

5 Ways to Boost Your Legal Expertise to Improve Client Service

Work smarter. Understand everything.
Miss nothing.



Bryan Jung
Lead
Practical Law Hong Kong

Optimising client service is essential for Hong Kong law firms and legal departments who are looking to stay competitive and relevant. One way to achieve this is by boosting the legal expertise of lawyers at the firm.

1 Improve client responses with deeper insights

In the Hong Kong legal market, accessibility and responsiveness are important pillars of law firm client service.

Having served clients for over ten years in private practice and in-house, Bryan Jung, Practical Law Hong Kong Lead, knows all too well the importance of being responsive.

“Being responsive is a fundamental requirement for the modern lawyer, especially in a fast-paced commercial centre like Hong Kong.” he says.

Yet there is a difference in being merely responsive versus being responsive and deep. It’s the difference between: “I will get back to you tomorrow” and “I have the answer right here and it is ...”.

“When I worked as an in-house lawyer at a multinational company based in Hong Kong, we worked with lawyers all over the world. It’s obvious when you are working with a leading lawyer in their field. They can reason through a problem confidently on the spot,” explains Bryan.

Speed of course is critical in responding to your client. But knowing you can access information and insights that you can trust will be accurate and current is what will set your response – and your firm – apart.



“Your clients rely on you to provide timely and reliable answers. You can rely on Westlaw Asia’s superior Hong Kong primary and secondary sources to help you get to your answers quickly with the confidence that you have the right answers.” says Jen Lee

Jen Lee
Proposition Manager
Westlaw



Did you know?

Practical Law’s practice notes can help lawyers respond substantively, and quickly. They are written by leading lawyers and provide clear how-to guidance on thousands of legal topics. Bryan says: “Our users are able to look up a practice note while they are on the phone with a client, allowing them to give quick, off-the-cuff guidance and feel assured that they are hitting the essential points.”

Extend your legal expertise into other practice areas

When you ask a senior lawyer to explain their career journey, they often say that they didn't plan to be an expert in their field, says Bryan.



“ Rather, they’ve developed their particular expertise as a result of growing with their clients. ”

Tim Perry, Director, Practical Law, advises lawyers to cultivate deep knowledge and expertise in their current area of specialisation, while retaining the flexibility to expand their knowledge base. “You need to drill down into that deep expertise, but you also need to develop that breadth, that T-shape. Even if you ultimately involve an expert colleague to provide specific advice, being able to identify and provide an initial view on a legal issue, informed by your knowledge of your client’s business and risk profile, is crucial.”

Practical Law publishes numerous overview notes, global guides, Q&As, checklists, toolkits and other resources that allow lawyers to quickly get up to speed on areas of law that are adjacent to their practice focus, or to familiarize themselves with the rules in foreign jurisdictions.

“Practical Law’s a breadth and depth of global coverage is unique,” says Bryan.

“ Our expert-led materials enable Hong Kong lawyers and businesses to tap into overseas markets. Even if you are unable to provide definitive advice on foreign law, you can use Practical Law to identify the salient issues for your client. This goes a long way in helping lawyers —whether in private practice or working in-house— to prove their value to clients and stakeholders.”



Tim Perry
Director, Practical Law
Asia & Emerging Markets



Did you know?

Westlaw Asia’s breadth of territorial coverage provides lawyers with a “one-stop shop” for their case, statute and commentary research needs. It is quick and easy to find relevant primary law and related authoritative secondary content from Hong Kong, the UK, and other common law jurisdictions. Primary law linking also connects users with relevant domestic primary law as well as international authorities from the UK, Australia and more. Together, Practical Law and Westlaw Asia are essential tools that allow lawyers to evolve their expertise in step with their clients’ businesses.

3

Give clients confidence while working remotely

In its recent annual survey, the Thomson Reuters Market Insights team examined the qualities that drove more than 6,000 senior legal counsel to rate their law firm advisors highly, with a third of these based in the Asia-Pacific region.

Innovation was one of seven drawcards that influenced their purchasing behaviour, with innovative law firms experiencing a spike in their GC preferential rating of 32%. Innovation is especially important in today's rapidly changing work environment.



“ Clients want to be confident that their external advisors can deliver the work, from wherever they're working. ” says Bryan

“Additionally, clients may question your team's efficiency if they learn that you are not working together in the same space, and may question if your team is sharing knowledge and delegating work in a cost-effective manner. These days it is harder for lawyers to knock on a colleague's door and talk through a thorny legal problem. Practical Law can be a virtual expert colleague down the hall when there is no one 'down the hall!' ”



Did you know?

Thomson Reuters' product team follows design thinking practices to ensure it builds and releases the most flexible and usable solutions for lawyers. At the same time, our product team is committed to enhancing and building new legal technologies which continue to make it more effective for users to find and understand the legal content they need to advise their clients. Westlaw Asia offers a comprehensive source of information that empowers Hong Kong lawyers to find relevant information quickly and efficiently, in one place.

4

Collaborate more effectively with foreign counsel and save on costs

“Hong Kong is one of the most outward-looking, globally-connected cities in the world, full of businesses looking to make an impact across Asia and the rest of the globe,” says Bryan.

“On the legal side, this necessitates working with foreign counsel. Practical Law can really help Hong Kong lawyers when collaborating with foreign lawyers. I know, because that’s how I used Practical Law when I was working in-house.”

Practical Law resources like **checklists and overview notes can help lawyers scope out the issues before seeking foreign legal advice.**

“When I was an in-house lawyer, I dealt with a number of foreign insolvency matters. Up to that point, I had very little experience in insolvency law, let alone foreign insolvency law. By using Practical Law resources, I was able to obtain a grounding in basic insolvency concepts. This enabled me to ask for targeted advice, instead of asking for an overview of basic issues. By using Practical Law in this way, we were able to reduce many hours of billable time to one or two hours. I’m sure we saved a great deal in legal fees — many multiples of our Practical Law subscription fee.”

An added bonus of Practical Law is that it can serve as a reference to do quality checks of the work prepared by foreign advisors. “I could quickly skim through a foreign law overview note or a standard document, for example, and make sure nothing important was missing. I could then seek clarification from our foreign counsel if necessary.” says Bryan.



“Overall, this gave me more confidence in our foreign legal position when advising stakeholders within the company.”

5

Understand your clients' businesses and industries

Corporate clients are demanding more from their legal advisors. Not only that they have exceptional technical expertise, but they can also add commercial and strategic value to their businesses. That X Factor that makes you stand out and above your competitors.

"There's an enormous difference between an advisor who can provide just legal advice, and an advisor who can provide legal advice that is also tailored to their client's industry and competitive environment," says Bryan.

To advise properly you need to equip yourself with several sources of information and ensure you're accessing legal information in an efficient and effective way. On Practical Law, lawyers can upskill themselves with industry knowledge available in industry coverage, current awareness alerts, global guides and overview notes. Lawyers can set up daily alerts on Westlaw Asia sourcing information from over 11,000 global news and business information resources from publications including the South China Morning Post and The Standard to enable them to speak with authority and stay on the cutting edge of developments in Hong Kong.

"An advisor who is able to marry their technical knowledge with knowledge of their client's industry and the broader world can really separate themselves from the pack," says Bryan. "Those counsel are special, and are worth their weight in gold."

To achieve this status requires information and tools that equip these trusted advisors to stay across industry trends and to know what's happening in the market.



“ With the combination of resources provided by Westlaw Asia and Practical Law, we empower lawyers in Hong Kong to perform at their best, to act with confidence, to demonstrate their expertise and to practice efficiently. ” says Rob Head



Ready to boost your legal expertise for optimal client service delivery? Speak with a **Thomson Reuters specialist** to explore your legal research technology options today.



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