is it something they are trained to deal with. But it is a commercial aspect of our role that we know we need to get better at.

Gone are the days when lawyers stick to a rigid fee structure. Every client and every deal will have specific requirements on price and charging. We are working across the firm to share knowledge regarding innovative fee arrangements that demonstrate risk sharing and value to the client.

We have to reflect the expanding role and address the worries of General Counsel. We have skills within our own firms that can provide assistance and reassurance to General Counsel in finance, in relationship and knowledge management, in cross practice legal skills.

Above all, we need to continue to listen to what our clients tell us. The business consultancy research of Bain & Co. a few years ago established that 65% to 80% of firms that had fired a service provider had answered "satisfied" or "very satisfied" in the survey they completed before they fired the provider.

Which all goes to show, there's listening and there's understanding.

"Legal firms should take more risk, meaning providing more competitive rates upfront and taking a bigger success fee."
Client Feedback, 2005

Value scorecard

We have devised a value scorecard (overleaf) that measures legal advisers' performance against a series of factors, which our clients tell us represent key aspects of client service.

To use the scorecard, rate your legal adviser against the 32 statements in four key areas of cost, relationship management, quality and added value. Each key area has a subtotal that can then be added together to provide an overall score at the bottom of the page. The 32 statements are scored on a scale of 1 to 5, which corresponds to a value from the following scale:

1 Very poor

2 Poor

3 Average

4 Good

5 Excellent

This scorecard approach provides a snapshot of the overall relationship you have with a legal adviser, as well as allowing you to compare the performance of one legal adviser versus another or against a panel of legal advisers or against a predetermined overall score. This can then be used to highlight areas of service which are a concern and that may need addressing.

Another use of the value scorecard is for you to determine the areas that you value the most by rating each statement in terms of importance. This will help you communicate with your legal advisers to improve the service that you receive.

C/M/S/ Cameron McKenna

Cost	1	2	3	4	5
Clear communication around fees and bills that meet your requirements for detail					
Billing methods match your preferred format and frequency of delivery					
Quotes/cost estimates are realistic, no consistent low balling					
Deliver value for fees paid					
Understand your cost base and internal cost drivers					
	Score				

Relationship management	1	2	3	4	5
Dedicated team and client partner focused on your business with a cultural/personality fit					
Listen to your needs and respond to them quickly and appropriately					
Understand and willing to share risk with you					
Understand your strategy and business objectives, current and future					
Understand market trends and issues affecting your business and sector					
Keep you informed and up to date					
Talk proactively about your business					
Ask, "What could we have done better for you?"					
	Score				

Quality	1	2	3	4	5
Legal solution provided and advice given					
Provide commercially sound advice					
Project and time management					
Keep to deadlines					
Responsive and accessible					
Speed and effectiveness in resolving issues and delivering solutions					
Right level of expertise - neither over or under lawyered					
The relationship with the Client Relationship Partner					
Consistency of service delivery from across the firm					
Ask, “What else could we do to help?”					
	Score				

Added value	1	2	3	4	5
Dedicated relationship manager/management team					
A commitment to periodic relationship reviews and matter debrief sessions					
Access to a team member for ad-hoc legal queries					
Secondments (if appropriate)					
Commitment to provide relevant and specific training to in-house team (if appropriate)					
Access to Know-how and use of library with set parameters					
No or reduced charge for an agreed period when taking over an existing project					
Offer proactive and preventative advice					
Provide insight into upcoming trends and issues before they become a concern					
	Score				

Overall score

Have your say

As you've probably gathered, we're interested in your feedback.
So, now that you've read the report, why not tell us what you think?

listeningtoyou@cms-cmck.com

Law-Now™

CMS Cameron McKenna's free online information service

To register for Law-Now online go to our home page www.law-now.com

CMS Cameron McKenna
Mitre House
160 Aldersgate Street
London EC1A 4DD

T: +44 (0)20 7367 3000
F: +44 (0)20 7367 2000