

ISON HARRISON

5 YEAR BUSINESS PLAN

2008 – 2013

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A INTRODUCTION

5 YEAR BUSINESS PLAN – LOOKING FORWARD

Purpose of the 5 Year Business Plan

The purpose of the 5 Year Business Plan is to identify the objectives, values, and ambitions of the firm.

It sums up what Ison Harrison stands for and how we intend to evolve over the course of the next 5 years.

Continued success and growth is the overriding objective.

The 5 Year Business Plan provides a clear framework and strategy. The firm's Objectives and Values should be clearly seen in all decisions involving the firm's future development.

In preparing the 5 year Business Plan we have considered where the firm presently has great strengths as well as those areas where improvement is necessary for us to compete at the highest level.

There are also factors which we believe are likely to present particular opportunities and challenges to the firm, and indeed law firms in general, over the course of the next 5 years.

Particular attention has been given to:

Service Delivery

- Drive to improve client care / customer service.
- Drive to improve working conditions.
- Drive for quality – kite-marks such as Lexcel.
- Consistency of service delivery.
- Know what we are good at.
- Know where we need to improve.
- Teamwork.
- Increasing / changing the profile of Ison Harrison.
- The growing importance of bulk referral work in some sectors.
- The firm's enthusiasm to provide services for more commercial clients.

Business Structures

- Management and leadership models and principles.
- Preparing for alternative business structures after Clementi – both financially and structurally.
- Ongoing relationship with Harrison Bunday.
- Succession issues.
- Maintaining and improving profitability.
- Managing the cash needs of the firm.
- Firm's present location at Duke House, Garforth and Crossgates.

The opportunities promised by 'Clementi', as now implemented within the Legal Services Act, demand a special mention. Multi-disciplinary partnerships and non-lawyer investment in law firms means that there is the real possibility of external investment - either in the whole, or distinct parts of the practice. There may be opportunities for non-solicitors to join the present partners in an alternative legal disciplinary partnership.

Provided the firm performs well financially and is well directed and managed then it will be an attractive proposition for future investment.

Annual team business plans focus on the continued improvement and growth of specific areas of the business. They provide detailed key performance indicators against which performance of the teams can be measured.

The Management Board

December 2007

B OUR BUSINESS OBJECTIVES

CONTINUED SUCCESS AND GROWTH

1. Keep Changing – Keep Improving

- Continued success and growth will not just be achieved through honest endeavour, strong management or a commitment to client care. The firm must continue to take pride in its ability to adapt to change and innovate.
- Embrace the changes implemented by the Legal Services Act.

2. Top 10 in Yorkshire

- Be a recognised market leader throughout Yorkshire.
- For clients – commitment to client care, quality of service, and commerciality of advice for private and business clients.
- For employees – commitment to fair deal and work / life balance and promotion from within.
- In size by reference to fee-earners – break into the Top 10 of Yorkshire based law firms.

3. A Quality Service

- Clients expect a quality, cost-efficient service.
- The firm is committed to be market leaders as far as the quality of advice and service that it provides to clients.
- Where service is good – we aspire to be even better.

4. A Consistent Service

- Clients demand consistency.
- Reputations are built on consistency.
- The firm is committed to consistency in the quality of advice and service that it provides to clients.

In achieving our objectives we must always focus on our clients, our colleagues, the financial management of the firm and our corporate responsibilities.

Our Clients

We will:

- Know and understand the sectors in which we offer services.
- Provide the best possible quality of advice to all clients.
- Provide the best possible customer service to all clients.
- Continue to grow in presence / profile regionally and nationally.
- Increase the number of our clients.
- Increase the number of instructions.

Our Colleagues and Team Management

We will

- Focus on teamwork and team integration.
- Recruit to maintain appropriate staffing ratios at team level o maintain service standards.
- Retain and continue to train colleagues.
- Further develop managers' skills.
- Retain open approach to information and management.
- Improve availability and use of key performance indicators.
- Review clear annual team business plans each quarter.
- Continue to develop case management systems and I.T. service and delivery.

Our Finances

We will

- Increase turnover.
- Increase profitability.
- Target salaries to 40% of turnover.
- Target investment in I.T. and employees.
- Reduce outstanding bills and debts.
- Maintain diversity of cost centres.
- Achieve equal balance / split of contribution to profit of
 - Commercial work.
 - Personal injury and clinical negligence work.
 - Private client and residential property work.

Our Corporate Responsibilities

We will:

- Build on green policies.
- Build on support of local charities.

C OUR BUSINESS VALUES

Our business values reflect how we operate as a business. Each decision made in the interests of achieving the overall business objective of continued success and growth will be consistent with the following business values:

- 1. Good Communication**
- 2. Honest Endeavour**
- 3. Respect for Others**
- 4. Corporate Responsibilities**
- 5. Accountability**

1. Good Communication

Good communication allows confidence in the firm's management and in our quality of service to grow.

What do we mean by good communication?

For Colleagues it means

- Providing strong leadership – clearly defined team aims and objectives.
- Ensuring clear lines of management and communication are maintained.
- The principle of no secrets – regular managers briefings and team meetings.
- Treating all colleagues with respect and courtesy.
- Support through coaching, mentoring and training.
- Frequent appraisals – 1-2-1s.
- Managers briefings and 6 monthly road-shows.
- Technical growth through training.
- Listening and acting on new ideas.
- Emphasising the importance of commitment to the team and developing policies to assist in team building and rewarding.

For Clients it means

- Understanding what a client actually wants
- Visiting clients
- Agreeing clear terms of instruction and establishing expectations.
- Maintaining consistency of service delivery.
- Treating all clients with respect and courtesy.
- Recognising that client care / customer service is of paramount importance.
- A commitment to friendly, informative and prompt telephone and e-mail communication.
- A commitment to prompt and informative correspondence in plain english.
- A commitment to consistent and reliable service delivery.
- Smart teamwork.
- A commitment to continuously improving standards of client care / customer service.

To the Outside World it means

- Showing strong leadership and management style.
- Sharing clearly defined team aims and objectives – a clear strategy.
- Developing a strong and consistent brand of the firm together with an associated reputation.
- Maintaining consistent growth in the firm's profile – both regionally and nationally.
- Maintaining a reputation for fair play, quality people and open culture.

2. **Honest Endeavour**

The continued success and growth of the practice is the firm's main business objective.

We believe that the further success and growth shall be achieved through honest endeavour.

Honest endeavour applies to all areas of the business.

Our Delivery of Services

Through honest endeavour we aspire to succeed in delivering:

- High quality service delivery to clients.
- High quality support and services to colleagues.
- High quality legal advice.
- Securing repeat business and recommendations.

Our Marketing

Through honest endeavour we aspire to succeed in successfully:

- Reflecting the firm's values and qualities in the firm's brand
- Increasing cross referrals.
- Increasing market share – commercial.
- Increasing market share – private client.

Our Financial Management

Through honest endeavour we aspire to succeed in successfully:

- Focussing on key performance indicators at team and firm level
- Agreeing, setting, communicating and monitoring team and firm targets.
- Improving risk analysis and reduce claims reporting.

Our Personnel Policies

Through honest endeavour we aspire to succeed in successfully:

- Attracting high quality applicants for vacancies.
- Developing managers - their management tools and skills.
- Increasing staff retention.
- Continuing to improve effectiveness in consultation, setting, communicating and monitoring H.R. policies.
- Providing high quality training – externally and internally for legal training, and internally for case management and I.T. support.
- Promoting from within.

3. Respect for Others

We value our colleagues and the teams in which we work. We believe in mutual respect and celebrate the diversity of talents that we bring to work.

We celebrate equality and diversity of colleagues, clients, and service providers.

We believe that it is important to ensure that colleagues achieve an appropriate work-life balance. This benefits both colleagues and clients.

An appropriate work-life balance has a positive impact on the enthusiasm and motivation of colleagues to their work and their team. Clients benefit from a positive attitude, heightened levels of service in both speed and quality, and client care in general. We believe that happy colleagues result in happy clients – an appropriate work-life balance clearly contributes to this.

We seek to ensure that a work-life balance is maintained by:

- Knowing our colleagues.
- Emphasis on approachable managers and regular communication.
- Regular 1-2-1s where workloads, stress levels and performance are monitored.
- Not encouraging work being taken home.
- Encouraging colleagues to take their full entitlement to annual leave.
- Flexibility of management by empowering managers to individually manage the members of their teams (working hours, making up time etc).
- Focus on rewards and recognition so as to be ahead of our competitors.

4. Corporate Responsibilities

As a business we do not exist in isolation. We are committed to running our business responsibly.

The Environment

We believe in delivering the best service that we can to our clients / customers in a way that takes into account the effect on the environment.

We have a Green Team which is concerned with ensuring that we constantly seek to improve the way that we work so as to reduce our impact on the environment.

We show a :

- Commitment to telephone and e-mail communication.
- Commitment to reusing.
- Commitment to recycling.
- Commitment to working towards paperless teams.
- Commitment to reducing use of consumable resources.

Our Locality

We actively support local charitable projects.

Our focus is first and foremost in Yorkshire. Colleagues are encouraged to involve the firm in local charitable projects.

Pro bono work

We have for many years been involved in pro bono work for existing and new clients. We look to assist wherever possible and recognise this as being one of the firm's corporate responsibilities.

We always have regard to the importance of the work to the client, any potential greater public interest and the commerciality of committing to undertake the work.

5. **Accountability**

Continuing to improve the quality and consistency of our work and service is the main thrust of the 5 year Business Plan. The quality and consistency of our methods of communication are the benchmarks on which our client's measure us.

In aiming to achieve our objectives we must recognise the importance of individual and corporate accountability. Accountability means that we should have high expectations of ourselves as well as our colleagues in working towards the firm's and our team's objectives.

We should expect and welcome feedback and support measures to improve quality and service on an individual and corporate level.

As a firm we are accountable to the Solicitor's Regulatory Authority for breaches of professional conduct.

As a firm we are accountable to our clients for the quality of advice and service that they receive.

As a management board we are accountable to our colleagues, managers and teams for the decisions made that affect the firm.

As a team we are accountable to our clients, our colleagues and our line manager for the quality of advice and service that we deliver.

As an individual we are accountable to our clients, our colleagues, our team and our line manager for the quality of advice and service that we deliver and for our attitude and approach to the team in which we work.

Examples of how we value the principle of accountability include:

- Management board - annual anonymous staff surveys and reports.
- Teams – internal and external audits.
- Team leaders – monthly performance reviews, 1-2-1s involving input from team members.
- Team members – regular caseload reviews, file quality reviews, 1-2-1s involving input from other team members.
- Team leaders and members – client feedback questionnaires.
- Team leaders and members – complaints procedure.
- Team leaders and members – disciplinary procedure.
- Team members - grievance procedure

D OUR PROFILE OBJECTIVES

Our profile in the market place must reflect our business objectives and values.

Individual and corporate marketing, the firm's branding, general publicity, and staff recruitment will all have an influence on a firm's profile.

Our objectives are:

To be commonly known throughout Yorkshire.
To be commonly known throughout our work sectors.

To be known as a quality commercial practice.
To be known as a quality private client practice.

To be known as a vibrant and exciting firm to work for.
To be known as forward thinking and innovative.

Our approaches will include:

- Defining and increasing the publicity of the Ison Harrison brand and its associated reputation.
- Increasing the awareness of specialisms and key individuals to other colleagues.
- Increasing the publicity of specialisms and key individuals externally – throughout the north.
- Increasing the awareness of specialisms to existing clients.
- Increasing the awareness of specialisms to new clients.
- Increasing the number of private clients initially introduced as panel referrals and commercial clients.
- Use of newsletters.
- Use of business press articles.
- Use of local newspaper articles.
- Local advertising.
- Increasing the profile of Leeds city centre office.
- Improving the look, functionality and purpose of the firm's websites.
- Increasing new traffic to the firm's websites.
- Increasing the number of panel and association members.
- Developing consistency and expertise in the firm's brand guidelines and marketing publications – both internally and with our marketing partners

E OUR SERVICE OBJECTIVES

Excellence in the quality of our advice and service will significantly assist in our realising our objective of continued success and growth.

Our specific service objectives are to focus on:

- Quality and consistency of service delivery
- The setting and monitoring of service levels

Team service levels to be agreed and published.

A dedicated Client Care Coordinator to be appointed.

Principle of zero tolerance when it comes to complaints regarding service delivery.

Monitoring responsibilities at manager level.

Annual team business plans will reflect success of compliance.

- Caseload Reviews and File Quality Reviews

Team service levels to be agreed and published.

Monitoring responsibilities will be at line manager level.

Individual supervision and reviewing will improve and ensure levels of service delivery.

- A living Office Procedure Manual

The Office Procedure Manual will reflect the systems adopted across the firm to ensure excellent service delivery. The manual will be user friendly, up to date and be subject to evaluation, review and change.

- Cross Referring Clients

Maximising cross referrals.

Enthusiasm about the firm and its services to clients.

Encouraging clients to visit the firm's website.

- Lexcel

The firm aspires to be compliant to Lexcel standard by 1st quarter 2009

Compliance thereafter will be subject to annual re-assessment.

F **REVIEW INTERVALS**

- 5 Year Business Plan to be considered when preparing annual team business plans
- Full reviews in 2010 and 2012

G **CONCLUSIONS**

Our **Business Objectives** identified to help us achieve continued success and growth are:

- To Keep Changing – Keep Improving
- To be a Market Leader in Yorkshire – Top 10 Yorkshire law firm
- To deliver a Quality Service
- To deliver a Consistent Service

Our **Business Values** which underpin the culture of the firm and each decision made to achieve our objectives can be summarised by the following:

- Good Communication
- Honest Endeavour
- Respect for Others
- Corporate Responsibilities
- Accountability

We aspire to be the firm of choice for:

- Clients who want excellent service and high quality advice;
- Employees who want career progression, to feel valued and treated with respect; and
- Business partners who want consistency of approach and delivery of service levels.

We believe that we shall see continued success and growth through our ability to anticipate and react positively to changing demands and markets. The Legal Services Act will mean that many firms who do not embrace change will be left behind. Ison Harrison will not be one of those firms.

Over the course of the next 5 years we shall strive to deliver higher and higher levels of service and advice in those areas where we specialise. By doing so we hope to evolve into a true market leader within each of the business sectors in which we operate.

Our commitment and enthusiasm to continually look for areas to improve our delivery of service will ensure that the firm is well placed to meet the opportunities and challenges facing the solicitors in the years ahead.