

The Lawyer management

Devereux Chambers

Beverly Landais, CEO

Beverly Landais is CEO of Devereux Chambers. She previously held roles as head of marketing at Lloyd's of London and director of business development at Baker & McKenzie, where she worked for almost 10 years

What are the leadership challenges in chambers?

A leader needs to understand and handle various situations. This requires an open mind and the ability to see beyond the immediate agenda. It's important to lead from the front, yet have a collaborative manner that draws on the qualities of barristers and staff.

Listening and interpreting, then acting decisively is a key skill.

How has your role changed in recent years?

Vince Plant joined in 2010 [from Fountain Court Chambers] as our head of clerking services. Vince and I are a team and we often see clients together. He has had a big impact on developing the client-centric approach to our business development activities.

He restructured the clerks' room into practice management teams, and in the process promoted Glenn Billenness to deputy senior clerk. His knowledge and enabling style have allowed practice managers to invest time in understanding the demands on our clients, and looking at ways of supporting them.



Landais: focus on clients

How important is training is for those in a leadership role?

I recently obtained accreditation from the Chartered Management Institute. The assessment process encourages reflection and focuses on outcomes, and the behaviour and skills that drive these. This allowed me to reflect on what works well and consider strategies for continuous improvement.

What role does branding have at the bar?

I have focused on crystallising the brand attributes that clients, members and staff can identify as 'Devereux at its best'.

When I asked clients, members and staff what we are like at our best, four things came up time and again. These are: being focused on what matters; being commercially astute; possessing excellence in depth; and being easy to deal with.

The challenge now is to ensure everything we do lives up to these values.

What key initiatives have you introduced to chambers?

Devereux has always had a reputation for advocacy with a client-friendly and pragmatic approach. This is a great place to start, as feedback from clients makes it clear they place more emphasis than ever on these attributes.

We have become more systematic in seeking clients' feedback and understanding their goals. To enable this I restructured the support staff to create a modern business services function.

You've been awarded a number of client service awards. How would you advise others to make a positive impact?

Focus on client service is a passion of mine. I don't believe you can achieve long-term success without understanding the activities that can deliver a more satisfied client.

Client focus is a way of working – it's about viewing everything from the client's perspective. It means taking a real interest in what mat-

ters to them and seeking ways to help them to deal with whatever is on their agenda.

I'm fortunate that I have a talented team and an excellent set of barristers who share this passion.

What's on your to-do list?

Continuous improvement to our service is top of my agenda. It's about having the right people working efficiently and focusing on doing things that add value to the business.

Who would you most like to get stuck in a lift with?

Eddie Izzard – brains, humour and beauty tips: what more could a woman ask for?

What's your favourite part of the day?

Dawn – for the time it allows to reflect on the day ahead. I'm a lark not an owl.

Lucy Burton



The Lawyer Management is a news service aimed at those working on the operational side of the law.

For more information email matt.byrne@thelawyer.com

Chambers facts



Financials

Undisclosed, although Landais says chambers' performance in 2012 was "over the budgeted target".

Responsible

"I firmly believe that senior professional managers have a responsibility to be the voice of the client inside their organisation," comments Landais. "In fact I'd go further and say that this is the primary

role of strategic management.

"Devereux is an accredited 'Living Wage Employer' and one of only a few chambers recognised to meet the criteria established by the Living Wage Foundation.

"The living wage is an hourly rate set independently and updated annually, based on the cost of living."

IT systems

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