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Executive summary

The modern lawyer is expected to be technically excellent, emotionally intelligent, adaptable and commercially aware – often all at once. But legal workplaces are not one-size-fits-all, and neither are the people who work in them. To thrive in today’s legal profession, lawyers must master the human skills that underpin trust, influence, and effective leadership. From handling difficult conversations and giving feedback, to building resilience, negotiating effectively and developing a strong professional profile, lawyers need tools to perform in an increasingly complex world.

Emotional intelligence, decision-making and delegation, networking and adapting to change are fundamental to success, and it is these human strengths that will succeed in a technological future.

The book is introduced by Sarah Fowler, president of CILEX, who explains why so-called “soft” skills are now core legal skills, taking into account the changing expectations of clients, firms, and regulators. From technical excellence to trusted adviser, Sara outlines how the fundamental skills outlined in the chapters that follow will drive career progression, wellbeing, and commercial success.

Part one of the book looks at mastering yourself.

Chapter one, by Kim Tasso, explores emotional intelligence in legal practice, and how this is a superpower for lawyers. Cognitive and intellectual abilities have always been highly prized in lawyers. Yet our fast-paced, AI-driven world will further increase the importance of those human (personal and interpersonal) skills, wrapped up in the envelope of emotional intelligence (EI or EQ). Research shows that EQ accounts for 58 percent of performance in all types of jobs and is the single biggest predictor in the workplace. In the chapter, Kim considers what emotional intelligence means, how it is measured and developed, and why it is important for lawyers and their leaders. She explores how empathy underpins effective communication and relationship building and demonstrates that improving the superpower of emotional intelligence enhances both performance and wellbeing.

Simply put, resilience is an individual's and team's capacity for stress-related growth. Decades of research show that resilience is not a fixed trait that you either have or don't have, but rather, a set of skills that individuals and teams can build. Paula Davis has been studying, teaching, writing, talking, and thinking about resilience since she first discovered the science of it for her master's studies at the University of Pennsylvania. She has seen countless lives and teams transformed by the power of resilience, including her own. Yet, for all its ubiquity, resilience is one of the most misunderstood concepts at work. It's also one of the most important, given the level of uncertainty and change that is and will continue to be present in the legal profession into the foreseeable future. The research literature can be confusing because there are many definitions of resilience and most of them have a clinical or trauma-related focus, rather than a work focus. In chapter two, Paula talks about the ways in which lawyers and legal teams can enhance their ability to develop this important set of skills.

Law is a loss-saturated profession, and the cumulative impact of repeated exposure to conflict, harm, failure, and high-stakes pressure quietly erodes judgment, decision-making, leadership capacity, and organizational cohesion. Traditional legal culture equates professionalism with composure, reinforcing a norm of suppression that is often mistaken for resilience, but carries measurable risk. In chapter three, Tom Spence explores the often-unacknowledged realities of grief and trauma in legal practice, framing them as operational and leadership issues rather than personal vulnerabilities.

The chapter introduces the concept of a grief-literate firm – one that recognizes cumulative exposure, supports regulation rather than suppression, and integrates structured support, leadership modelling, and clear pathways for addressing strain. It distinguishes between individual and collective resilience, emphasizing that sustainable high performance depends on systemic buffers, distributed regulation, and culturally embedded practices that enable teams to function effectively under pressure.

Practical strategies for implementing these ideas include deliberate resets before key decisions, structural transitions between matters, language shifts, leadership modelling, and accessible, destigmatized support pathways. Tom argues that grief literacy and collective resilience are not softening the profession – they strengthen judgment, ethical clarity, and long-term performance. Ultimately, the chapter reframes legal practice culture – exposure to loss is inevitable, but by acknowledging it and designing systems

capable of metabolizing it, firms can create steadier, more resilient organizations, enhancing both human and institutional capacity.

In chapter four, Danielle Gleicher-Bates and Emma Llanwarne explore neurodiversity in legal practice – practicing as a neurodivergent lawyer, working with and enabling neurodivergent colleagues, and serving neurodivergent clients’ best interests and needs. Neurodivergent neurotypes are distilled into primary areas of divergence before examining the importance of strengths-based framing, personal identity, and language, alongside the unique tension between neurodivergence, disability identity, and disability in law. The chapter turns to the overlap between common neurodivergent strengths and the soft skills required as a lawyer, in addition to the potential challenges and barriers, not least the interplay between masking, imposter syndrome, and burnout, which legal environments are prone to fostering. Core issues are addressed through practical considerations and frameworks for disclosure, managing your working style, requesting and making reasonable adjustments, and effective allyship, with the significance of reasonable adjustments in empowerment and working well embedded throughout. Whether you are neurodivergent or not, the key takeaways and insights are relevant to everyone.

In chapter five, Nikki Alderson looks at why lawyers struggle with time, analyzing the importance of personal responsibility, the cultural pressures that exist in law, the impact of remote and hybrid working on boundaries, and how unmanaged time pressure contributes to stress and burnout. The chapter explores how to distinguish urgency from importance, managing competing stakeholders and deadlines, focus, energy, and burnout, and practical systems for busy legal professionals. Nikki outlines how technology boundaries and improvements, as well as clear communication protocols, can create systems that support long-term wellbeing and professional effectiveness.

Chapter six explores how lawyers can make effective decisions in high-pressure situations, where time is limited and information is often incomplete. It highlights common decision-making traps and examines the balance between risk and professional judgement. Alice Boullier de Branche and Jean-Baptiste Lebel address how perfectionism, while valued in legal work, can become a liability when swift action is required. Emphasis is placed on the importance of collaborative decision making, drawing on the insights of others to strengthen outcomes. Finally, the chapter underscores the need for confidence in decisions, while remaining open to revisiting and adapting them as circumstances evolve.

Part two then looks at how to work effectively with others.

Chapter seven brings a practical, performance-based communication lens to one of the most challenging and career-defining aspects of legal practice. Drawing on her work helping professionals communicate with clarity and confidence under pressure, alongside her background as a prize-winning opera singer, Susan Heaton-Wright offers a distinctive approach that blends preparation frameworks, emotional regulation, voice, and presence. The chapter provides lawyers with clear, usable tools to prepare for high-stakes conversations, manage emotion and defensiveness (their own and others'), navigate power dynamics, and turn conflict into clarity.

Susan's focus is on helping lawyers show up powerfully when it matters most – structuring difficult conversations around purpose and outcomes, using non-verbal communication intentionally, listening with impact, and maintaining authority without aggression. A highly practical chapter, it includes real-world examples, short exercises, and simple models that readers can apply immediately in client and colleague conversations.

Chapter eight examines the role of feedback in building and sustaining a truly client-centered culture. Drawing on practical experience, Wayne Hassay explores how effective feedback must flow across all levels of an organization and align with clearly defined values and expectations. The ability to give and receive feedback is a fundamental skill, and the chapter considers how client-driven frameworks – such as structured feedback tools and resolution processes – can strengthen relationships and accountability, particularly when supporting large, demanding clients. Central to the discussion is the challenge of making feedback genuinely constructive – not just shared, but translated into clear, actionable steps. It also reflects on a common disconnect in many organizations, where feedback systems exist in principle but fall short in practice, offering insight into how this gap can be addressed.

In a legal world where the modern lawyer is expected to be technically excellent, emotionally intelligent, adaptable, and commercially aware, delegation and supervision are no longer administrative tasks – they are core leadership capabilities. Chapter nine explores how supervision and delegation can be used not only to deliver highquality legal work, but to develop resilient, capable teams in modern workplaces that are more diverse, flexible, and complex than ever before. Pam Loch offers practical and human-centered observation and advice that recognizes the shift in how newer entrants to the profession approach work, communication, and accountability, and the impact of digital fluency of technologies such as AI. She discusses the

increasing importance of managing teams in ways that do not rely on disclosure, conformity, or outdated supervisory models, delegation as a strategic leadership tool rather than a source of risk, and how to maintain commercial viability in the face of increased management responsibilities. She also outlines how management can impact retention through effective engagement and development of people, opening up career opportunities, creating psychological safety, and setting good working habits from the early stages.

Negotiation is not a separate skill from communication – it is a form of communication and every interaction a lawyer has is potentially a negotiation. In chapter ten, Jonathan Middleburgh suggests that lawyers often default to adversarial (or positional) communication, whereas communication focusing on the achievement of each side's interests is preferable. Jonathan unpacks a range of practical skills that should be part of the communication toolkit and encourages readers to reflect on their level on each of these skills. The chapter also focuses on where and how the negotiation happens and encourages readers to think about how most effectively to communicate, dependent on mode of communication. Ethical and professional conduct issues are also considered, as is the impact of AI on negotiation and communication.

Chapter 11 explores how agile and lean principles are reshaping collaboration in modern legal practice. In a rapidly evolving, tech-driven landscape, Maria Govis highlights the growing importance of lawyers developing a practical understanding of digital tools to enhance teamwork and efficiency. She emphasizes the value of aligning with clients' terminology and ways of working, enabling effective collaboration. The chapter introduces agile and lean methodologies as flexible, alternative approaches to organizing knowledge work, and considers how these principles can be applied within legal teams to improve communication, adaptability, and outcomes. Ultimately, Maria argues that even a basic proficiency in technology, combined with these collaborative frameworks, can offer a meaningful competitive advantage.

Part three explores influence, visibility and career development.

The section begins with chapter 12 reframing relationshipbuilding as a critical skill for modern lawyers. As legal markets become more commercial and trustdriven, purposeful networking rooted in curiosity, authenticity, and strategic intent supports both career progression and firm growth. Rebecca Overend challenges misconceptions about networking, emphasizing

valued, ethical relationshipbuilding across internal teams, clients, peers, and wider professional communities. She offers practical guidance on starting conversations, maintaining connections and selecting opportunities wisely. With tailored advice for different career stages, she reinforces that consistent, longterm engagement, rather than transactional interactions, creates meaningful networks. Purposeful networking is not selling, rather it is sustained professional development.

Business development is no longer optional in modern legal practice. As lawyers become more senior, their ability to generate, retain, and expand client relationships directly impacts their career trajectory, influence, and earning potential. Still, many lawyers approach business development with uncertainty, unsure where to start, what to prioritize, or how to do it authentically. In chapter 13, Yuliya LaRoe reframes business development as a learnable, practical skill rather than a personality trait or sales tactic. She introduces a clear, structured framework that integrates networking, visibility, relationship management, and follow-through into a manageable system. Readers will learn how to move from reactive outreach to strategic relationship management, increase visibility without compromising authenticity, and build BD systems that support consistent client engagement. By the end of the chapter, readers will see business development not as an uncomfortable add-on, but as a skill that reinforces – rather than distracts from – great lawyering.

Chapter 14 by Rebecca Harding examines what it truly means to build a professional profile in a legal context, moving beyond superficial notions of self-promotion to focus on credibility, reputation, and value. Rebecca encourages lawyers to reflect on their individual strengths and interests in order to define a clear and authentic niche. The chapter addresses common discomfort around visibility, offering practical ways to build a presence and reputation without feeling overly self-promotional. Rebecca emphasizes that consistent, value-driven engagement is key to being recognized in the profession. The chapter highlights the role of thought leadership through activities such as writing, speaking, and sharing insights. These avenues are presented as effective ways to demonstrate expertise, build trust, and enhance professional standing over time.

Part four then looks at leading through change, and the fundamental skills necessary for future leaders.

When change initiatives fail to take root in legal organizations, the explana-

tion is rarely the one that gets cited first. The strategy was not the problem. The technology was not the problem. The rollout plan was not the problem. The problem, consistently and across change types, is human. According to research, 38 percent of all implementation difficulties trace back to human and proficiency factors – the learning curve, the gap between training and practice, the absence of sustained support. Technical implementation issues account for only 16 percent of the same failures. This pattern holds whether the change in question is a new operating model, a process redesign, or – as is the defining challenge of this moment in legal – the adoption of artificial intelligence.

The implication is uncomfortable but important – most change programs in legal are not failing because the wrong approach was chosen. They are failing because the human architecture of change was not designed. The roles that every successful change requires were left unfilled, undefined, or misunderstood. AI adoption makes this visible more starkly than most changes because the gap between access and genuine use is so measurable – but the underlying dynamic is not new, and it is not unique to technology. Chapter 15, by Andrea Miskolczi, maps those roles. It describes what each one demands in practice – not as titles to be assigned on an organizational chart, but as functions that must be actively performed. Some individuals will hold more than one. Others will hold none, even when they might be expected to. Understanding the difference between what a role is called and what it actually requires is often the starting point for making change work.

The chapter covers seven roles – the sponsor, managers and partners, the change leader, the project manager, the power user, the change champion, and the sponsor alliance. Together, they form the cast of characters that every successful legal change story needs.

Chapter 16, by Daan Potjer, explores how legal practice is evolving in response to rapid technological change, particularly the rise of artificial intelligence. It begins by outlining the shifting landscape of the profession and redefining what it means to be a modern lawyer in a digital-first world. The focus then turns to the essential skills and mindset that lawyers need to remain relevant and adaptable, emphasizing continuous learning and openness to innovation. A key theme is the transformative impact of AI on legal workloads, highlighting how routine tasks are being automated and how this reshapes the lawyer's role. The chapter also stresses the importance of leveraging technology effectively, encouraging lawyers to work smarter rather than harder. It underlines the need for law firms to cultivate a culture of

innovation to stay competitive. Finally, it examines how the value proposition of lawyers is changing in the AI era, and concludes by encouraging legal professionals to actively embrace and adopt AI as a core component of modern practice.

Ever since David Maister's book, *The Trusted Advisor*, was written in 2001, this has been the declared ambition of most law firms in relation to their client relationship. But what does this actually mean in practice? And is this the right target? In chapter 17, Stuart Maister (David's cousin) sets out an updated version of this approach, starting with a focus on trust as the critical foundation for all client engagement. By defining trust, he sets out how lawyers can consciously and intentionally design high trust relationships and use this as the basis for winning, retaining, and growing major accounts. He then looks at the second part of the formula, analyzing the difference between being a trusted supplier and an advisor. One is transactional, the other is based on a relationship. He suggests there is an even higher level to aim for – being a trusted partner, which puts you on the team with the client. This chapter maps out the mindset and skillset required to develop this status with a client, and includes exercises to help the reader apply this in their own context.

AI is the single biggest disruptor to lawyering – arguably ever. Basic lawyering skills – as traditionally understood – will increasingly be outsourced to the machine. The need for a rounded skill set will be taken to the next level as AI will increasingly do the core technical lawyering work. The consequence will be a fundamental shift in essential lawyering skills. The differentiated law firm will be the one where client service and the meeting of client expectations is as close to optimal as possible, and where lawyers add maximum value – with the best / most innovative solutions, and commercial value add. In this final chapter, Jonathan Middleburgh argues that the Profoundly Human Law Firm (PHLF) will be the winners in these disruptions, and the building blocks of the PHLF are profoundly human lawyers (PHL). As a fitting end to this book on fundamental skills, the chapter endeavors to unpack the core skills of the PHL.

About the authors

Nikki Alderson is an international talent retention and women's leadership specialist, TEDx and keynote speaker, coach, bestselling author, and former criminal barrister with 19 years' experience. She supports law firms, barristers' chambers and other legal organizations to retain female talent and empowers female lawyers to achieve their career ambitions.

Nikki specializes in three areas – women's leadership, enhanced career break returns and new working parent support, and workplace resilience, mental toughness, confidence and wellbeing.

Alice Boullier de Branche is senior HR manager in the Paris HR team at A&O Shearman. She graduated from business school (ESSEC Global BBA) and has a Master's degree in Sociology (Paris VII). Alice has been working on HR matters at A&O Shearman for over ten years. She joined A&O to work on training and development, then later specialized in providing human resources support to the fee earner population. She is especially engaged in areas such as performance evaluation, compensation strategies, recruitment, retention, and talent development, as well as wellbeing, and diversity and inclusion initiatives.

Paula Davis JD is a global speaker, strategic advisor, and award-winning author who helps leaders reduce burnout and build team resilience by improving how work is designed, led, and sustained. Paula left her law practice after seven years and earned a master's degree in applied positive psychology from the University of Pennsylvania. As part of her post-graduate training, Paula was selected to be part of the University of Pennsylvania faculty, teaching and training resilience skills to senior leaders in the military as part of the Army's Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness program. The Penn team trained resilience skills to more than 40,000 soldiers and their family members.

Paula is the author of *Beating Burnout at Work: Why Teams Hold the Secret to Well-Being & Resilience* (2021) and *Lead Well: 5 Mindsets to Engage, Retain,*

& *Inspire Your Team* (2025). Both books have been selected as “must reads” by the Next Big Idea Club, which is curated by Adam Grant, Susan Cain, Malcom Gladwell, and Daniel Pink. The Next Big Idea Club selected *Lead Well* as one of its top 11 leadership books for 2025. She recently collaborated with ALM to learn more about burnout and psychological safety in the legal profession. They collected data via a national survey of lawyers and legal professionals, and she is the author of the resulting report titled *Lawyer Strong*® → *Law Strong*.

Paula has shared her expertise at educational institutions such as Harvard Law School, Stanford, Wharton School Executive Education, and Princeton. She is a two-time recipient of the distinguished teaching award from the Medical College of Wisconsin. Her expertise has been featured in and on *The New York Times*, *O, The Oprah Magazine*, *Inc.*, *Fast Company* and many other media outlets. Paula is also a contributor to *Forbes* and *Psychology Today*.

Maria Govis is a legal technology expert within global legal business services at KPMG. She has over five years’ experience driving large-scale digital transformation projects for legal and compliance functions of global corporations, with a proven track record of delivering high-impact AI and automation initiatives. She played a key role in a life sciences corporation’s transformation program that was recognized by *Financial Times* Innovative Lawyers 2021 and 2022 Awards. Throughout her legal tech and consulting career, she has delivered projects using agile methodology and facilitated legal process improvement workshops for 70+ legal professionals. Maria holds a law degree from the University of Düsseldorf, Germany and a prior degree in translation and interpreting from Moscow State University, which included an academic stay at the University of Basque Country in Spain. She is fluent in English, German, Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese and Russian, and currently works out of the UK. Maria’s research and writing focus on organizational management in the age of AI, non-linear career paths, and the future of work.

Danielle Gleicher-Bates is an award-winning neurodiversity advocate passionate about diversity, equity, and inclusion, recognized in the Women and Diversity in Law Awards 2024 and Shaw Trust Disability Power 100 2024. As a late-diagnosed, multiple-neurodivergent and disabled woman, she uses her lived experience to challenge perceptions of neurodivergence and disability. Danielle is co-chair of neurodiversitykey® which she co-founded in 2023 to improve neuroinclusivity in the legal sector and justice system. A

proponent of knowledge as a tool for enable and empower, Danielle has created educational resources including co-authoring *ADHD in Custody: A Guide to Police Custody for ADHDers*. As an aspiring barrister, Danielle was awarded scholarships by the Honourable Society of the Inner Temple and City Law School to pursue the Bar Vocational Studies course.

Rebecca Harding is an international professional services consultant, with specialisms in marketing, public relations, and business development. She was, until September 2022, the worldwide chairman of the Society of Women Writers and Journalists, as well as retired vice chair of the UK's Chartered Institute of Marketing. She founded Saltwhistle in 2000 and has developed an impressive portfolio of clients within business and professional services. Clients have ranged from multi-national firms, such as accountants Deloitte, PWC, and EY, to law firms like Stephenson Harwood, Norton Rose Fulbright, and Weightmans, as well as international businesses such as J Walter Thompson (now Wunderman Thompson), Mediacom, and Mindshare (all part of WPP). Saltwhistle now specializes in supporting SMEs worldwide and international marketing. Prior to establishing Saltwhistle, Rebecca was head of communications at Andersens. She worked across Europe, the Middle East, India, and Africa. Rebecca also worked in marketing within the oil industry, with corporations such as BNFL, BP, ESSO, and Shell. She was awarded Highly Commended Finalist in the UK's Institute of Directors' Non Executive Director of the Year award in the UK. She is a professional member of the Chartered Institute of Public Relations. She speaks regularly at conferences on matters ranging from innovation to winning business. Rebecca is an author and has written three publications for *Globe Law and Business*. She has been quoted and published widely in trade journals, as well as national newspapers, such as the *Sunday Times*.

Wayne Hassay is managing partner of Maguire Schneider Hassay, LLP in Columbus, Ohio. He leads a consumer-facing practice and focuses on building systems that translate legal judgment into a consistent client experience – clear scope, timely communication, dependable follow-through, and measurable service standards that lawyers can actually execute. His work centers on feedback loops, delivery mechanics, and technology-enabled workflows that improve client outcomes and reduce friction without diluting independent professional judgment. Wayne's broader mission is access to justice – using modern delivery models and operational discipline to make

competent legal help more affordable and more predictable for ordinary people. He earned his J.D. from the University of Akron School of Law and is admitted to practice in Ohio.

Susan Heaton-Wright is an award-winning communication specialist, professional speaker, TEDx speaker, author, and podcaster, and the founder of Superstar Communicator™, a CPD-accredited training company. She works internationally with companies, professional services firms, and membership organizations to develop the essential communication and interpersonal skills required for success in today's business environment.

A former professional opera singer, Susan brings a distinctive performance-based approach to communication, combining artistic excellence with commercial insight. Her methodology translates complex communication challenges into practical, actionable strategies, enabling professionals to communicate with clarity, confidence and credibility in high-stakes situations. Susan delivers keynote speeches, masterclasses, and facilitated workshops, and provides one-to-one coaching across all areas of impact, presence, and credibility. She supports individuals and teams at all levels, from emerging talent to senior leaders, helping them enhance their effectiveness in meetings, presentations, pitches, and business development activities. She is known for her engaging, high-energy delivery and her ability to create immediate, lasting change in how people communicate. She is a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, the Independent Society of Musicians, and the Professional Speaking Association.

Yuliya LaRoe is an award-winning consultant, coach, and speaker who helps lawyers build the leadership, management, and business development skills that modern legal careers demand. She works with lawyers who want to do more than excel technically – they want to lead with confidence, strengthen client relationships, expand their influence, and create greater impact over the course of their careers. She is widely known across the legal industry as the Income-to-Equity Coach who helps non-equity partners get promoted to equity status at their firms. With over 20 years in the legal industry, Yuliya has coached and trained over 5,000 lawyers and professionals. As a former practicing BigLaw attorney with an MBA from Boston University's Questrom School of Business, she brings a rare combination of legal credibility, business strategy, and real-world practicality to her work. Her insights have been featured by the ABA, NALP, PDC, ALM, Law Practice Today, Attorney at Work,

and other respected industry platforms. She is passionate about personal growth and cultural intelligence.

Emma Llanwarne is a consultant criminal defense paralegal and chartered legal executive. She is an unregistered barrister, called to the Bar of England and Wales in 2022, having been awarded the Rosina Hare scholarship by the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple. As a neurodivergent legal professional, diagnosed after a successful career in midwifery, Emma combines personal and professional experience to bring distinctive insight to her work. Her commitment to neurodiversity was recognized at the Women and Diversity in Law Awards 2025 in which she was highly commended for DE&I Champion of the Year (Legal Services Professional). Emma co-founded and is co-chair of neurodiversikey®, a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing neuroinclusion across the legal and justice sectors. Informed by her professional experience of the criminal justice system, Emma focuses on accessibility, support, and challenging systemic barriers, demonstrated by her co-authorship of *ADHD in Custody: A Guide to Police Custody for ADHDers*.

Jean-Baptiste Lebel is the HR director of A&O Shearman's Paris office. He holds a law degree from Paris II Assas and graduated from Sciences Po Paris. Jean-Baptiste taught at the Sorbonne and HEC on recruitment, retention and career management in law firms. He has over 25 years of HR experience in the consulting sector and is especially engaged in topics related to compensation policies, recruitment, talent retention, inclusion, and wellbeing applied to law firms. He switched from headhunting for law firms to HR, becoming PWC Legal's HR director for Paris before A&O.

Pam Loch set up Loch in 2007 to respond to the need for commercial and bespoke legal and people solutions for clients. She has continued to evolve the business to respond to client needs and is now proud to have services offering solutions in all elements of HR, employment, and business law. As well as being the managing director of Loch, Pam has also been a specialist, award-winning employment law solicitor for over 20 years. Her passion for finding solutions to help businesses manage and look after their people is reflected in the development and success of the businesses across the group. Unusually, Pam is a dual qualified solicitor, having qualified as a solicitor in 2000 in Scotland and England & Wales. Clients like her pragmatic, commercially focused approach and solutions. Pam is a seasoned commentator on

the TV and radio on employment law and HR issues and is often involved in providing training.

Pam is a member of the Employment Lawyers Association and is also qualified as an accredited mediator.

Stuart Maister gives keynotes, trains, and consults firms in the areas of strategic storytelling and building trust. He helps clients gain clarity – in their strategy and the way they communicate it, in the strategic narrative that makes them stand out in the marketplace and win business, and in the way they intentionally build trust with clients and colleagues. His background as a TV and radio reporter with the BBC, ITN, and Sky News led him to work with the world's biggest companies on their storytelling. One of his businesses was sold to a NASDAQ-listed US company and Stuart became SVP for international markets. He now runs his own company, Strategic Narrative, based in the UK. Stuart is the co-author of *Choose Trust: Building Relationships For Business Success*, published in 2025. He is an experienced offsite and conference facilitator, leading workshops around the world using his experience as a journalist and business leader.

Jonathan Middleburgh is a specialized and highly experienced consultant to law firms, in-house legal departments, and senior leaders in the legal sector. He advises and consults primarily on issues relating to people, management, and leadership within the legal services sector. He is a principal of Edge International, a leading global consultancy to law firms. Since around 2003, Jonathan has consulted to law firms and in-house legal departments in the UK, Europe, and internationally, with a focus on developing senior legal leadership, helping senior leaders to interact more effectively, guiding and coaching senior leaders through behavioral change, and steering senior leaders towards the adoption of more effective managerial and leadership behaviors. He has also helped law firms with the development, refinement, and practical implementation of succession strategies and in particular the working through of complex succession transitions, including in founder firms. He has collaborated with colleagues in helping law firms to refine their strategies and to reevaluate and, where appropriate, overhaul their remuneration structures.

Having studied Law as an undergraduate at Oxford University (where he graduated in the top five of his cohort), Jonathan taught for a year at the University of Chicago and for short stints at Oxford and King's College,

London. He then practiced as a barrister for around 12 years. Prior to leaving the Bar, Jonathan obtained undergraduate equivalence in psychology and subsequently Masters' equivalence in occupational psychology. A deep understanding of psychological processes and dynamics underpins the work he does with senior legal leaders. In recent years, Jonathan has consulted to, and advised, senior lawyers on every continent save for Antarctica. He continues to relish having a broad international practice and advising across a wide range of cultures, as well as spending time with his family in London.

Andrea Miskolczi helps legal leaders turn innovation ambition into operational reality. As managing director of InterAlia Consulting, she works with law firms and in-house legal teams facing stalled AI and LegalTech projects, low adoption rates, and fragmented innovation efforts. Her clients typically struggle to formulate their strategy for Board approval, align it with day-to-day execution, build internal buy-in, and deliver measurable outcomes. A Prosci-certified change practitioner, Andrea brings structured change management methodology to the challenges that innovation initiatives in legal most commonly stall on – the human side of transformation. Andrea began her career as a practicing lawyer at Clifford Chance and Linklaters, before moving into leadership roles in innovation, business development, and marketing at Wolf Theiss and Dentons. She has led cross-border, award-winning initiatives recognized by the *Financial Times* Innovative Lawyers Program for their impact on collaboration, client experience, data literacy, and workflow automation.

With experience spanning the UK, Germany, Austria, Hungary and leadership roles throughout Continental Europe and CEE, Andrea brings a pragmatic, pan-European lens to what actually works – and what doesn't – when modernizing legal functions.

Rebecca Overend is a business development and marketing professional with over 20 years' experience building relationships, driving growth, and shaping strategy across professional services. She currently holds a business development role at leading law firm Irwin Mitchell, where she leads business development strategy across multiple practice areas, working closely with partners, firm leadership and key stakeholders.

Operating as an autonomous, trusted adviser, Rebecca sits at the intersection of strategy and human connection – helping lawyers turn technical expertise into trusted, long-term client relationships. Her work spans refer-

rerled business generation, crosspractice collaboration, strategic networking frameworks, and longterm client development planning. She has led firmwide initiatives including the development of referrer networks, networking structures for junior lawyers, and sector positioning campaigns. Alongside this, she coaches co-chairs the IMpowered Diversity & Inclusion network in London. She is known for her pragmatic, ethical, and peoplecentered approach to networking, viewing it as a professional skill rooted in curiosity, consistency, and reciprocity. Rebecca is passionate about demystifying business development and empowering lawyers at all career stages to build meaningful, credible networks that support both personal progression and firmwide success.

Daan Potjer is director of commercial and legal excellence at Loyens & Loeff, a European law firm based in the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Switzerland. He is responsible for business development, marketing, innovation, data and analytics, and knowledge management. Daan is driving AI-strategy and delivery of AI solutions at the firm. Before joining Loyens & Loeff, Daan worked for over 25 years in leadership roles in the financial sector and the real estate sector, most recently as COO for Colliers Netherlands. Daan is vice-chairman of the Supervisory Board of Dynamic Credit Group. He studied economics at Erasmus University Rotterdam and the London School of Economics and is currently a PhD-candidate in History at the University of Antwerp.

Tom Spence is a chartered management consultant and co-founder of Donoma Advisors, a London-based legal search and advisory firm. He has nearly 20 years' experience in the legal sector, where his advisory work includes supporting law firms and legal teams on growth, leadership, and strategic direction. He is also, with his wife, the founder of Beyond Us, a human-centered initiative through which he draws on personal experience of grief and trauma to support individuals and organizations navigating loss, building resilience, and sustaining wellbeing. Beyond Us bridges professional insight with lived experience, creating space for reflection, connection, and shared learning. Tom brings a rare perspective at the intersection of professional performance and the human experience of loss. He works with professionals and communities to sustain clarity, ethical judgement, and effectiveness under pressure, while remaining grounded in the human realities of loss and care.

Kim Tasso BA (Hons) DipM FCIM MCIJ MNCPS (Acc.) MBA is managing director of RedStarKim Ltd (a management consultancy specializing in professional services) and Tasso Talking Therapy Ltd (a private psychotherapy practice). After graduating in psychology and working for several years in the technology sector, she worked for leading professional service firms Deloitte and Nabarro. She started her own business in 1994. For over 30 years she has worked for over 300 clients, including solicitors, barristers, patent attorneys, accountants, insolvency practitioners, actuaries, and surveyors. She advises on and provides training and coaching in the strategic and operational aspects of management, change, and relationship management. She has published seven books (on selling and business development, media relations and social media, soft skills for lawyers, growth strategies, and business relationships). As an accredited therapist, she started her private psychotherapy practice at the start of 2024 and has held non-executive director positions in the property sector. She was also a trustee of a mental health charity.

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