

Fostering a knowledge sharing culture..

..where lawyers regularly contribute without having to be constantly chased

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Outline of presentation

1. Introduction
2. Why is culture change important?
3. The Solution
4. Preparing for the launch
5. Launching
6. Results

About me...

- Trained at Allen & Overy
- Qualified into Competition Group
- PSL at Linklaters
- Strategic review of practice's needs
- Emphasis on culture change

Why is culture change important?

- All firms have access to the same external sources
- Any competitive advantage comes from internally created materials
- Knowledge is a firm's greatest asset – it is what clients instruct law firms for!
- Revolution in a firm's culture vis-à-vis knowledge capture, retention and utilisation – it's about processes and behaviours
- You need to sell this message

Benefits for the firm

- Better quality, commoditised products
- More efficient fee-earners:
 - they can take on more work;
 - devote time to marketing / BD
 - go home earlier.

N.B. The efficiency paradox

Benefits for fee-earners

- Fee-earners can retrieve..
...other people's knowhow and experience
...their own work (!)
- Fee-earners are happier and more efficient
- They get to go home earlier

Breaking down barriers

Need to understand why people don't contribute - and provide solutions to this.

Reason 1: the “black hole” theory

Reason 2: fear of exposing themselves, and their work, to criticism

Reason 3: document not finalised

Preparation and advocacy are key!

Partner support is essential:

- discuss key messages / decide on targets
- agree on carrot and stick approach – control the process!

Preparation and advocacy are key! contd

Messages for partners:

- partners need to be seen to support the process and attend the launch
- partners should actively contribute themselves
- contributing will benefit all fee-earners
- partners need to communicate the message in terms of expectations they have of fee-earners
- they need to remind associates to contribute when working on a deal together.

Messages to fee-earners

Focus on expectations and rewards

Expectations:

- X number of knowhow items to be contributed each year
- attend deal debriefs
- contributing is not optional
- “this is how we do things at Linklaters”

Messages to fee-earners contd

Rewards:

- monthly prize for best contributor
- visibility of winners
- greater availability of materials to everyone

How we did it - 1

In advance of the launch:

- Project name – a line in the sand!
- agreed on methodology for counting and assessing contributions
- the process needs to be transparent

How we did it - 2

The launch:

- three-line whip for all fee-earners
- Big Bang launch – with props

Messages from the Head of Practice:

- quarterly deal debriefs
- table of contributions published monthly
- contributions taken into account in appraisals
- the stated aim: to change the culture in the group
- contributing is not an extra job
- documents can be submitted in draft form
- documents are a starting point for future users

..and the winner is.....

- The Project has been wildly successful
- Statistics: ?% increase in contributions
- People like winning the prize – exploit their competitive spirit!
- Deal debriefs for partners, to elicit tacit knowhow – the next step.
- Significant burden for PSLs!

Case study 1

Jane, a Managing Associate:

- Initially sceptical – bad experience with old PSL team
- Has gradually become more KH-friendly
- Started contributing, has seen the results
- Has won a couple of prizes
- Our best contributor!

Case study 2

Richard, a junior associate from overseas:

- Joined Linklaters after the launch of the Project
- Minimal interaction with the KH team
- Has cancelled deal debriefs
- What should we read into this refusal to engage?

Case study 3

The majority of the fee-earners:

- Generally good, and far better than before launch
- Partners good at encouraging people
- Virtuous circle - you can work wonders by impressing people and getting them involved
 - success breeds success

Conclusion and summary

- It is possible
- It is hard work
- KH team need to deliver what you have promised – be innovative
- Partners need to deliver on their carrot and stick approach

Questions?



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