# Briefing

MARKETING TOMORROW'S FIRM
APRIL 2014

*Interview*

## Ash Coleman-Smith

BLP's marketing director on legal marketing after the flood – and why outsiders' input is disrupting business as usual

*Feature*

## Rules of attraction

Marketing and BD chiefs from legal and professional services on why and where marketing must go – and how firms can put their stamp on the future

*Industry views*

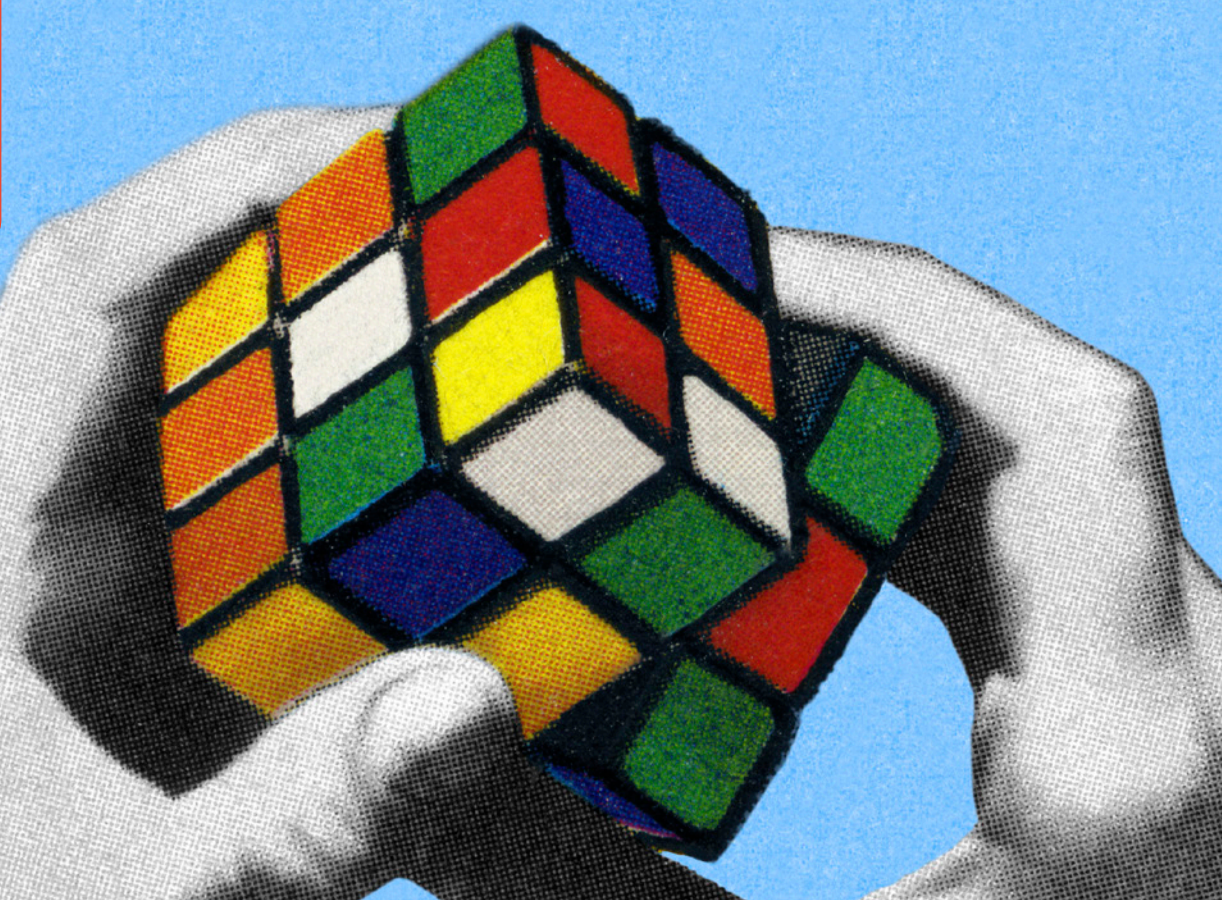
## Market leaders

Industry knowledge from suppliers for marketing and BD leaders

**Briefing** jobs: Senior roles across the board on our jobs pages

# Solving the marketing puzzle

***How law firms are learning the lessons of accounting and consulting to compete in tomorrow's legal market***



*Industry Analysis*

# Making CRM work for you

**Marketing and business development is an established strategic function in law firms – but client relationship management is still significantly under-used, says Fiona Jackson, client adviser at LexisNexis Enterprise Solutions**

**Marketing and BD has come of age. It's now recognised as a strategic function, separate from the traditional sales and marketing activities in law firms. With partner clout diminishing, client loyalty no longer a given (due to reduced budgets), and strength of reputation alone being insufficient, law firms need to demonstrate their 'value' to customers and prospects to win and retain business. Marketing's primary tool, customer relationship management, is still a powerful weapon – but it's not being used to its potential.**

BD entails identifying targets, developing relationships and approaches through a structured process, successfully concluding with on-boarding the new business. CRM systems deliver against every step of this journey, ensuring that the BD activities are closely aligned to the larger goals of the business.

A single view of the firm's targets is essential. BD and marketing teams must have visibility of the commercial landscape that prospects operate in. Understanding the challenges potential customers face provides the opportunity to propose a suitable solution.

BD teams can cleverly use their CRM system to stay a step ahead. New sector-related legislations come up frequently, for example, that may be relevant to clients' business. With prior knowledge of such developments, BD and marketing teams are well placed to offer new services that the client potentially may need.

This is possible by integrating CRM with practice management and billing systems, along with external data sources such as Bureau van Dijk and Dun & Bradstreet – all are vital. Furthermore, having information such as size of client, billing, over- or under-spend, details of financial arrangements and the like for existing clients at your fingertips is powerful. Well-used CRM can help BD and marketing teams identify and develop ideas for new value propositions based on the perceived requirements of client needs.

**Value of the new business pipeline**

BD activity has to be aligned to the firm's revenue targets and overall strategy, making tracking of the new business pipeline critical. Most law firms are good at managing marketing campaigns from their CRM systems, but often neglect using the solution for pipeline management and revenue forecasting. CRM systems house current and historical data. By analysing that information, marketing and BD teams can accurately forecast future revenue, as well as using the intelligence to fine-tune BD strategies.

Firms in the accountancy sector are fairly sophisticated in their use of CRM. Grant Thornton, for example, has aligned its partner KPIs with the strategic objectives of the business, and uses its CRM system to monitor performance and progress.

Offering complementary services helps with organic business growth but, more importantly, it's a means of ensuring continuous improvement in the value that a law firm provides to its clients.

CRM systems record relationship data along with past engagements and client-related activities. The combined intelligence derived often throws up potential opportunities for cross-selling in a productive and constructive manner. Some commercially savvy firms are including cross-selling targets in partner KPIs, and making them a part of metrics for fee earner appraisals.

The relationship intelligence that CRM systems provide serves as an important indicator of how the needs of clients must be addressed and their expectations managed. Staying on top of client issues is fundamental to this. Mobile access to up-to-date information about activities, communications, inter-relationships and more is therefore essential. CRM systems offer such capability.

Succession planning is a key aspect of client management, and must be embedded in day-to-day activity. CRM systems store historical records of written communication, phone calls, client requests/needs and any other client-related activity so that, if a client's key contact leaves the firm, the quality and level of customer engagement is not lost.

Marketing and BD has carved a niche for itself. It is no longer a support function, but a vehicle to achieve business goals. It is no surprise that, worldwide, up to £37bn will be spent on CRM by 2017, according to Gartner. Underpinning BD with CRM facilitates a strategic, best-practice approach.

But a CRM tool is simply a piece of software. It's what law firms do with it that counts. Optimising it will help to achieve strategic business targets.