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Thomson Reuters Boutique Law Firm of the Year Award

Winner: Queen City Law



Haydn Davies, Country Manager, Thomson Reuters and Marcus Beveridge, Principal, Queen City Law

Building better client relationships

By Craig Sisterson

As a service industry, the legal profession is all about people, says Queen City Law principal Marcus Beveridge, whose firm won the premium Thomson Reuters Boutique Law Firm of the Year Award for the third year in a row at the recent 2009 New Zealand Law Awards™. Lawyers should always remind themselves that they are primarily in business to help their clients realise their objectives, says Beveridge, who has also spoken at Strategic Law Firm Management Conferences and to groups in other service industries about client-centricity. "A client-centric mindset should permeate every daily activity of your firm's function, and should be everywhere, from the receptionist to the [partners]."

Despite his firm being founded five years ago with a very client-centric focus, and having a successful history at the client-focused Law Awards (Queen City Law has also won the Infrastructure and Construction Law Award multiple times, including in 2009), Beveridge says he was still "blown away" and "absolutely thrilled" when he heard their name read out as Boutique Firm of the Year, again. "It's all attributable to the staff at our law firm and our clients," he says. "And we are humbled to be in the presence of co-practitioners who are leaders in their respective fields... genuinely pleased to be in the company of the other finalists."

Beveridge believes one of the things the staff at Queen City Law have done "quite well" is going out of their way to make their clients, who can be enduring "pressure-cooker situations", feel at ease. "We have tried to make our firm an environment that is supportive." For both clients and staff. The firm, which has nine staff, specialises in commercial, property (particularly large-scale property development), and immigration law. "In a way, we've been kind of lucky in the way we've grown the practice," says Beveridge. "We are a little law firm – we've been able to stick with some really cool clients, and they learn what we do and we learn what they do and there's some really cool synergies."

Another key to their success, Beveridge believes, is the way Queen City Law looks to build robust client relationships and add value to their clients beyond a particular legal transaction. This can create a "trusted partner relationship", where a lawyer is more than just a supplier; they are part of the client's business, and the client will ask for advice across a wider range of matters, because the lawyer is able to understand the client's business. When talking to lawyers and other professional groups, Beveridge has noted that "legal advice in a vacuum is not normally very helpful – go further – give strategic advice", and that people in service industries need to ensure that their "advice should be tailored to [their] client's own business practicalities".

It really comes down to putting clients first – lawyers and law firms keeping what matters most to their clients top of mind, rather than being distracted by their own internal concerns. And having passion for what you're doing. "It is also helpful to enjoy yourself while you do these things, and ensure that your [clients] enjoy and

trust you also.”

NZLawyer, issue 127, 11 December 2009

1st runner up: Wigley & Co

2nd runner up: Chen Palmer

FINALISTS:

**Chen Palmer
Dennis King Law
Hardy-Jones Clark
Lowndes Associates
Queen City Law
Wigley & Co**

Criteria:

The winning firm will:

- have 1 to 5 partners
- practise in one, or a limited number of, specialist area/s of practice
- provide [excellence in client service](#)
- possess leading expertise in advising in its sole area or one/some of its specialist areas of practice

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