

PETER SCOTT CONSULTING

Briefing Note January 2019

Ambition or Complacency?

Will your firm achieve its ambitions in 2019?

The most viewed of my Briefing Notes in 2018 by a clear margin was the one I sent in February 2018 entitled ***Ambition or Complacency – which is driving your firm?***
<https://www.peterscottconsult.co.uk/briefings/Feb2018.pdf>

The beginning of a new year may be an appropriate time to once again focus on this topic.

Did your firm achieve its ambitions in 2018? If not, how are you now proposing to make progress? On the other hand, if all your ambitions for 2018 have been achieved, how are you going to build on that success in 2019?

The one key determinant which stands out in relation to those law firms which have powered forward to success over the recent past has been the presence of **ambition** on the part of their owners to succeed. However, all owners need to collectively and individually share that ambition and be clear as to:

- ***What kind of firm do they realistically want to be?; and***
- ***How are they going to achieve their goals?***

Given the competitive pressures on law firms, there is a need to review strategic thinking around the fitness for purpose of their organisations, their governance, ownership and their peoples' performance and reward, all of which require a critical analysis of whether things will need to change to maintain competitiveness. On the other hand, to be complacent and allow fundamental problems to go unresolved can only be a recipe for disaster. When did you last take your Partners away for a retreat to brainstorm your future and to decide how your firm will need to change if it is to remain competitive?

If you are presently planning a partner retreat this Spring, it may be useful beforehand to carry out a **confidential partner questionnaire** to find out whether your Partners really do share your ambitions and are prepared to follow you to achieve your vision. An example of a form of confidential partner questionnaire which I have used before with law firms is set out in the February 2018 Briefing Note and the first question asked (***What needs to be changed in our firm?***) can be the most effective in terms of agreeing on change for the better. The real benefit of doing this is that once you have achieved a declared consensus within a firm that change needs to happen, then it will be that much easier to implement that change.

It will be ambition, which banishes complacency and encourages innovation and embracing of technology and new ways of working, which will create the competitive law firms of the future. How will you ensure that your firm will be one of those?