

MANAGEMENT PARTNER OF THE YEAR

WINNER

Ian Austin

HALLIWELLS

Breaking £50m in revenues and £400,000 in profits

The entrepreneurial Austin has combined an astute hiring and merger policy with an infectious enthusiasm and ambition, to put Halliwells back on the map as a serious UK player.

In 2005, he presided over partner profits exceeding the £400,000 mark for the first time in the firm's history, with the firm also breaking the symbolically significant £50m revenue barrier for the first time. During the same period, Austin negotiated the firm's first ever merger, with Liverpool firm Cuff Roberts, and snared four top-notch partners from DLA Piper in the North West. Perceived by peers as being, 'savvy, approachable and not afraid to take the big decisions', Austin has also ditched the office head role, refocusing the business as one firm, as opposed to a four-office operation.

Under Austin, the firm drew praise from many unexpected quarters including Patrick Gaul, managing partner of Liverpool rival Weightmans, who said: 'They seem buoyant.

They've been a breath of fresh air and have shaken things up.' The firm is set to break the £60m barrier in 2006, with Austin pursuing an aggressive growth strategy throughout the UK.

Tom Handley, director of chambers at Exchange Chambers, summed up: 'I can't ever remember a firm making such a big impact in such a short amount of time.'

With Austin at the helm, expect the aggressive pursuit of market share to continue unabated.



Haliwells' Ian Austin with sponsor representative Gillian Switalski of F&C Asset Management

HIGHLY COMMENDED

DAVID CHILDS

Clifford Chance

The larger-than-life Clifford Chance COO has earned respect on both sides of the Atlantic for the way he has tackled CC's bloated cost base. Lawyers now fee-earn while management and business support is left to the professionals. The effect on the firm's profitability has been spectacular, and a period of fighting together for global progress is now thoroughly underway.

KEVIN GOLD

Mishcon de Reya

The energetic Gold has overseen a substantial profit hike, diverting substantial time and resources into developing

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a more transactional image for the firm. Mishcons' fast-growing corporate practice has benefited from targeted hires and senior management changes internally, and 2006 is already set to be a record year for the firm.

JONATHAN GOLDSTEIN

Olswang

The signing of a strategic alliance with US leader Greenberg Traurig last year capped a punchy year for Goldstein's re-invigorated Olswang. With turnover and profits set to jump significantly in 2006, expect to see further investment in the firm's international network imminently. The transformation of the firm from boutique TMT outfit to respected global player is now looking a formality.

DREW SCOTT

Sidley Austin

The low-profile but highly effective Scott has engineered steep profitability increases and rigorous performance management. Recent lateral hires have bedded down quickly, with minimum fuss and significant success. The US leader is alone in its ability to truly take on the Magic Circle in its dominant practice area, securitisation, along with more complementary areas of finance.

DAVID PESTER

TLT Solicitors

With turnover doubling in the past five years and a 2005 merger with niche City player Lawrence Jones in the bag, Pester has succeeded in creating a highly credible national player. Considered, driven and enthusiastic, Pester has moulded TLT in his own image. Negotiating the arrival of a handful of lateral hires from leading London rivals has bolstered Pester's gravitas.



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Please contact **Matthew Root** for senior appointments to private practice or **Matthew Sharpe** for appointments to industry.

LONDON

330 High Holborn, London WC1 7QT

Telephone: 0207 203 8413

MANCHESTER

82 King Street, Manchester M2 4WQ

Telephone: 0161 935 8288

email: contact@challenorgroup.com