

A section on the rise

Jeff Golden, chair of this year's ABA International meeting, talks to **Simon Crompton**

SC: How has your first year in charge of the ABA Section of International Law been?

JG: Great, when I became chair at the end of last year's meeting in San Francisco I took over a section on a roll. The leadership over the past few years has been a succession of outstanding talent and great team players. I learned a lot from them, and they've put ABA International into a whole new sphere.

How have membership figures been going?

Again, going well based on several years of growth. We're the fastest growing section of the ABA. When I took over I was impressed that we had 16,000 members. But someone told me yesterday that this has gone up to 17,500. Not all bar associations have found it that easy to grow.

Where have the numbers come from?

A large portion of it is from young lawyers. We have been emphasising that section of the membership for a while and they seem very interested. At this year's ABA International meeting in London we have a young lawyers track. We have one session on pathways to employment in international law [Thursday at 9:00]. That's chaired by Scott Mason of the University of San Diego but also includes Martina Barcaroli of the Consiglio Nazionale del Notariato in Paris and Patrick O'Malley from Interpresas Consulting in Monza. And we have a session on lifestyle and life issues [Friday at 2:15] for the modern associate. That's chaired by Markus Zwicky of the International Association of Young Lawyers' and includes Ed Hillhouse, dean of the medical school at the University of Leeds, alongside Ken Costa of UBS in London. So it's a very international and varied track for those younger lawyers attending.

"A Navajo chief pointed out that much mistreatment has been done pursuant to the law, not against it"



Are those sessions new this year?

The specific sessions aren't, they've been cornerstones of the agenda for a while, but this year we added a dedicated track for the first time. The tracks are for specific practice areas, geographies or sections and prevent lawyers from having two sessions that they want to go to at the same time.

Why have an international flavour at the sessions?

It makes some of the debate much more interesting. Legal education, for example – in the US, law is only a postgraduate course, whereas in the UK it is taken at undergraduate level. It will be interesting to hear from both the undergrad and postgrad schools here as part of the look at pathways to employment. We also have a dean from Sierra Leone coming to talk. His challenges are very different to those in developed countries – one of the big ones is getting enough textbooks together for a whole class. Hopefully that should cast a different light on other issues in legal education.

A large part of our growth has also been outside the US. Around 20% of members live outside the US (including the chair for the

first time), of which half are US-qualified and half aren't. In fact it's a secret we've kept too well that you don't have to be a US-qualified lawyer to be a member of the ABA. In fact, the ABA board recently announced that those lawyers can also become officers. So you may well see a chair who isn't US-qualified sometime soon.

Why would a non-US resident, non-US-qualified lawyer join ABA International?

He just needs to be interested in how the US and the ABA interact with the world, to think about global issues and how they involve America. Membership of the section is a gateway to a very large, intellectually rich group of people, so it can be a fascinating thing to take on. We serve as the point where the ABA (with over 400,000 members, the largest voluntary professional body in the world) and the rest of the world meet.

What kind of themes would he find at this year's meeting?

There are probably four key themes. One will be the ongoing work in advancing the rule of law. This will be a key debate at several of the sessions, and will hopefully lead to

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THE WORLD'S LEADING ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT LAW FIRMS

some interesting thoughts being filtered up to the section's council. It is something that Bill Neukom, the new president of the ABA in the US, has been heavily involved with through his World Justice Project.

A second big theme will be the dignity of the law and the legal profession. If we are pushing for the rule of law around the world, we'd like it to rule deservedly. And many events have eroded the view of the law at different points in history. For example, I talked to a chief of the Navajo Indians about this, and he pointed out that much of their mistreatment over the years has been done pursuant to the law, not against it. At one stage in America's history the easiest way to carry out that kind of behaviour was to get a law passed to enable you to do it. It wasn't that hard. So it's easy to assume that everyone is in favour of the rule of law, but it isn't that straightforward. You need to make sure people buy in to the idea that the law should rule.

Reaching out to young lawyers is a third theme we want to look at closely, but all these themes are interlinked.

How do they connect?

Well, fighting for the rule of law and working on its dignity are obviously linked, and then dignity is connected to reaching young lawyers. We want to emphasise that the law is an important and dignified profession that can make a real difference to the world.

Personally, I think being a lawyer today is

more exciting than any other period since the sixties. The things that are taking place in international law are revolutionary, from international courts to the kind of campaigns the bar associations are leading. The law will only get its fair share of the best and brightest individuals if it is seen in this light. We need to roll up our sleeves and communicate with young lawyers, something I hope the new track at this year's meeting that I mentioned earlier will do.

What's the fourth key area?

Lawyers giving back, using their experience to tackle the world's toughest problems – poverty, disease, famine. These aren't legal issues, but there are ways in which lawyers can use their expertise to help in specific areas. This kind of work is done through taskforces, who work on separate projects and all report back to the chair.

Can you give us a specific example?

Sure. One I set up is called Financial Engineering for Economic Development, or Feed. We recruited lawyers that have a background in derivatives or structured finance, and asked them to look at ways to use the most sophisticated legal products in these areas to help poor countries. For example, they are analysing risk management techniques to see how they could protect producers or countries that are dependent on one product, or at risk of a particular event, such as low rainfall. By using derivatives to hedge against commodity

prices or disasters they might be able to stop to spread risk, and prevent drought turning into famine or disease.

Does the taskforce work with any international agencies?

Yes, it's working with the UN on this – it gives them a big access to talent in this area. We have Rick Grove, former CEO of the International Swaps and Derivatives Association, involved, as well as people from JP Morgan, Goldman Sachs, Deutsche Bank, Calyon and others. And it's something I follow closely, given my derivatives background.

What other taskforces are there?

There are many, but a few others I've been involved with concern the rule of law's crossover with public health and legal education. The first sees people from the ABA team up with other experts in the public health arena, to see how they can work together to enhance both aspects. The second works on legal education and its specialist certification. There's a need there to make standards fairly universal, to make them less parochial and so increase awareness of the rule of law and legal standards around the world. One other taskforce worth mentioning is the international models project on women's rights. This was driven by an inspirational trip we took to west Africa in March. Again, there are many ways that international law and the presence of the ABA can help on these issues.

TODAY'S SCHEDULE

8:00 am - 8:45 am	Continental Breakfast	BALLROOM
9:00 am - 10:30 am	Opening Ceremony featuring the Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales - The Rt Hon Lord Phillips of Worth Matravers (Head of the Judiciary) and the Master of the Rolls, the Rt Hon Sir Anthony Clarke (President of the Court of Appeal - Civil - And Head of Civil Justice)	BALLROOM
10:30 am - 10:45 am	ALBEMARLE	
10:45 am - 12:15 pm	Where to Arbitrate?	BURLINGTON
	Islamic Finance: New Products, New Challenges	NORTH SUITE
	Showcase Program: Conducting Internal Investigation in Multinational Corporations	COURT SUITE
	Corporate Responsibility and the Fragile State	FITZROY
	Trade Facilitation: Cutting Red Tape at International Borders. Progress Since Doha?	DEVONSHIRE
12:30 pm - 2:00 pm	Luncheon with the former Attorney General for England and Wales, The Rt Hon Lord Goldsmith of Allerton QC	AUDLEY
2:15 pm - 3:45 pm	Showcase Program: Balloon Debate on the Best Dispute Resolution Methods	COURT SUITE
	Multinational Enterprise Liability in Insolvency Proceedings	NORTH SUITE
	Data Protection and Internal Investigations	BURLINGTON
	Wetlands in War: International Environmental Law and Damages to Aquatic Resources during Conflict	DEVONSHIRE
	China's WTO Compliance: the US, Canadian, and EU Views	FITZROY
4:00 pm - 6:00 pm	Section Administration Committee Meeting	BROOK
4:00 pm - 5:30 pm	Electronic Discovery Issues in Investigations and Litigation	BURLINGTON
	Challenges to the Rule of Law in Africa and Elsewhere	DEVONSHIRE
	International Chemicals Regulation: There's More Just Beyond Our REACH	NORTH SUITE
	Extraterritorial Application of US Export Controls and Trade Sanctions	FITZROY
	Showcase Program: Building and Managing a High Performance Multi-Jurisdictional Legal Team	COURT SUITE
7:00 pm - 9:00 pm	Reception at the Grosvenor House Hotel	BALLROOM
9:00 pm - 11:00 pm	Committee Dinners	

Hidden conviction

Behind the soundbites and the questions over his new job, Lord Goldsmith is a man of fervent belief says **Rachel Evans**

Lord Goldsmith may have exited government but he can still create a stir. Last week, a media frenzy greeted the ex-Attorney General's decision to move into private practice when he accepted a role as European chair of litigation at Debevoise & Plimpton. His appointment was greeted by a headline in the Guardian newspaper that read: So Lord Goldsmith, what first attracted you to the £1 million-a-year job?

Goldsmith's time in the public eye has always been controversial. But although he is best known for legally sanctioning the Iraqi war, his opposition to extending the detention period for suspected terrorists to 90 days and his outspoken comments against Guantanamo Bay show him to be a man of conviction.

And this man of conviction believes he has found a new approach to tackling terrorism which he will expound during his lunchtime speech today. Balance is central, specifically the balance between security and freedom. "We need to recognize that liberty and freedom is part of the solution to dealing with terrorism rather than an obstacle," says Goldsmith. "We have to win the struggle for ideas with a war of values as well as conventional means."

If this sounds a little glib, you'd be right. Goldsmith litters his speech with the sort of soundbites that headline writers adore. ("Guantanamo is a recruiting sergeant for Al-Qaeda" for example) But the sincerity behind his neat phrases and catchy slogans is undeniable. "My basic thesis is that we have to demonstrate – by thought and action – liberty, justice, the rule of law and equality," he says.

Terrorists threaten these values, not only through organizations such as Al-Qaeda, but by pushing societies to abandon their values to boost security. Goldsmith believes that while security is important, the West must remember it is fighting for the very values that terrorists would destroy.

Personal crusade

Goldsmith's time in government has clearly left its mark. The balance between personal liberties and public safety was a feature of much Parliamentary debate in the wake of 9/11 and continues to concern him. "It's a topic I had to grapple with during my six years as Attorney General and you don't stop worrying about it when you're not in office."

In grappling with these issues, Goldsmith took a principled stance against the existence

"Guantanamo has tarnished the proud tradition of the US as a beacon of liberty"

of Guantanamo Bay. He secured the release of British nationals held within the camp and continues to call for its closure. He believes that his vocal opposition has not been ignored, but admits that he has been frustrated at the lack of positive developments.

"What I said then has had considerable influence, but I have been disappointed that more has not been done. It really needs to close, and the sooner the better."

Pressure must remain on the US to close Guantanamo, Goldsmith says, as it has become a symbol of injustice (soundbite: "it has tarnished the proud tradition of the US as a beacon of liberty"). Rebuilding this reputation will be an uphill struggle, but it's one the West must embrace and win.

How to save the world

So how can the West convince an angry world that it's one of the good guys? Goldsmith thinks there are three key ingredients. First, the West must practice what it preaches.

Adjustments to personal liberties are fine if they



address a specific threat and are proportional.

Second, Goldsmith believes that more needs to be done to promote understanding between communities. "We need programmes of cohesion that try to bridge differences between communities and counter the myths about Western societies."

And finally, on a more practical note, the West's aid efforts should help people on a wider scale. "Using aid we can reach people in the depths of poverty – not just by putting bread and rice on the table but by building governments and stable, independent legal systems."

This approach could seem rather paternalistic and Goldsmith is keen to emphasise the importance of international cooperation, not only between bodies like the UN and G8, but between the West and the rest. "We have to be careful that we are not patronising but work together with governments in different parts of the world to create international understanding and action."

Role of the ABA

Bar associations such as the ABA have a key role to play in establishing these independent legal systems, in promoting understanding, and in demonstrating justice, tolerance and equality. The ABA's Ceeli (Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative) to restore the legal systems of ex-Soviet satellites is just one example on the practical difference that such organizations can make.

"This is a very important part of what bar associations can do, though maybe they can do more," says Goldsmith. "They can help other countries, not just their own members. It's a global world and the problems of one country are exported to others."

The ABA, Goldsmith believes, helps uphold the quality of justice in the US and the need for such justice. Maintaining this is the key to beating terrorism and to restoring the credentials of the West. Bar associations have a vital job to do in preserving justice and ensuring that a balance between security and liberty is found.

CV

Debevoise & Plimpton – European chair of litigation, September 2007 to present

Privy council – Privy counsellor, appointed 2002

Her Majesty's Government – Attorney General, 2001 to 2007

UK Parliament – Life peer, created 1999. Also Prime Minister's personal representative to the Convention for the European Charter of Fundamental Rights

Bar of England & Wales – Chairman, elected 1995.

High Court – Deputy High Court judge, appointed 1994

Crown Court – Crown Court recorder, appointed 1987

Fountain Court Chambers – Barrister, 1972 to 2001. Became a QC in 1987

Your tour around Gothic London

Ahead of the tour on Thursday evening, **Matthew Bridle** presents a potted history and mini-tour of the Courts

Described as the last great Gothic public building in London, the Royal Courts of Justice house both the High Courts of Justice and the Court of Appeal, known jointly (as of 1981) as the Supreme Court of England and Wales. Open to public tours, it is England's primary civil court, hearing cases from the likes of Lord Archer and Michael Jackson as well as current cases such as compensation for failed pension schemes. The building itself is made up of over 1000 rooms with 3.5 miles of hallways connecting them all, and employing an excess of 150 Judges, Registrars and Masters.

Construction of the RCJ was originally envisioned amidst pressures to erect a grand new building to exemplify a reformed legal system and to replace the complex system of courts that had been housed in Westminster Hall, Lincoln's Inn and various other buildings around London. It is estimated that the building cost Parliament just under a million pounds, paid for by cash accumulated in court.

When in 1866 Parliament announced a competition for its design, eleven architects are said to have submitted proposals. The original location had been envisaged at the Thames Embankment, with the current loca-

"A trapdoor was discovered under the linoleum, where a prisoner could drop into a tunnel and out into the Strand"

tion between the cities of Westminster and London chosen only after lengthy debate. George Edmund Street, a solicitor turned architect, was appointed sole architect whose design was said to unite 'Gothic revival with the quasi-classical symmetry appropriate for a public building'. Street is heralded with overcoming a number of potential building hazards including a mason's strike (German workers were brought in to complete the construction), a bureaucratic arts patronage and the demands of clients whose interests often conflicted. Sadly, Street died before Queen Victoria officially opened the courts in 1882, but the courts are said to be the finest achievement of a leader of the High Victorian generation of British architects.

Very much a working court, the Royal

Court of Justice houses the High Court, which hears more important civil disputes and is divided broadly by three divisions: i) Queen's Bench Division dealing with a wide range of contract law and personal injury and general negligence cases, but also has special responsibility as a supervisory court; ii) Family Division dealing broadly with issues such as divorce, children, probate and medical treatment (such as the separation of conjoined twins without parental permission); and the iii) Chancery Division, covering a broad spectrum in relation to issues of equity; i.e. landlord/tenant disputes, intellectual property (e.g. the Beatles' Apple Corps case), commercial frauds and increasingly involved with financial regulatory work. A transcript of one day's hearing in the High Court contains about 35,000 words - roughly half the length of a novel.

The Royal Courts of Justice also house the Court of Appeal, consisting of two divisions: the Civil Division (hearing appeals from the High Court and County Courts) and the Criminal Division (hearing appeals from the Crown Court).

The Citizens Advice Bureau also has a small office in the main entrance hall where lawyers provide free advice. There is usually a

queue for this service. There is also a Personal Support Unit where litigants in person can get emotional support and practical information about what happens in court. The main criminal court (Crown Court), housed separately, is the Central Criminal Court, and is known popularly as the Old Bailey.

Tour of the Law Courts

Entering through the main gates in the Strand one passes under two elaborately carved porches fitted with iron gates. The carvings over the outer porch are heads of the most eminent judges and lawyers. Over the highest point of the upper arch is a figure of Jesus; to the left and right at a lower level are figures of Solomon and Alfred the Great.

Upon entering the building and walking



through the security arch, there is a statue of George Street working on his plans. Continuing straight ahead through the final arch, you'll see a display showing the various robes worn by the judges. Once through the display, go up the spiral staircase posted Bear Garden, then turn left and left again towards two rooms that were originally robing rooms and retain their original décor. The origin of the name Bear Garden is alleged to originate from the amount of arguing that took place there, as it had been used to settle certain matters before a trial. The windows in this room overlook a courtyard known as the Quadrangle. Today these rooms are essentially waiting areas for applications to be heard by the Interim Applications Judge for injunctions.

Walking through these rooms and through a swing door, turn left and down a flight of stairs. At the bottom, turn right and through a set of doors which leads down to the Action Department, where cases are heard in the Queen's Bench Division. As further access to the building is restricted from here, go down the stairs leading out of the building and into the Quadrangle. Turn right and walk across the Quadrangle, and at the far side you see steps leading back into the building. Follow these steps and turn right, which will lead you into the East Block, which was recently renovated in 1994.



Return along the same corridor back into the Quadrangle.

Turning immediately right and up the stairs again; through two sets of doors (are you lost yet?) enter a walkway with tessellated flooring and complex Gothic ceiling. Carry on and on your left is the Main Hall. The pil-

lars here were the work of German workmen who carved them in their spare time before the managers informed them that their work was not in the plans. Turn right in the Main Hall and ascend the staircase posted First Floor Courts 11-19, which at the top gives a fine view of the main hall. The mosaic floor

was not laid in blocks, but done individually, and was intended to continue to the windows but halted upon Street's death because no one dare press Parliament for more money.

Return down the stairs and enter the hall; located on your left through the first archway are the main cells where the prisoners are held. According to rumour, a secret of the appellate cells was not discovered for 20 years after the fact; an unfastened trapdoor under the linoleum was discovered just outside the cells, where a prisoner could have dropped into a tunnel, through the engineering shop and out into the Strand!

Also around here are portraits and statues of Queen Victoria, Lord Russell and the so-called Fire Judges, who settled land disputes after the Great Fire of London in 1666. In the middle of the Main Hall is a cabinet containing the Daily Cause List of all cases to be heard on that day. On the other side of the cabinet are stairs that lead to the main court corridor. These stairs lead to courts 3-9, which are good examples of the original courts; they are open to the public unless posted otherwise. Lastly, at the rear entrance of the building there is a stone cat and a dog representing fighting litigants in court over the judge's entrance.



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A crowded marketplace

Legal networks are struggling to differentiate themselves from their competitors. But many have new products, seminars and geographical ambitions to solve that problem.

Shamin Hassomal reports

“You don’t get competitors in legal networks, as far as I know no one has ever tried to poach one of our firms. Competition is not really a valid concept,” says Peter Appleton Jones of Tag Law.

Legal networks continue to assume that the term competition doesn’t apply to their industry sector. Networks like Meritas and Tag Law operate under the impression that a one firm per jurisdiction strategy means that there are enough law firms to go around. While this may be true, what’s the quality like – are there enough top-tier law firms to go around?

In a quick survey by the *IBA Daily News* of 10 legal networks, all of them claimed that their members were top tier firms in the relevant jurisdictions. Those networks do have to compete for the best firms in key jurisdictions – not all law firms offer the same calibre of legal expertise. A network may be extensive and capable but that does not make it the best. Most networks are looking to fill gaps in their membership in emerging economies such as North Africa, the Middle East and South America. These economies are characteristically weaker and harder to infiltrate. With this as a common goal, networks might find themselves struggling to attract a top tier firm to their network if they do not have top-tier services to offer in return.

Legal networks have only had a role in the legal profession for 20 years. It is easy to rank the firms within them, to pit one organization against another within a sector and compare the reputations of the constituent law firms. The

assumption that rivalry has no place in legal networks is not a commercial attitude, and could jeopardise networks in the long run. A less than first-rate network would not be able to justify fees up to \$50,000, payable today for membership of some of the larger networks. Reputable and high ranking networks could lose out on key clients and an increase in profits, sacrificing their reputation in the market.

The network journey

A network could be defined as the agreement of independent law firms to enter into association with one another. To date, this trend has not only manifested itself with large city-based firms but has also with smaller firms. The alternative is mergers between global or regional law firms. An example is the creation of the alliance between Herbert Smith, Gleiss Lutz and Stibbe. This unprecedented merger, which gave the firm offices across Europe, Asia and the US, came about due to the need for greater legal expertise and skills, needed to keep pace with the demands of corporate clients operating in a highly competitive market. Independent firms still need to offer international reach to their clients in order to survive. In order to ensure retention of the crucial attorney-client relationship and expansion of the client base, a consistently high standard of service is necessary. It is this difficulty in recruiting attorneys with the relevant skills that has been passed on to network associations. The result is immediate, personal and quality local service backed up by a

powerful brand image.

Nearly all network memberships offer at least a basic package deal. Most were founded on two main principles, relationships and referrals. A referral system exists to facilitate the transfer of work between member firms. The number of jurisdictions this system spans will vary according with the different networks. All networks have a stringent vetting process when assessing potential members and existing members are always asked for references and opinions. Alongside this there is always some form of quality control. Member firms are assessed on a somewhat regular basis. The stringency of this control varies with different networks. The standard checks consist of forms and a quality control committee.

All networks have basic marketing initiatives consisting of brand promotion, newsletters, practice groups and promoting member firms. All networks have a complaints procedure in place, whether it is a single person members can call or a complaints committee. Fee plans differ from network to network, but there is always an obligatory standard component. All networks provide their members with a certain number of events every year, around seven on average. These include regional meetings, practice group meetings, educational events and annual conferences.

Get your money’s worth

By these standards all networks are equal. The differentiating factors are the innovative services that some networks are beginning to deliver to engage their clients and keep up the proactive atmosphere of the network. It is the objective of all networks to provide business for their members. And it is the objective of all members to provide quality service to their clients. In order to fulfil these goals efficiently a network has to be able to boast confidence above all.

According to Paramjit Mahli, media relations for the International Lawyers Network (ILN): “People do business with whom they like, know and trust.” It is this comfort zone that allows members to confidently refer work back and forth without having to take a risk that might ruin their reputation. With this in mind, there are firms that place more emphasis on relationships and firms that place more emphasis on referrals. Adam Cooke, head of business development for Multilaw comments: “Multilaw is a network based on friendship and



Who, when and where?

Network	Founded	Head-quarters	Expansion in 2006	Where next?
International Lawyers Network	1988	New Jersey, US	Australia, Canada, China, Switzerland, England and Germany	South America and Africa
World Law Group	1988			
World Link For Law	Late eighties	Zurich, Switzerland	US, France, Germany, UK, Spain and South America	Japan, Thailand and South America
Lex Mundi	1998	Houston, US	Spain, Netherlands, France, Germany, US and Australia	Slovenia and central Europe
Meritas	1990	Minneapolis, US	London, Germany, US, Australia and Canada	Atlanta, Canada and Romania
Multilaw	1990			Dubai and Middle East
Terralex	1990	Miami, US	North America, Europe, England, Mexico and China	Middle East and North Africa
Tag Law	1998			Ukraine, Montana and Africa
Ius Laboris	2001			Central Europe and Asia



personality, it's not for everyone. We are not prepared to grow at the expense of intimacy." Some networks, such as the World Law Group, refer to themselves as a "best friends network."

On the other hand, many networks are more referral orientated. Terralex appointed a director for referrals in March 2006 in order to increase the accuracy of its referral tracking system. When asked where the value of Terralex lies Charles McCallum says: "Referrals, referrals, referrals!" So it could be suggested that there are two separate kinds of legal networks, those who are not willing to sacrifice deep relationships for expansion, and those who will put business before pleasure. However, legal networks generally aim to provide a good balance of both these factors. Without relationships there wouldn't be trust, and without referrals there wouldn't be demand. So where's the real difference.

Educating the young

The most established new service offered by networks is some form of educational system catering to young lawyers. These initiatives aim to remove the impression that legal networks are a club for senior partners. Young members are introduced to the network culture at an early stage, allowing them to cultivate relationships from the start. Among the most impressive is the Lex Mundi Institute. Lex Mundi runs a week-long intensive programme three times a year involving senior associates and junior partners. In addition, Lex Mundi has created a pro-bono foundation which supports the efforts of social entrepreneurs worldwide. The foundation is sponsored by the Shell, Kellogg and Packard foundations.

ILN boasts another popular option, using webinars to enhance the business development abilities of its attorneys. ILN coordinates and sponsors these webinars together with client webinars in an attempt to showcase the collaborative approach between members of ILN. Other networks that have participated in this educational initiative include Tag Law, with the Tag Academy, and Multilaw, with its academy for young lawyers. The other aspect to this educational approach is that of training attorneys in the practice of writing in business and legal English, an approach endorsed by Ius Laboris and World Link for Law.

Particularly innovative projects include Multilaw's new data privacy solutions project. It is still under development and will be an elec-

tronically accessed product. Twenty-two countries have agreed to provide information on data privacy laws in their jurisdictions. In addition to this, copies of relevant laws, model policies, and EU directives will also be available on the system.

Another outstanding idea has been the inter-staff secondment programme offered by World Link for Law. The purpose of this exchange programme is to promote the knowledge of different judicial systems and to enhance relationships between the members. The programme is voluntary and lasts approximately three months. The tasks that are carried out during these sec-

"We are not prepared to grow at the expense of intimacy"

Adam Cooke, Multilaw

ondments include research on practical cases, participation in court hearings, liaising with clients and local intermediaries, and attending the various social activities organized by the hosting firm. In 2007 the participating cities were Barcelona, Frankfurt, Paris and Warsaw. In addition to this, World Link of Law offers an EU-based IP and trademark search project known as Brandvue. This service is for EU countries only and carries out trademark searches in as little as 48 hours. A report is also issued covering national marks, international registration, and assessment ratings.

Marketing initiatives

The other emerging services within the network market are mostly marketing initiatives. There are certain networks like ILN that retain a PR firm to handle their marketing needs instead of allotting these tasks to the existing staff. This way there is a whole team dedicated to the marketing needs of a network. These new initiatives usually involve travelling and meeting existing members in an attempt to further deepen the relationships within the network. Both Terralex and Tag Law make it a point to personally meet members in order maintain or establish relationships and also as a method of quality control.

The World Law Group operates a database of respected non-member firms for jurisdictions like South Africa and Central America, deemed not yet active enough to justify membership.

Meritas is currently carrying out a corporate business development initiative in the form of a sales project. The staff makes contact with corporate companies on behalf of Meritas and tries to sell them membership and increase awareness of the network. Other marketing initiatives include publications, exhibitions, and sponsored conferences. Tag Law is one of the only networks to be run by a private company and not by lawyers, meaning it can dedicate time and attention to running the network and not treat it as a second priority.

Where do we go from here?

In all major jurisdictions independent players have been able to stand alone. They have a clear future in the market and according to Tanna Moore, president of Meritas: "There is a real opportunity for Meritas and other networks to take a significant leadership role in the market. The network business model is a new model in the global economy and fills a clear gap in the corporate agenda of many companies. The model is flourishing."

The legal profession is now showing that the global firm route is not an exclusive one. If the current trend continues, global firms could reach a plateau, after which they will become less global as loss-making offices are cut to bolster profitability. Globalization and rapid technological change are bound to make all industry sectors more international in one way or another, for example due to outsourcing. This is where networks are key players because they boast a competitive international reach.

The future of networks is not just constrained to the legal profession. It could potentially be a feasible model within all industry sectors. Tag Law has an affiliate international network of accounting firms known as TIAG which takes care of the financial market. TIAG is made up of 220 firms in over 90 countries, quite a sizeable chunk of the market. In this way networks have found a new direction in which to expand.

This linkage of legal firms with non-legal firms is the next logical step in the expansion strategy of network associations. Such a relationship would be feasible with marketing consultants, management consultants, engineering consultants, stock brokers, estate agents, investors, and clinical psychologists...the list is never ending. It is also a matter in which productive debate could be initiated with law societies.

worldwide network local expertise



20,000 lawyers

160 firms

100 countries

550 offices

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