

STEPHEN JOHN WHITE

Personal Profile

As a partner in a law firm for thirty years, I was not only an active fee-earner representing clients in property-related transactions but I had extensive management responsibilities.

These arose from acting as team leader and completing two terms in each of the positions of managing and senior partner.

I believe that these roles equipped me with key interpersonal skills and the ability to deal with issues at every level of the business.

Whilst my experience derives from a single relationship with a firm lasting thirty-five years, I had significant input into the development of the firm which I joined as a trainee and which is now an LLP ranked within the UK's top 40 firms.

This experience has given me a unique position from which to offer a broad range of skills to any organisation seeking proactive non-executive involvement.

Employment History

Cobbetts and Cobbetts LLP

In 1977 when I became an equity partner in Leak Almond & Parkinson, the firm was based in Manchester and had a number of outlying branch offices. There were 15 partners and fee income amounted to just over £500,000.

In 1987 Leak Almond & Parkinson merged with Cobbetts and the combined firm (Cobbett Leak Almond) comprised 28 partners with a fee income in excess of £2.5M.

Since then the following key mergers have taken place:

1998 with the majority of the Manchester practice of Slater Heelis.
2002 with Read Hind Stewart in Leeds thereby establishing the first major office outside Manchester.
2003 with Fox Brooks Marshall of Manchester.
2004 with Wilbraham & Co, planning lawyers, of Leeds.
2004 with Lee Crowder of Birmingham.

The firm became an LLP in 2005 and had an annual turnover in excess of £55M.

2005 – 2007 Partner and Principal

Key responsibilities:

- Client relationship partner for a number of the Firm's key clients.
- Project Manager for the acquisition of new buildings for the firm's Leeds and Manchester offices. (Leeds move successfully completed August 2006; Manchester move successfully completed May 2007).

1999 – 2005 Senior Partner

Key responsibilities:

- Client relationship management – conducting client visits for firm's top clients and ensuring satisfactory follow-up of issues arising.
- Project managing the acquisition of a new building for the firm's Birmingham office. (Move successfully completed September 2004.)
- Chairing Partners' meetings; the Partnership Board and the Remuneration Committee.

- Ambassadorial role representing the firm in the financial and professional community and amongst clients.

1996 - 1999

- Reverted to fee-earning role and from 1997 to 1999 managed property development team.

1990 – 1996 Managing Partner

- With responsibility for the day-to-day and strategic management of the firm.
- Revenue growth during that period was from £4.2M to £7.6M.
- Presided over a period of rapid change in the legal marketplace, one of the key elements being the introduction of and dependence on IT as a tool for time-recording; word-processing; document production and accounting.

1972 – 1990

- Joined as a trainee solicitor, achieving equity partner status by 1977. As an equity partner over the next 13 years I was involved in commercial property transactions and actively engaged in first major merger with Cobbetts in 1987 including negotiating and completing acquisition of premises for newly-merged firm in Ship Canal House, King Street, Manchester.

Current Directorships and Consultancies

2006 – 2007 Chairman and Director, pro.manchester limited

A member organisation whose aim is to promote the financial and professional sector in Manchester and whose strapline is: "Bringing Business to Professionals".

As Chairman for one year responsibilities included:

- Chairing Board and Management Committee.
- Chairing networking events.
- Liaising closely with Chief Executive.
- Pursuing theme for year of office – in my case "Retention of Skills".
- Attending functions locally and nationally as ambassador for organisation and representing members' views.
- Presiding over development of agreed strategy.

2007 to date Director, pro.manchester limited

2006 to date Chairman and Director, Disabled Living

A charity promoting assistance for the disabled both on a practical level in terms of physical aids and emotionally by providing guidance and counselling.

As Chairman responsibilities include:

- Chairing Council and Management Board.
- Liaising closely with Director.
- Presiding over strategic change.
- Attending functions largely for profile-raising and fund-raising purposes.

2007 to 2008 Consultant to Cobbetts LLP

2007 to date Consultant to Citi Quilter; as from June 2009 known as Quilter

2008 to date independent member of audit committee of Assessment and Qualifications Alliance

Qualifications

1972 Solicitors' Final Examination
1968 to 1971 LLB (Hons.) University College London
1960 to 1968 The Manchester Grammar School – 3 'A' levels; 5 'O' levels

ADR Group Accredited Mediator and member of ADR Group Panel of Mediators.
Member of The Association of Northern Mediators and The Manchester Mediation Panel.

Legal Specialisms

All aspects of commercial property, including development; landlord and tenant; investment and management; funding.

Personal Details

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