RATIONALISING THE FIRM – COMPETING WITH NON-LAWYER COMPANIES

Transitioning an IP Firm: From People to Software
Stephen Carter

Partner
Mewburn Ellis
stephen.carter@mewburn.com
The changing business environment ...

• IT is ever present, increasingly capable and cost effective
• Clients are familiar with benefits IT brings to the various functions they work across
• Clients expect their IP service providers to leverage modern IT systems – deliver efficient and tailored services
• Newly emerging, non-lawyer companies are ahead of the game
Non-lawyer companies

- Renewals
  - e.g. CPA, CPI
- Filing
  - e.g. Inovia, Park IP, Valipat
- EP Validation
  - e.g. Valipat, Park IP, Inovia
- Translation
  - RWS, Park IP, Morningside
From the law firm’s perspective

- Increased competition from non-lawyer companies
- Previously loyal clients being lured away
- “Bad for our business and bad for our clients!” … or is it?
From the client’s perspective

- Clients value good working relationships
- But they cannot pay “over the odds” for the IP services that are being provided
- Quite reasonably they ought to consider the marketplace for IP services to get the best deal
From the competing non-lawyer company’s perspective

- Have seen and grasped an opportunity
- Using IT to efficiently deliver low margin, commoditisable IP services
- Economies of scale
Where is the value?

- Commoditisable IP services
  - low margin
  - require very efficient delivery to be profitable
- “Legal” IP services
  - Require technical and legal skills
  - Good attorneys can genuinely add value
The future?

• Commoditisable IP services
  • to be delivered through IT services
    • develop our own or outsource

• Focus people resource on “legal” IP services to generate profit

• ..... or develop new revenue streams based around services that require technical & legal skills
THANK YOU