

CLIENT FEEDBACK

The following is feedback I have received in relation to services provided by me to law firms.

One of the pillars of my approach is absolute confidentiality. That applies not just to data or information that is shared with me by firms but also to the very fact that I am talking with or working with them. No names are therefore provided here, though a number of firms have indicated a willingness for their names to be made public.

Some firms that approach me with a view to us working together ask if they might talk with other firms that I work with. Such is the relationship that I have with my client firms that this can be arranged without difficulty.

This is what they say about me :

Law firm Managing Partner :

I first met Simon three years ago and welcomed him into our firm. From the start he listened and understood us.

Simon has taken the time to meet everyone, he knows all the team members by name, he has given his time and has shown interest. In return he is well liked and respected by the team. This has been very important to me because the firm is all about the people in it.

Simon's track record speaks for itself but whatever the size of firm he is able to grasp quickly the difficulties and (often daily) challenges any law firm meets. This is because he has been there and done that. So his experience and knowledge is extensive but, not only that, Simon is able to take his experience and the lessons learnt and communicate it all in a very straightforward and engaging manner. I am a firm believer in getting the basics right in terms of people, new quality work, the finances and so on. Simon's input has been direct, often thought-provoking and challenging but at all times he has been crystal clear with his vision.

Our goal was to grow the firm. This involved making some important and difficult decisions but Simon was always at hand to offer his advice and support. What has always impressed me was his speed of response, his drive and his energy. Not only that, but follow-up is key in everything we do. After a consultation, Simon will immediately follow up with an action plan. He will also check-in to ensure we are up to speed with his recommendations. Simon works very, very hard for you.

What I value is the encouragement and support Simon offers. He proposed subtle but important changes to our firm. He also turned our team structure upside down and spearheaded a growth plan.

A new focus was introduced to achieve our financial goals. And guess what, it worked! In fact, at no stage did I think it wouldn't work because we had a belief but we also had that extra focus and motivation Simon was able to provide. That is not to say our journey has been easy. It has not and Simon does not pull any punches either! But he inspires you and I cannot recommend Simon enough.

For me it is all about surrounding yourself with good people whether that be the team, clients and professional contacts. Simon is very much part of our team now and has become our good friend too.

Law Firm Managing Partner :

In the space of 5 ½ months of first meeting Simon, our business changed beyond belief.

In that time, we made the biggest business decision we had ever made, we had changed the firm's accountants, and we had improved cashflow significantly.

We outsourced one of the firm's critical functions, changed the firm's structure, and had secured introductions through Simon to 3 important business contacts that have added value to my firm, and will continue to do so in the years to come.

Oh – and in the process, Simon also saved me over £200,000!!

The meeting nearly didn't happen. The usual woes of a Managing Partner meant that I never had enough time and, although my Practice Manager had made an introduction for me to Simon in June 2019, we didn't eventually meet up with Simon until October 2019.

Simon's email on the delay was memorable – *"I won't chase you – you know where I am if you want to talk anything through. It's never too early to make more money!"*

I knew in the first half an hour of our first meeting with Simon that we were dealing with a heavyweight. I knew that he was someone who could transform our business.

In the short space of time that we have been working together I have been hugely impressed with Simon's ability to identify key "big ticket items" that, when addressed, have made a significant and immediate difference to the firm.

His passion and energy are inspirational. He has an absolute commitment to support the changes that we want to make in firm. I see him more as a mentor than a consultant and like any good mentor he has helped me to find my own solutions.

Once a decision has been made, he then holds me accountable to that decision to make sure that it is followed through.

There's no easy ride with Simon and he is restless for change for the good. I always feel that I need to be on top of my game in any dealings with him, but I feel completely supported and I genuinely feel that Simon wants to see us succeed.

Once we had committed to the biggest business decision of our business life, I left our meeting with Simon's parting words ringing in my ears – "*We will get this done – and I'm with you every step of the way*". He meant it and I knew he meant it. It gave me the confidence to take the first, most difficult, step and set the snowball rolling down the hill.

It is early days in our professional relationship and already so much has changed for me personally and also for my firm. I am hopeful that it will be a long and productive relationship for many years to come.

Don't be intimidated by his CV or the scary photographs on his website. He's a nice bloke, and he knows what he's doing.

Law Firm Managing Partner :

As Managing Partner of a law firm, I would highlight two features in Simon : (1) he goes deep in understanding the dynamics of the firm, the relationship between the partners, the type of services, the type of clients; and then (2) he provides feasible recommendations which we as a team can relate to. That is, nothing unrealistic or abstract but rather concrete measures which are fully aligned with the culture and objectives of the firm. He is now (and will always be) part of our team and I have no doubts that we will always involve him in all future structural decisions for the firm.

Moreover, the recent COVID-19 pandemic times did not affect us much, which I attribute to the "silent and smooth revolution" that Simon sparked in the firm last year - because of him and his advice, we were stronger to ride out these pandemic times.

Law firm Managing Partner :

I got in touch with Simon as I could see that although we were doing really well as a business, we felt sure that our business had a lot of untapped potential, and we needed someone to help unlock that.

Simon clearly has a deep understanding of how a legal business works, and he can see both the pitfalls and benefits of a particular course of action. His methods and solutions fitted very well with what we were trying to achieve.

Simon is friendly and approachable, and always available when you need him. He talks a lot of sense, and most people in the firm really liked his approach. Some probably did not take to it as much, but with a group of 100 people or more, that is always going to be the case.

We made several specific changes to the business as a result of working with Simon, and these are becoming embedded as part of the ethos of the firm. These changes are helping drive our performance in terms of the service we provide and the way the lawyers deliver it.

I would certainly say that Simon added value, and I would recommend other law firms to speak to Simon to see what he can offer.

Law firm Managing Partner :

I've known Simon for approaching 20 years since his days at Pannone and right through his days at Darbys and recently we've used his McCrum Consulting services.

Probably the key difference between Simon and a number of other law firm consultants in the marketplace is that he actually has been there and done that - he's been a Managing Partner, and he's dealt with the management of more than one law firm in good times and bad. He's done numerous re-organisations. He has motivated staff, he's dealt with banks and ultimately he's successfully sold a chunky-sized practice.

That means he's got real practical experience going way beyond the theoretical looking-in-from-the-outside view. He's also got an impressive book of contacts which is helpful as well.

When we needed to start using Simon recently, I simply phoned him up and within a couple of days was sitting in a coffee shop talking through what we, as a thriving and very large law firm, would benefit from, and a short while later he was on site doing it.

We used Simon for a whole range of issues. We were looking at a significant acquisition and he was able to put us in touch with relevant professional advisers to help us with that and to attend meetings and give us an impartial view as to whether we were going in the right direction, to encourage us to make the decision and move forwards.

We needed him to look at our promotions and remuneration structure and engage with all our groups and ultimately present a new detailed and documented process for career progression to all of the staff.

We also had Simon look across our already extensive reporting and gross margin analysis work to suggest improvements relevant to each individual fee earner, each individual fee earner's supervisor, and each team. He worked across all our teams over a period of several weeks developing the timely production of new and key information and a method by which that was used to great effect in the management of the teams and the firm. That has led to a measurable improvement in productivity and profit.

A key benefit in engaging with Simon was that I was confident that when he went off to engage with other partners and managers within the business that I wouldn't need to manage that relationship and convince my partners to work with Simon. Rather, they would accept his practical background in doing the very job they were doing and would see from

talking to him that he understood solicitors' practices and very much spoke the same language as them, but equally that he had some new and progressive management ideas and suggestions. It was easy to work with Simon because I didn't have to continually explain the intricacies of a solicitors' practice and how the finances worked. He knew how it worked.

I was confident in putting Simon up in front of our whole fee earning community to help me to actually launch the new initiatives that he'd worked on alongside me.

We're still getting the benefit from all of the things that were put in place and we're still in touch with him on a regular basis.

Law firm Managing Partner :

Simon's analysis of our business, based on an examination of the figures and a discussion with key stakeholders, was incisive, erudite, and at times challenging. He identified areas of strength, weakness, and areas for growth. When introduced to our team leaders, he was inspirational, clear in the delivery of his message, and uncompromising. He certainly provokes a reaction, and in our case a positive reaction.

What is most impressive for us is his ability to relate to the practical difficulties faced by practices of our size and profile, and to provide solutions which we have implemented with success.

We identified weaknesses in our existing structure, and we are working on those, and the net effect of these changes is continued growth.

We already ran a successful practice prior to working with Simon but he certainly challenged us to generate new ideas; challenged our practices; provoked developments; and perhaps most importantly energised our leadership team and refocused us all on the growth and success of the firm. He was definitely great value for money!

Law firm Managing Partner :

We brought Simon in when we first opened our law firm. Having never run a business before, we needed guidance with regard to where we wanted to be and how we were going to get there. He took us back to the basics and explained where we needed to focus and why.

We then brought him back a year on, as we felt we had lost our way somewhat. Simon was able to give us the wake-up call we needed and after some uncomfortable conversations he helped us to re-focus on what is important as a business.

Simon uses his experience and knowledge to provide a professional and valuable service to law firms. He is straight-talking, honest and has a no-nonsense approach. He has a clear way of explaining and looking at things, and he is able to use genuine examples of experience or mistakes made in the past to give his advice credence.

His guidance has changed the way we and our employees conduct our business and where we focus.

He has always been instantly responsive when we have had questions or needed someone to sanity-check a decision we are trying to make.

We would happily recommend Simon to any law firm.

Law firm Managing Partner

Simon is a very good at consistently prompting us to keep moving forward with the plans we develop together. He responds very quickly indeed.

His extensive knowledge of legal businesses is enormously useful when sense-checking plans that we are developing together. His very strongly-held views are a useful foil and help us to test our thinking. It's good to have someone who challenges and tests your approach. We don't always agree but the process is a very constructive one.

Simon has definitely added value – he works with us on our Business Development plans and we have gained new work as a direct result of our collaboration

Law firm Managing Partner

Simon McCrum understands business and legal businesses. He challenges established ways of working to meet the new challenges and competition that law firms face. That means he challenges established ways of thinking to encourage partners to look at their law firm and its strategy differently and for the better.

His enthusiasm for the operational and strategic management of legal businesses is infectious and the depth with which he gets to know the businesses with which he is working means that his opinions are well thought-through, they are backed by evidence, and are relevant.

The result is that even the most sceptical of partners were won over to think again about their own practice area and what is right for the firm.

In a challenging and a changing market for legal businesses I would certainly recommend Simon as a consultant to assist any legal business to get a clearer focus for the future of their business

Law firm CEO

Sometimes when you are immersed in the thick of it, it's hard to stand back and plough a route through. This is where Simon steps in to add clarity of thought, and calm support. Without intrusion, he offers the relief of a truly trusted friend to bring his vast experience to smooth over waters.

Law firm Managing Partner

I can highly recommend working with Simon. It can be lonely at the top as a business owner but having Simon as a sounding board has made all the difference to me. Last year I rang him in quite a state over an issue where I could not see the wood for the trees. But Simon just got to the point, which has had a major impact on how I run the business.

Simon is blunt, but that's a good thing. He takes you out of your comfort zone and makes you look at your business in an entirely different way. For law firm owners, his added value is that he has been there and done that. He understands the nuances of law firms - unlike many other business coaches.

Chief Executive Officer, supplier to the Legal Sector

Simon's work with us has stimulated a lot of positive thought which formed into a new plan and a new direction for our business. In the last 18 months this new plan has largely been implemented and has substantially improved our profitability. Why wouldn't I recommend Simon?

Managing Director, supplier to the legal profession

In bullet-point form, I say the following about Simon :

- Confidentiality - Absolutely
- Service level - Excellent
- User-friendly? Yes, whilst being direct and honest
- Did we enjoy working together? We are still in touch...
- Liked by our people? Liked and respected
- Understand legal business? Undeniably
- Understand our business? On the whole
- Talk sense? Yes, commercial sense
- Relevance of advice? We still refer back and remind ourselves of his advice
- Did anything change in our business as a result of our work together? The biggest change was the new concentration on existing customers
- Add value? Not cheap, but yes
- Would you recommend that other legal businesses engage with Simon? 100%