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INTERNATIONAL BAR ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE 2026

IBA Law Firm Management Committee

Academy for Leaders

A practical leadership programme for law firm leaders

27–30 July 2026
King's College London, London, England

Working programme

All speaker materials and biographies can be found at **www.ibanet.org/conference-details/conf2793**

Day One – Monday 27 July

0830 **Welcome coffee**
K2.30

0900 – 1000 **Introduction to the Leadership Academy**

Welcome remarks – The "Big Picture" – introduce the business plan, the strategy model and case study approach

Discuss "learning objectives" including icebreaker

Zulon Begum *Partner, CM Murray, London; Secretary-Treasurer, IBA Law Firm Management Committee*
Stephen Bowman *Former Managing Partner, People & Talent, Bennett Jones, Toronto; Co-Chair, IBA Future of Legal Services Commission*
Moray McLaren *Lexington Consultants, Madrid; Strategy Officer, IBA Law Firm Management Committee*
Stephen Revell *Making Change Happen, London; Member, IBA Law Firm Management Committee Advisory Board*

1000 – 1300 **Module One**

Understanding market position and strategic advantage: what type of law firm do you want to build and how do you build it?

This session will cover the following topics:

- Reviewing the changing business environment and client needs: what is the higher versus lower value work? Which clients and prospects are most attractive?
- Reviewing and prioritising your firm's opportunities in terms of service lines, sectors and client types
- Positioning yourselves, accordingly, building and communicating the firm's unique offering and the differentiation required
- Opportunities and challenges for approaching the market through industry specialisation and client service teams (sector teams/client relationship management)
- Setting direction, getting buy-in, ensuring accountabilities and delivery
- How will tech/AI and externally funded law firms change the strategic landscape and how firms can respond
- How should clients influence strategy?

1000 – 1115 **Presentations**

Faculty lead
Moray McLaren *Lexington Consultants, Madrid; Strategy Officer, IBA Law Firm Management Committee*

Faculty
James Batham *Co-Head of Clients and Markets, Dentons, London*
Neville Eisenberg *Consultant at ClarityX Advisory, London*
Shahir Guindi *Chair Emeritus and Partner, Osler Hoskin & Harcourt, Montréal, Québec*

1115 – 1130 **Coffee/tea break**
K2.30

1130 – 1215 **Breakout groups**
Council Room, River Room, K2.30, K2.31

1215 – 1300 **Practitioner perspectives and Q&A panel**

Chair
Neville Eisenberg *Consultant at ClarityX Advisory, London*

Panel
Zulon Begum *Partner, CM Murray, London; Secretary-Treasurer, IBA Law Firm Management Committee*
Shahir Guindi *Chair Emeritus and Partner, Osler Hoskin & Harcourt, Montréal, Québec*
David Gutierrez *Co-Founding Partner, BLP, San Jose, Costa Rica; Member, IBA Latin American Regional Forum Advisory Board*
Carola Van den Bruinhorst *Consultant, Phyleon Leadership & Governance, Amsterdam; Immediate Past Chair, IBA LPD*

1300 – 1400 **Lunch**
River Room

MOBILE TELEPHONES

Delegates are requested to ensure that mobile telephones and any other portable devices are switched to silent in working sessions.

1400 – 1745 **Module Two**

How to grow; organically; lateral hiring; alliances; merger; referral relationships and networks. Does this need external investment?

Within more competitive domestic markets, law firms are seeking options for growth including increasing the level of their international work. In parallel, they are seeking to modernise with more professional systems and are investing in AI and other tech. As a result, the number of domestic mergers is increasing as firms seek economies of scale, while others are also seeking to grow through international networks, alliance relationships or even an international merger. Growth has always involved organic growth – mainly associates into partners but many firms are using lateral hiring as a key growth driver. How is all this funded – is external investment the answer.

This session will cover the following topics:

- Do we want or need to grow?
- Understanding your strategic challenges for growth and weighing up the options for growth
- Weighing-up pros and cons of domestic mergers, international alliances and mergers
- Defining your merger needs and making the first selection
- What does a successful lateral hiring and integration strategy look like
- Pros and cons of external investment
- Managing a relationship network
- When is external capital appropriate? How does it work? What are the alternatives?

1400 – 1515 **Presentations**

Faculty lead
Stephen Revell *Making Change Happen, London; Member, IBA Law Firm Management Committee Advisory Board*

Faculty
David Pester *Head of Strategic Growth, TLT, Bristol*
Stephen Revell *Making Change Happen, London; Member, IBA Law Firm Management Committee Advisory Board*
Robert Millard *Director, Cambridge Strategy Group, Cambridge*
Andreas Schønbeck *Partner, HortenDahl, Copenhagen*

1515 – 1530 **Coffee/tea break**
K2.30

1530 – 1620 **Presentations continued**

Faculty lead
Stephen Revell *Making Change Happen, London; Member, IBA Law Firm Management Committee Advisory Board*
Keith Heddle *Director, Mackrell International, London; Vice Chair, IBA Small and Medium Firms Subcommittee*
Gary Assim *International Legal Consultant, The Image Lawyer, London; LFMC Materials Co-Officer, IBA Law Firm Management Committee*
Charles Martin *Senior Advisor, Darrois Villey Maillot Brochier, Paris; Member, IBA Law Firm Management Committee Advisory Board*

1620 – 1700 **Breakout groups**
Council Room, River Room, K2.30, K2.31

MOBILE TELEPHONES

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Day One – Monday 27 July continued

1700 – 1745 **Practitioner perspectives and Q&A Panel**

Chair
Stephen Revell *Making Change Happen, London; Member, IBA Law Firm Management Committee Advisory Board*

Panel
Gary Assim *International Legal Consultant, The Image Lawyer, London; LFMC Materials Co-Officer, IBA Law Firm Management Committee*
Charles Martin *Senior Advisor, Darrois Villey Maillot Brochier, Paris; Member, IBA Law Firm Management Committee Advisory Board*
Robert Millard *Director, Cambridge Strategy Group, Cambridge*
David Pester *Head of Strategic Growth, TLT, Bristol*
Andreas Schønbeck *Partner, HortenDahl, Copenhagen*

1745 – 1815 **Keynote address**

Speaker
Michael Williams *Partner, Kirkland & Ellis, Washington DC*

1815 – 1830 **Closing remarks and 'advance the business plan'**
Stephen Bowman *Former Managing Partner, People & Talent, Bennett Jones, Toronto; Co-Chair, IBA Future of Legal Services Commission*
Moray McLaren *Lexington Consultants, Madrid; Strategy Officer, IBA Law Firm Management Committee*

1830 – 2000 **Informal welcome drinks**
River Terrace
Strand Campus, Strand
London WC2R 2LS

Day Two – Tuesday 28 July

0830 **Welcome coffee**
K2.30

0845 – 0900 **Introduction**
Stephen Bowman *Former Managing Partner, People & Talent, Bennett Jones, Toronto; Co-Chair, IBA Future of Legal Services Commission*
Moray McLaren *Lexington Consultants, Madrid; Strategy Officer, IBA Law Firm Management Committee*

0900 – 1300 **Module Three**

Understanding financial management and profitability: how do I manage the firm from a financial perspective?

This session will provide an overview of the key financial risks for law firms and how you can overcome them.

This session will cover the following topics:
- Current trends in law firm financial management; is AI the answer?
- Best practice in handling cash-flow
- Time recording, invoicing and cash collection
- The levers of profitability

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0900 – 1045 **Presentations**

Faculty Lead
Moray McLaren *Lexington Consultants, Madrid; Strategy Officer, IBA Law Firm Management Committee*

Faculty
Greg Jackson *Founder, Oakwood Strategy, London*
Nick West *Chief Strategy Officer, Mishcon de Reya, London*
Shahir Guindi *Chair Emeritus and Partner, Osler Hoskin & Harcourt, Montréal, Québec*
Anne Macdonald *Partner, Harper Macleod, Glasgow; Co-Chair, IBA Law Firm Management Committee*

1045 – 1115 **Coffee/tea break**
K2.30

1115 – 1200 **Breakout groups**
Council Room, River Room, K2.30, K2.31

1200 – 1300 **Practitioners perspectives and Q&A panel**

Chair
Moray McLaren *Lexington Consultants, Madrid; Strategy Officer, IBA Law Firm Management Committee*

Panel
Shahir Guindi *Chair Emeritus and Partner, Osler Hoskin & Harcourt, Montréal, Québec*
Anne Macdonald *Partner, Harper Macleod, Glasgow; Co-Chair, IBA Law Firm Management Committee*
Nick West *Chief Strategy Officer, Mishcon de Reya, London*

1300 – 1400 **Lunch**
River room

1400 – 1730 **Module Four**

Understanding law firm ownership, partner performance and profit sharing: how do we remunerate/reward to build a firm?

Law firms are facing a "perfect storm" in terms of their ownership models, evaluating partner performance and dividing profits fairly.

What are the financial and non-financial requirements of a law firm partner and how to evaluate their "contribution"? During turbulent times, how to "fairly" divide ownership and profits? How can firms continue to promote new partners within a slow or no-growth environment, meanwhile ensuring that the most senior of partners are still able to transition out of the firm?

For many, this is coming against the background of the transition from first to second generation ownership with additional challenges regarding law firm valuations and partner contributions.

This session will cover the following topics:
- Current challenges within law firm ownership, contribution and profit sharing
- Understanding partner performance in terms of financial and non-financial contribution
- Capital contributions and buying out founding interests
- How will AI/external capital affect ownership, profit sharing, partner expectations and succession?
- Latest trends in partner performance: objective setting, evaluation and profit-sharing

MOBILE TELEPHONES
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Day Two – Tuesday 28 July continued

1400 – 1530 **Presentations**

Faculty lead
Zulon Begum *Partner, CM Murray, London; Secretary-Treasurer, IBA Law Firm Management Committee*

Faculty
Moray McLaren *Lexington Consultants, Madrid; Strategy Officer, IBA Law Firm Management Committee*
Aku Sorainen *Founder, Senior Partner, SORAINEN, Tallinn*
Fabian Gaffron *Partner, HEUKING, Hamburg*
Roger Bull *Managing Partner, Burges Salmon, Bristol*
Eric Baijal *Director, BBM Solicitors, Wick; Website and Communications Officer, IBA Law Firm Management Committee*

1530 – 1600 **Coffee/tea break**
K2.30

1600 – 1645 **Breakout groups**
Council Room, River Room, K2.30, K2.31

1645 – 1730 **Practitioner perspectives and Q&A panel**

Chair
Zulon Begum *Partner, CM Murray, London; Secretary-Treasurer, IBA Law Firm Management Committee*

Panel
Eric Baijal *Director, BBM Solicitors, Wick; Website and Communications Officer, IBA Law Firm Management Committee*
Roger Bull *Managing Partner, Burges Salmon, Bristol*
Fabian Gaffron *Partner, HEUKING, Hamburg*
Aku Sorainen *Founder, Senior Partner, SORAINEN, Tallinn*

1730 – 1800 **Keynote address**

Speaker
Matt Meyer *Managing Partner, Kingsley Napley, London*

1800 – 1815 **Closing remarks and 'advance the business plan'**
Zulon Begum *Partner, CM Murray, London; Secretary-Treasurer, IBA Law Firm Management Committee*
Moray McLaren *Lexington Consultants, Madrid; Strategy Officer, IBA Law Firm Management Committee*

Day Three – Wednesday 29 July

0830 **Welcome coffee**
K2.30

0845 – 0900 **Introduction**
Stephen Bowman *Former Managing Partner, People & Talent, Bennett Jones, Toronto; Co-Chair, IBA Future of Legal Services Commission*
Moray McLaren *Lexington Consultants, Madrid; Strategy Officer, IBA Law Firm Management Committee*

0900 – 1000 **Keynote speaker**
Law firm evolutions and market revolutions
Yasmin Lambert *Managing Director, RSGI, London*

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1000 – 1300 **Module Five**

Inspiring your people and leading through change: how do I best lead my firm? How to lead to achieve strategy.

This module will help you become an effective and successful leader by understanding what current changes (in generations, society and work practice) mean in terms of your own leadership style, collaborating better and getting the most from your people by building open and trusting relationships, understanding personal motivation and managing by "outputs" and not "inputs".

Having a strategy is important but achieving it is mission critical and it's the primary job of a "leader".

Participants will gain a clearer picture of their role both as a leader and as a manager, what can be expected of them (or not), plus insights and tips into how to get the job done effectively while at the same time maintaining personal and professional balance.

The module will cover the following topics:

- Understanding the difference between management and leadership and what is required of today's law firm leaders
- Understanding the job of law firm leadership and how to do it effectively
- Getting the best from your people, appreciating the different styles of leadership and what that means
- How to build consensus
- Understanding the diverging goals, values and attitudes across generational cohorts
- Guiding the junior lawyers and supporting them as they grow professionally
- Improving your 'management leverage' by delegating, supervising and developing an effective team around you
- Ensuring your people are on board and the "people pipeline" is still intact.
- Leading to achieve strategy.

1000 – 1115 **Presentations**

Faculty lead
Stephen Bowman *Former Managing Partner, People & Talent, Bennett Jones, Toronto; Co-Chair, IBA Future of Legal Services Commission*

Faculty
David Morley *Principal, Dejonghe & Morley, Newcastle Upon Tyne*
Julian Yarr *Non-Executive Director and Board Advisor, Julian Yarr Advisory, Dublin; Vice Chair, IBA Strategy and Finance Subcommittee*
Carola Van den Bruinhorst *Consultant, Phyleon Leadership & Governance, Amsterdam; Immediate Past Chair, IBA LPD*

1115 – 1130 **Coffee/tea break**
K2.30

1130 – 1215 **Breakout groups**
Council Room, River Room, K2.30, K2.31

1215 – 1300 **Practitioner perspectives and Q&A Panel**

Chair
Stephen Bowman *Former Managing Partner, People & Talent, Bennett Jones, Toronto; Co-Chair IBA Future of Legal Services Commission*

Panel
Neville Eisenberg *Consultant at ClarityX Advisory, London*
David Morley *Principal, Dejonghe & Morley, Newcastle Upon Tyne*
Carola Van den Bruinhorst *Consultant, Phyleon Leadership & Governance, Amsterdam; Immediate Past Chair, IBA LPD*
Julian Yarr *Non-Executive Director and Board Advisor, Julian Yarr Advisory, Dublin; Vice Chair, IBA Strategy and Finance Subcommittee*

1300 – 1400 **Lunch**
River Room

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1400 – 1500 **Client panel**

An open discussion with a panel of clients – what do they want? Opportunity to submit questions in advance or from the floor.

Chair

Paul Marmor *Head of Dispute Resolutions, Sherrards, London; Member, IBA Law Firm Management Committee Advisory Board*

Speakers

Dawn Stallwood *Founder, Floodlight Business, Cobham*
Jacqueline Moreton *General Counsel, Banijay UK, London*
Duc Trang *Managing Director of Landon Advisory, London*

1500 – 1800 **Module Six**

Improving legal service delivery through better use of knowledge, technology and innovation: How do I make the most of disruption, technology and new business models?

More competitive market conditions are forcing law firms to find efficiencies, adopt new ways of delivering their services and adapt and update their business models.

This session will review the challenges of innovation and change, in particular, ensuring you have the right balance of inputs and outputs required to improve your service delivery without waste and higher costs.

We will cover the following topics:

- Understanding the driving forces for a new approach – is efficiency everything?
- Starting with your clients, people and processes (then adding in the technology)
- The importance of knowledge (what does that mean?) and role of knowledge management
- Affordable options for embracing new approaches
- How should firms embrace AI (and charge for it)

1500 – 1615 **Presentations**

Faculty lead

Stephen Bowman *Former Managing Partner, People & Talent, Bennett Jones, Toronto; Co-Chair, IBA Future of Legal Services Commission*

Faculty

Robert Millard *Cambridge Strategy Group Limited, Cambridge*
Julian Yarr *Non-Executive Director and Board Advisor, Julian Yarr Advisory, Dublin; Vice Chair, IBA Strategy and Finance Subcommittee*
Nick West *Chief Strategy Officer, Mishcon de Reya, London*
Carola Van den Bruinhorst *Consultant, Phyleon Leadership & Governance, Amsterdam; Immediate Past Chair, IBA LPD*

1615 – 1630 **Coffee/tea break**

K2.30

1630 – 1715 **Breakout groups**

Council Room, River Room, K2.30, K2.31

1715 – 1800 **Practitioner perspectives and Q&A panel**

Chair

Stephen Bowman *Former Managing Partner, People & Talent, Bennett Jones, Toronto; Co-Chair, IBA Future of Legal Services Commission*

Panel

Robert Millard *Cambridge Strategy Group Limited, Cambridge*
Carola Van den Bruinhorst *Consultant, Phyleon Leadership & Governance, Amsterdam; Immediate Past Chair, IBA LPD*
Nick West *Chief Strategy Officer, Mishcon de Reya, London*
Julian Yarr *Non-Executive Director and Board Advisor, Julian Yarr Advisory, Dublin; Vice Chair, IBA Strategy and Finance Subcommittee*

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Day Three – Wednesday 29 July continued

1800 – 1815 **Closing remarks and 'advance the business plan'**

1815 – 2100 **Networking drinks**
Roof Terrace at Marquess of Anglesey
39 Bow Street
London WC2E 7AU

Day Four – Thursday 30 July

0830 **Welcome coffee**
K2.30

0845 – 0900 **Introduction**
Zulon Begum *Partner, CM Murray, London; Secretary-Treasurer, IBA Law Firm Management Committee*
Moray McLaren *Lexington Consultants, Madrid; Strategy Officer, IBA Law Firm Management Committee*

0900 – 1000 **Keynote speaker**
Keeping it simple

Speaker
Hugh Verrier *Partner, White & Case, New York*

1000 – 1300 **Module Seven**
Business development and communications: How do we build the best client relationships?
In this session, we will demystify the state-of-the-art marketing and strategy techniques at use for individual lawyers and their firms. By using these approaches, lawyers maximise their ability to build a network, develop a strong reputation, and create the practice they dream of having.

This module will cover the following topics:
- Understanding your value proposition – creating strategic plans, practice plans and mini marketing plans.
- Selecting and prioritising opportunities: which clients and prospects are most attractive and what work do you want from them?
- Options for winning new work and developing stronger client relations
- Market positioning and branding – why tactics come before strategy
- Communications tactics, PR, social media and law firm directories
- Organising your law firm BD – various structures and how they operate
- How will AI affect marketing strategy? Some clients are now choosing firms based on recommendations by AI

1000 – 1115 **Presentations**

Faculty lead
Stephen Revell *Making Change Happen, London; Member, IBA Law Firm Management Committee Advisory Board*

Faculty
Katie Cramond-Hill *Senior Director of Business Development EMEA & Asia, Gibson Dunn, London*
Melissa Davis *Founder and CEO, MD Communications, London*
Gary Assim *International Legal Consultant, The Image Lawyer, London; LFMC Materials Co-Officer, IBA Law Firm Management Committee*
David Gutierrez *Co-Founding Partner, BLP, San Jose, Costa Rica; Member, IBA Latin American Regional Forum Advisory Board*

1115 – 1130 **Coffee/tea break**
K2.30

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1130 – 1215 **Breakout groups**
Council Room, River Room, K2.30, K2.31

1215 – 1300 **Practitioner perspectives and Q&A panel**

Chair
Melissa Davis *Founder and CEO, MD Communications, London*

Panel
Gary Assim *International Legal Consultant, The Image Lawyer, London; LFMC Materials Co-Officer, IBA Law Firm Management Committee*
Katie Cramond-Hill *Senior Director of Business Development EMEA & Asia, Gibson Dunn, London*
Louise Edwards *Michelmores, London*
David Gutierrez *Co-Founding Partner, BLP, San Jose, Costa Rica; Member, IBA Latin American Regional Forum Advisory Board*

1300 – 1400 **Lunch**
River Room

1400 – 1800 **Module Eight**
Wrap up session: Ask the experts?

1400 – 1500 **Expert panel**
An open discussion with a panel of experts around the specific questions/challenges participants want help with. Please submit questions by 12.45pm

Chair
Moray McLaren *Lexington Consultants, Madrid; Strategy Officer, IBA Law Firm Management Committee*

Panel
Zulon Begum *Partner, CM Murray, London; Secretary-Treasurer, IBA Law Firm Management Committee*
Anne Macdonald *Harper Macleod, Glasgow; Co-Chair, IBA Law Firm Management Committee*
Stephen Revell *Making Change Happen, London; Member, IBA Law Firm Management Committee Advisory Board*
Tiziana Sucharitkul *Tilleke & Gibbins, Bangkok; Co-Chair, IBA Law Firm Management Committee*

1500 – 1530 **Coffee/tea break**
River Room

1530 – 1615 **10 key takeaways**
What should you do differently on Monday morning

Speakers
Zulon Begum *Partner, CM Murray, London; Secretary-Treasurer, IBA Law Firm Management Committee*
Stephen Bowman *Former Managing Partner, People & Talent, Bennett Jones, Toronto; Co-Chair, IBA Future of Legal Services Commission*
Moray McLaren *Lexington Consultants, Madrid; Strategy Officer, IBA Law Firm Management Committee*

1615 – 1715 **Keynote speaker**

Introduction and Q&A moderator
Moray McLaren *Lexington Consultants, Madrid; Strategy Officer, IBA Law Firm Management Committee*

Speaker
Professor Richard Susskind OBE RRSE *President, Society of Computers and Law; Author, 'Tomorrow's Lawyers', and 'How to Think About AI', London*

1715 – 1800 **Closing and Awards ceremony with farewell drinks**
River Room

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