

So you want to be your own boss! Part 1



*If you can imagine it
you can achieve it!*

So you want to be your own boss! Part 1

Starting any new business can be terrifying as well as **exciting** and **liberating**:

you must find the customers, **but** the profit is yours
you must find that regular salary, **but** you make the decisions
you must provide the infrastructure, **but** can choose your own hours

then add the fact that your new business is a law firm and you've got even more things to think about.

Don't let that put you off!

2011 is going to bring new challenges and great opportunities to the legal profession and those firms who understand they are there to provide a **customer** with a **service** will be those that survive and thrive.

Start at the end and work backward

Some people might suggest the PI cover, your Practising Certificate, VAT registration, et al, are the first things to think about. However, don't think about how your new firm should look now but what you want the firm to look like in ten years' time, then work backwards, putting in place **now** systems that will enable you to realise your dream. You want:

a totally flexible system to work more efficiently from anywhere, **don't you?**
an exceptional relationship with your internal customers, your staff, **don't you?**
to provide exceptional service so your external customers return, **don't you?**

Start how you mean to end up so your organisation grows as a mature business from the beginning.

Branding

How do you want your firm to be viewed? Do you want a modern forward-thinking look so your customers see you are set up to provide the best possible service to them but with that appearance associated with a professional organisation? If so, be modern, not too quirky, but look forward rather than backward for inspiration. Remember, your new firm must think **customers** rather than client in the new open legal market.

Branding is very important and should permeate everything you do, including how you, as the business owner, act and talk when at networking events and when interacting with your customers. Every time your contacts or customers see your logo, it should be exactly the same. You don't need to see the whole logo of companies like Virgin or Cadbury to know which company you're looking at; you know just from seeing part of the V or the Cadbury colour.

Systems

Putting systems in place, from the beginning, as if you were a large company is vital to the organisation working at its most efficient for the benefit of your external and internal customers and allows you to grow without having to make wholesale and costly changes to accommodate that growth. Simple systems, allowing everyone to know who to go to when they need something or have a query, cuts down on the time taken to achieve greater output.

In part 2 of **So you want to be your own boss!**, I'll go into detail about how to market yourself and your new firm, what really constitutes exceptional customer service and how you can charge more if you provide it and the 'must have' bits; those procedures, insurances and documents the Law Society requires you to have but how you can also win from the relationships with those companies who provide the 'must have' bits.



Stewart Graham

Avalon Solutions
Avalon House
26 Faris Barn Drive
Woodham
Surrey KT15 3DZ

t: +44 (0)1932 459383

m: +44 (0)7920 114572

e: info@avalonsolutions.co.uk

w: www.avalonsolutions.co.uk

Stewart Graham has managed organisations at the highest level for over 15 years. He has been a business mentor and speaker to Investor in People Assessors. He has given numerous seminars on a variety of topics.

Avalon Solutions supports your organisation by looking at your support and administrative processes, from a strategic and operational point of view, and improves them; resulting in a more efficient organisation, reduced costs and increased profit.

Avalon Solutions also offers business coaching and seminars on a variety of management topics.