

# Most enterprising law firm of the year

## WINNER

# Pannone

Joy Kingsley

*Leading the way with legal technology innovation*



Joy Kingsley of Pannone (centre) accepts the award from Jeremy Boodle of Smith & Williamson

Manchester firm Pannone does not have ambitions to be in the City, nor have any designs on being a national giant, but it remains one of the most consistently impressive regional firms in the country. It is constant innovation that allows the firm to thrive alongside larger rivals such as Addleshaw Goddard, DLA Piper and Eversheds.

It is impossible to isolate just one example of the firm's enterprising activities. Last year saw Pannone acquire a 33% shareholding in I-Com, the company that had previously won a tender to advise the firm on website engineering and search engine optimisation, and which is now serving the firm's clients on their commercial website requirements.

Three years ago, the firm launched Connect2Law, a scheme whereby smaller firms are connected to larger commercial firms, giving their lawyers and clients access to GPD training and management advice. In 2006 it franchised the scheme out around the country, resulting in East Midlands giant Shoosmiths, among others, joining the network.

The firm also introduced Door2Law, a legal and business support network offering quick and uncomplicated commercial advice as well as a 24-hour helpline. Kingsley has revolutionised the firm, from an insurance specialist into a full-service commercial outfit, by thinking outside the box time and time again.

## HIGHLY COMMENDED

### ANDERSON FYFE

Derek Hamill

The Clementi reforms may not herald the revolution in the legal sector that some might have hoped, but there are firms gearing up for the new era. If and when the reforms are applied to Scotland, Anderson Fyfe will be at the head of the queue for potential investors, following some innovative measures intended to increase profitability and turnover. These include

by way of a dividend. The initiative comes on the back of other diverse schemes including the establishment of a referral network of Filipino law firms in order to deal with personal injury claims by British citizens in that country.

### LAWYERS DIRECT

James Knight

Since pioneering the 'virtual' law firm in 2002, Lawyers Direct has not only thrived but inspired copycat outfits, a sure sign of success. The basis of the firm, where the lawyers work from home as self-employed consultant lawyers, is founded on the dual principles of quality of life and flexibility of practice. An innovative remuneration structure is offset by low overheads, while the introduction of new technology and a new management structure ensures the continuing progress of this fresh business model.

### WITHY KING

Martin Powell; Nikki Sherry

Although Withy King's legal 'shop' Complete has been operating in Bath since 1998, 2006 saw the firm take it a step further by opening branches in Swindon and Trowbridge. Complete was initially conceived as a sister operation, selling pre-packaged conveyancing products to the firm's cash-rich, time-poor private client base. The firm has broadened the scope of the products on offer to include wills advice, and also plans to provide divorce advice in 2007. The bespoke Complete brand has reaped the benefits of a more consumer-oriented approach, with initial feedback indicating 96% customer satisfaction. A tribute to Powell's vision and dynamism.

## Connect2Law links small firms to larger ones, giving both lawyers and clients access to training and advice.

supporting solicitors to train for tertiary qualifications and to dual-qualify as English solicitors, and training support staff as paralegals, nearly doubling fee-earner numbers and increasing chargeable hours without substantially growing the firm.

### BRIDGE MCFARLAND

Paddy McFarland; Simon Oates

The Lincoln firm cemented links with next-door neighbours the Lincolnshire Co-operative, and boosted business in its private client department, by offering the incentive of paying a dividend to members instructing the firm. The firm offered 5% of the fee back on residential conveyancing matters, and a fixed amount back on every elderly client matter, both

10th  
anniversary