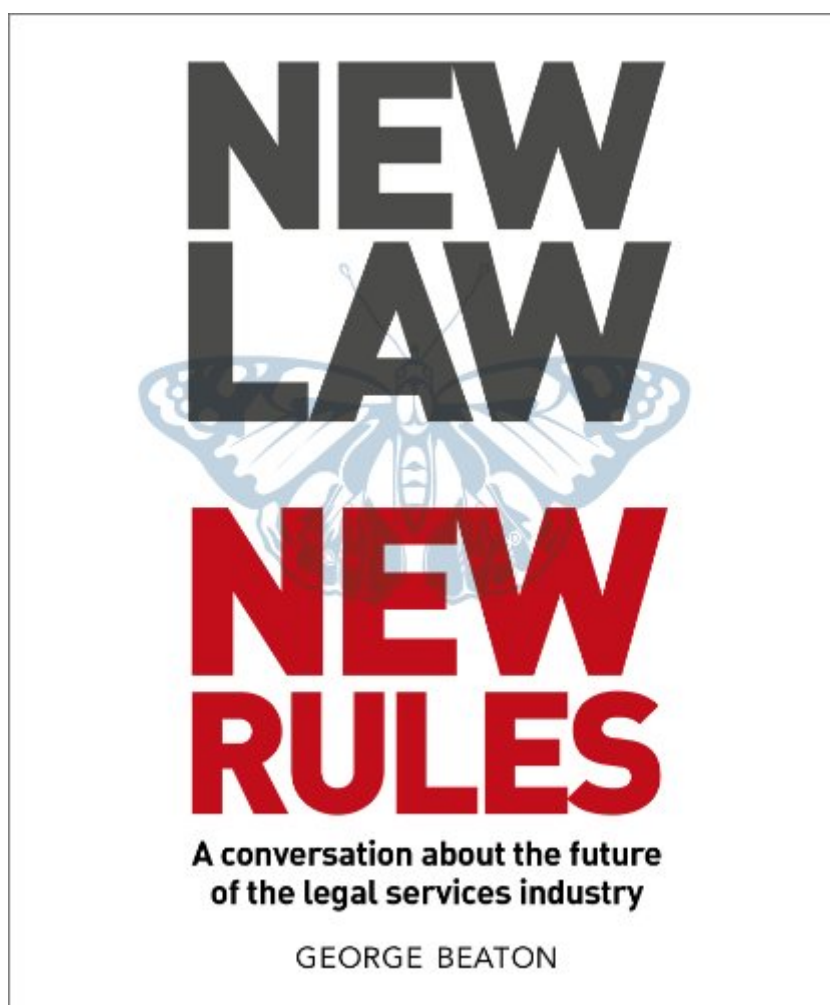


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NewLaw New Rules - A Conversation About The Future Of The Legal Services Industry



Synopsis

It began with 'The rise and rise of the NewLaw business model' posted on 7 October 2013 on Bigger. Better. Both? The Beaton Capital Blog. In that post, I canvassed recent developments in the legal services industry, specifically the rise of providers that do not fit the traditional law firm mould. The ensuing discussion about current and anticipated developments in the legal services sector attracted responses from law firm leaders, practitioners, consultants and academics. In the blogosphere and on Twitter contributors from Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States engaged in vigorous and insightful exchanges. The intensity and pace of the discussion over the course of two months attested to the timeliness of the questions that were being raised. And there was certainly a common theme: Major changes are afoot in how clients are buying legal services and how providers are innovating and responding – and in some cases appear not to be responding. This book is an anthology; it collates, curates and comments on the authors' views. The book aims to preserve the essential content and tone of the independent contributions and spirited exchanges, at the same time allowing for easy reference to parts of the debate relating to specific topics.

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Customer Reviews

George Beaton's new book brings together in one place a conversation that has been taking place between many of the profession's top minds. Some of the predictions are controversial, some I dispute, but if you want to quickly bring yourself up to date on the latest thinking on what the future may hold for the law, then this is essential reading. It's also surprisingly entertaining! For example, the comments from Peter Kalis (no less than the Chairman and Global Managing Partner of K&L Gates) are both insightful and absolutely hilarious. In summary, given the ridiculously low price of an e-book, this should be mandatory reading for partners at all large law firms.

George Beaton and his team do an excellent job in this book of bringing together a wide range of observations and views on the developing nature of the legal industry, taking both a qualitative and quantitative approach to their analysis. In particular, I was interested to observe that Beaton actively avoids the "echo chamber" effect by drawing in views from structural change sceptics and flagging challenges likely to be faced by both NewLaw and Big Law players. Very readable and worthy takeouts for all industry players.

First part of the book where the differences between Big Law, BigLaw and NewLaw are described and the consequences they lead to are investigated is relevant and interesting. The second half of the book is just boring. Writing a book as a result of a discussion on a blog is a very interesting experiment but the book should have been shorter.

Back in the Summer I blogged "The Legal Market is undergoing a "Big Bang". There will be more demand than ever but most services will be commoditised with the emphasis shifting more to cost effective technical access, research and delivery than traditional legal firms and (except for 20 or so yellow book firms) not from prestigious Ivory Towers in the City. Other delivery will be online retail by law companies working from cheap out of town premises with perhaps a token city centre presence, virtual law firms of people working from home and sole practitioners with a laptop to visit clients with, a home office and indemnity insurance. Those traditional law firms tied into long leases of largely redundant city centre office space will be lugging their millstones behind virtual firms unincumbered by that now greatly unnecessary infrastructure." (Source: Propertylegalblog.co.uk). Being a property solicitor in Big Law this was based on my observations of the changing World and the major commercial centre I work in and on assiduous reading of all sources of news and opinion I knew of including Twitter. I need not have bothered saving much of the most salient material from Twitter

because George Beaton has here done it for me. The book contains an ordered compendium of the Tweets and attached publications from George and other leading observers of the legal scene edited and linked by George himself. Whether or not you think the views I expressed in my Blog are extreme, it's a must read for anyone concerned about or interested in the future of the legal services industry in the World.

George Beaton has managed to gather together nearly all points of view on the changes the legal sector is going through. This is not the work of an author giving reasons for the changes or explaining where our profession is heading. Wisely, George has managed to compile the opinions of experts, professionals and consultants based on a lively conversation where they all contribute their own visions. They range from the staunchest defenders of Big Law and its capacity to adapt and survive to those who think its days are numbered. Topics covered include innovation, technology, the "partnership" structure and models such as "eat what you kill", the vision of "in-house" lawyers and the debate over whether the changes in the industry are cyclical or structural (this is the big question...). The innovative format in which the book is presented (it originated from a post and a long list of comments on the Beaton Capital blog) makes it fun and entertaining to read. In particular, it fully respects the "tone" of comments, reproduced verbatim, which were often made from the heart and with a strong emotional charge. Definitely a very exciting book.

Interesting ideas - we have been using [...] and [...] for a number of years and it has really transformed our legal firm and many of these NewLaw principles are based on their pioneering work

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