

Modern Lawyer

Ideas for Legal Leaders

Editor: Isabel Parker

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Featured in this issue

*Big hairy audacious goals
coming to life – the innovation
journey at Clifford Chance*

*Creating trust and business
value – the transformative
power of legal design*

*Waste not, want not –
recalibrating legal*



Breaking
New
Ground





Welcome to *Modern Lawyer*.

I am delighted to share my first issue as Editor of *Modern Lawyer*.

It comes at a pivotal time for the profession. Many lawyers and allied professionals are coming back to the office after a prolonged period of isolation. It is not a question of returning to a ‘new normal’. Against the backdrop of war in Ukraine, spiralling inflation and a pandemic that still rages, there is a collective feeling that whatever ‘normal’ once meant for us, we are not going back there again.

This presents an opportunity. For too long, lawyers have been badged as change resistant, a profession stubbornly clinging to the status quo. But as the title of this issue, “Breaking New Ground”, suggests, there is a growing number of lawyers and allied professionals working in the legal industry that are subverting that stereotype.

We are privileged, in this issue of *Modern Lawyer*, to have received contributions from some of the individuals that are driving meaningful change. In our interview with Thomas Barothy, the former COO of Legal at UBS, we hear about a large corporate legal department creating a digital legal front door to deliver frictionless service to clients. Other examples, from adopting Agile methodologies in the legal team at AB InBev, to rolling out legal design approaches across the HSBC legal department, show that established corporate legal departments are changing, with a renewed focus on the customer experience.

We also hear from law firms that have moved beyond ‘innovation theatre’ to work in new ways to drive client value. Bas Boris Visser of Clifford Chance gives an honest overview of the challenges of innovating in a way that best serves the client. There are contributions from law firms that are embracing new – sometimes experimental – approaches to delivery, from client listening and service design to new approaches to training. Perhaps the most powerful example of ‘breaking new ground’ can be found in our interview with Natasha Harrison, managing partner of new law firm Pallas Partners LLP. Natasha did what many fantasise about doing – took a blank sheet of paper, sketched out what a modern law firm should look like – and then set about building it from the ground up.

As we reassess our professional and personal priorities and return to the workplace, I hope there is something in this issue of *Modern Lawyer* to inspire you. I look forward to your feedback.

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