

Alternative firms continue to flourish

By Olivia Collins | Thursday, 8 December 2011

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Alternative law firm models are gaining momentum with both Advent Lawyers and Marque Lawyers looking to grow in the new year.

Advent Lawyers has grown from one to three offices across the region since launching in mid 2008. The firm, which now has more than 30 lawyers, has plans to reach 50 lawyers in the coming 12 months. Founder and chief executive officer John Knox told ALB the firm is in the process of recruiting for its Singapore office and has several offers on the table at the moment. The office, which launched in February this year, has grown to nine lawyers, but Knox's aim is for it to reach 25 "reasonably quickly".

"There is so much happening in this part of the world. South East Asia is booming: Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia ... A lot of the major corporates don't necessarily have people on the ground in those countries; and we have specifically recruited people who have regional experience and linguistic skills," he said.

Knox originally opened the Singapore office to service existing clientele, but in recent months the firm has also started picking up work from Singapore businesses. "Things are going well," he said. "We never get ahead of ourselves, especially in the current economic environment, but I think there is real appetite for what we are doing."

Both Advent and Marque offer corporates an alternative to the traditional hourly billing model favoured by most top tier firms. Advent operates on a secondment-based model – its lawyers working directly from clients' premises on a project-by-project or as-needs basis. Marque uses a fixed-fee model.

Founder and managing partner of Marque, Michael Bradley, said the firm was currently recruiting for two additional senior lawyers at the moment. "We are growing incrementally," said Bradley. "We have grown from eight to 30 lawyers in 18 months." Unlike most firms which often recruit senior lawyers and partners for their clientele, Marque has gone out of its way to grow organically, earning clients on merit, said Bradley. "We don't recruit laterally for the sake of getting clients," he said. "From the outset we have wanted to build a firm organically."

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