

TVP Law increases online research spend to support business development

A best of breed law firm of any size cannot serve its customers without high quality legal research resources. In the current economic climate firms cannot afford to make mistakes or not provide clients with the best advice to make informed commercial decisions.

Regional Firms Can Deliver “Big City Firm Standards” in Client Services

TVP Law, a three partner Gold Coast firm specialising in property, commercial law and commercial litigation has been established for just three years. The firm employs 12 staff, including recent graduates and a research assistant.

With over 40 years combined practising experience, the partners range from an ex-air force pilot with a passion for perfection and detail, a South African Senior Commercial Lawyer, and an ex-barrister and Minter Ellison lawyer - the firms capability is impressive.

All lawyers in the firm are involved in property and commercial work or commercial litigation. The firm’s client base is varied, most clients are small to medium private and publicly listed companies, but they also deal with many ‘high street’ and mum and dad clients too. “We stick to what we do best, but cover all facets of law that relate to commercial, property and commercial litigation work, we don’t just offer our clients the basics but can advise on all their issues relating to these areas of law”, says *Mike Prior – Partner, TVP Law*.

With adequate trusted research tools and many years of experience the firm has the capability to conduct accurate and quality research. This provides the firm with a level of confidence knowing that it offers excellent advice and service to its clients. TVP strive to stand out from the crowd. “We don’t aggressively market our services, with just word of mouth and strong retention of staff we are not ‘compared’ to other local firms. So far we have not been impacted by the financial crisis at all”.

Legal Research Sources to Cater to a Client’s Needs

Small to mid sized organisations that are not quite up to having a full time in-house counsel or a company secretary require a firm that can fulfil that function for them. TVP advises that along with this comes the need for the firm to provide sound advice in the areas of contracts, stamp duties, franchising, options, partnerships, large transactions involving high level property deals, retirement village issues and many more. “With CaseBase, Unreported Judgments and The Australian Encyclopaedia of Forms and Precedents as well as a wide array of specialist commentary sources covering corporations law, contract law, stamp duties and the ASX Rules, we are equipped with peace of mind, knowing we can solve problems quickly.”

Today a client’s expectation around delivery of service includes rapid response times. “Because of the sense of urgency and the vast online tools available, clients often come to us with information printed out from Google or free legal sites like AustLII thinking that they can answer their own problems.”

“The danger here is the information may be wrong or out of date.” Mike explains that this assists his firm demonstrate to clients why they need to ensure that they seek quality legal advice from firms that are equipped with up to date materials. “Google and other free search engines have a place – the wide ranging sources are impressive but rudimentary; professionals need more reliable and authoritative online sources”.

Success Built on the Back of Careful Planning

TVP have selected their niche carefully to take advantage of the good and not so good times. They believe that they are well placed to ride out the uncertain economic times. The Gold Coast is built on the back of property development and the downturn will impact part of the firm's practice, but their commercial and litigation areas are strong.

For organisations that don't have in-house teams or have stretched in-house legal resources they need creative and accurate advice from firms that care. TVP explains that it stands for the old school values of personal professional service and having a team with considerable and complimentary skills. By developing strong personal relationships with its clients, TVP knows each client individually and their business skills and business strategy well enough to render truly collaborative and progressive advice. The firm believes it can do this equally as well as the big city firms.

Prior to initial on-boarding discussions, clients often comment that they didn't think a small Gold Coast firm would be able to meet their needs. "As quality service comes back into fashion, I think we will see organisations more and more look to alternatives in the larger firms".

TVP believes that the Gold Coast has excellent lawyers and many of the graduates are locals. The last three Bond graduates the firm hired have exceptional research skills and are committed to their work.

One of the hiring criteria for TVP is that graduates enjoy legal research and know how to use CaseBase. This isn't difficult however as most of the Queensland Universities seem to develop graduates with excellent online research skills particularly using LexisNexis AU.

Sustainable Growth Aided by a Solid Partnership

The LexisNexis Relationship Team has worked with TVP since its inception in 2005. In starting out the firm recalls purchasing the QLD 'bible' publication, *Civil Procedure Queensland*, but soon realised that to grow the firm meant growing their library.

"Some small firms are happy to go with the flow when it comes to legal research". But this is not the philosophy of TVP. Having quality services has without doubt helped the firm grow and be sustainable. "We personally know that the service we provide to our clients would not be as high quality if we were not resourced with LexisNexis AU and the trusted titles it contains".

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Mike Prior – Partner, TVP Law

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