

The government's White Paper on the future of legal services has just been published and *Managing Risk* asked several alumni in the legal sector to offer some thoughts on how this affects the future of law firms.

Peter Scott, Peter Scott Consulting

I recently met a group of 'high street' firms who showed a range of emotions to the government's White Paper, ranging from fear of being driven out of business to optimism from opportunities opening up.

Lawyers will survive, but only if they can compete. They will only do so if:

- they provide clients with what they need;
- at prices clients regard as value for money; and
- they do this better than their competitors

Far-sighted firms will find strategies to achieve this. One trend that I believe will become dominant in the profession to meet that overriding need to compete, is further consolidation.

The ability to give clients what they want, when they want it, and where they want it, by harnessing the greater resources that critical mass provides, is likely to become a driving force for change. Consolidation is now, more than ever, needed in what is, a fragmented profession.

The opportunities are there to be taken. If they are not, then sadly, I see firms going the way that much of the high street has gone over the last 30 years. But, if they face up to the challenges and take the opportunities, there is a future.

MANAGING RISK

LAW FIRM RISK MANAGEMENT

Winter 2005