

## Background

Brethertons Solicitors LLP is a full-service law firm, with a history dating back over 200 years. The firm comprises of four offices, located in Banbury, Bicester, Rugby and Central London. Brethertons has:

- 16 partners
- 95 lawyers
- 150 support staff

In 2011 Brethertons won the Law Society Excellence Award. They were also highly recommended for the award in 2010 and 2012.

## Finding a strategy to demonstrate quality

From the beginning, Brethertons has prided itself on quality and this was always key to the firm's growth. However, being a mixed practice firm with multiple offices, there was a danger of inconsistency of service and quality as the business expanded.

Linda Jones, Partner, Head of Family and Head of Compliance gave three reasons for choosing Lexcel:

1. The accreditation provided the firm with a quality mark, recognised within the industry.
2. Lexcel added a framework for driving through the strategy of quality service.
3. It gave the firm a solid platform for implementing strategies to grow and succeed.

"Since having Lexcel we have embraced that it is the framework we need to grow the business in the right way, based on quality. We now have a culture of quality across the firm, which not only benefits our clients, but makes Brethertons a nice place to work" states Linda.

## Life with Lexcel

Lexcel's policies and procedures standardises how everything is done in the firm, across all four offices. Lexcel training is incorporated into all new staff inductions and it is made crystal clear that all employees must follow the policies and procedures in place. Linda herself conducts a Lexcel training and compliance session for all employees within the first three months of them joining the business.

The firm is proud of its Lexcel accreditation and promotes it on its website and in all marketing material.

Lexcel is now part of the Brethertons' culture and Linda cannot imagine running the business without its solid framework.

### **The time commitment**

Brethertons did engage a consultant to assist with setting up the plans, policies and procedures required to gain the accreditation. Linda recommends finding a good quality consultant to make the process easier to roll out across the firm, especially if the business comprises of multiple offices.

Linda comments that the time-commitment required to set up Lexcel initially provided unexpected benefits. "It gave us the opportunity to review all our documentation and practices. Right from the start, we thought it was important not to have a tight, restrictive timeframe to achieve Lexcel. As a practice, we felt that it was more important that we all felt confident in the knowledge that all systems and procedures had been put into place ensuring the smooth running of the business, prior to applying for Lexcel".

### **Benefits to the business**

Linda states that the benefits of investing in Lexcel are far-reaching and numerous. "So many problems have simply evaporated. Staff morale is always high which increases productivity immensely.

We have also witnessed an increase in positive client feedback with our overall complaints reduced by 68.2 per cent."

Linda believes that having standard client care letters and templates save an enormous amount of time. Risk is also minimised as the firm has standardised policies and procedures for due diligence around money-laundering.

Relationships with stakeholders such as our insurer and bank have been enhanced through having Lexcel, particularly when it comes to demonstrating good practices.

Linda comments, "As a partner and owner of the business I have a sense of security that risk is taken care of and the firm is running well".

Having Lexcel also provides a level of confidence when it comes to SRA reviews. The firm's Risk and Compliance Manager, Rebecca Maxim states, "when it comes to inspections, we know we have the framework in place. As long as everyone is following it we have nothing to fear".

Rebecca comments that Lexcel also helped set up the COLP and COFA requirements as the accreditation framework fully supports the process.

### **Resistance to Lexcel**

When Lexcel was first implemented there was some initial resistance. However, this disappeared once the benefits such as reduced risk and increased efficiency became clear.

Lexcel provides a structure for the firm to review its processes every year and Heads of Departments welcome the questions and challenges this brings. The culture of Lexcel is fully embedded in the firm and all staff members embrace its ethos.

Linda expresses this when she states, "As a lawyer, Lexcel creates such a quality environment to

work in. It provides me with the confidence that our clients are happy and our staff are content, and this gives me a great sense of personal satisfaction."

**Are you interested in becoming accredited?**

Find all the information you need about applying for Lexcel online: [www.lawsociety.org.uk/lexcel](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/lexcel).

Download the Lexcel Standard for England and Wales, Scheme rules and self-assessment checklist.

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