

Don't ignore specialist option

LET THE buyer beware. Large law firms and other operators whose usual area of business is outside the legal sector are increasingly offering packaged 'standard' legal transactions, but is this the way forward for the legal sector and the provision of legal services?

The importance of specialist legal advice has never been greater and looks set to become increasingly so, according to one Sheffield law firm.

Alex Ross, a partner at law firm Bell & Buxton and a specialist in Company and Business Law explains: "As new legislation emerges which affects you or your business, the benefits of seeking advice from a lawyer specialising in the relevant area are invaluable in unravelling the inherent complexities and establishing the right solution for you".

The legal industry, like many others, has seen an increase in the availability of legal services from large, perhaps faceless, organisations adopting a supermarket or processing factory approach to the provision of such services, but should the potential complexities and pitfalls of legal matters be exposed to this approach?

Most people are aware of the availability of such services as a result of the marketing and advertising surrounding them and the range of services offered will undoubtedly expand to other areas of the law.

Alex Ross continues: "Matters which require legal advice and a subsequent legal process are invariably of significant importance and consequence to the individual or business concerned and therefore warrant specialist attention. The philosophy that Bell & Buxton adopts, being a long established Sheffield firm focussing on close client relationships, is to offer informed and expert specialist advice.

'All businesses must evolve and a law firm is no different; quality and depth of understanding of our product and service is key'

"The way that medium sized firms like Bell & Buxton develop and respond to the emergence of mass processing services through demonstrating strength in depth and the ability to handle diverse and complex issues will impact significantly upon the shape of the legal sector in years to come.

"By way of recent examples, we have a very strong and established Wills & Probate department with particular expertise in handling complex contentious probate cases. The recent changes to Trust Law and inher-

itance tax planning, coupled with rising house prices and the inheritance tax threshold, means that many more people are now affected and this needs to be brought into consideration – to that end we brought a taxation specialist into the team to ensure our service continues to be sound and comprehensive.

"In our Commercial Services Department, where we have an established practice in commercial property and business law, we recognised that, to provide a full business service to our clients, we needed to provide specialist advice in dispute resolution and appointed a specialist commercial litigator to the team.

"All businesses must evolve and move forward and a law firm is no different; quality and depth of understanding of our product and service is always key."

So what should one do when seeking legal advice and services? The phrase 'caveat emptor' ("let the buyer beware") has always been true and this doesn't look like changing.

● Alex Ross is a solicitor with Bell & Buxton Solicitors, Telegraph House, High Street, Sheffield S1 2GA. Tel: 0114 249 5969, email a.ross@bellbuxton.co.uk

Alex Ross of Bell & Buxton in Sheffield



Commercial Legal Services



Your commercial legal team



Telegraph House, High Street,
Sheffield, S1 2GA

Tel. 0114 249 5969

email: a.ross@bellbuxton.co.uk

Business of football playing a key role in city development

AMID the transformation of Sheffield into a modern, vibrant centre of commerce, leisure and industry, Sheffield United's development has followed suit and the club is determined to play its part in delivering a bright new future.

Behind the scenes we have re-shaped our business interests and priorities off the field to now become one of the city's most progressive companies especially with our development and property interests.

We have concentrated effort and resources on our off-field activities enabling the club to grow through a robust business strategy which will ultimately increase investment in the first team.

The club has taken advantage of the buoyant UK investment climate and our property investment companies have thrived bringing money into the club. Our investment joint venture United Scarborough Estates (USE) has seen significant returns over the past 18 months. The intended joint venture United Scarborough Developments (USD) is seen as another potential income stream and will focus on existing development projects minimising risk and maximising potential returns.

The football club's diversification is led by the realization that the modern football club needs various income streams and sustainable profits to invest in the football team.

Since being promoted to the Premiership back in May we have completed the new Westfield Health corner stand taking the capacity to 33,000, improved the Halliwells Stand, refurbished rooms, bars and function suites including the new Tunnel Bar and

The business of football is no longer confined to what you see on the pitch for 90 minutes.

Sheffield United Football Club chief executive Jason Rockett looks at how Yorkshire's only Premiership club is becoming a force off the field to help the way forward on the field



doubled and radically upgraded the new Blades Superstore – all to cater for our record 21,000 season ticket holders.

We feel Bramall Lane is arguably the best in the Yorkshire region, if not one of the best in the country.

Old fashioned areas have been revamped with the simple aim of generating ever-increasing returns - ultimately for the benefit of the football team. The changes are also intended to improve the matchday experience and in the long term our aim is to attract more supporters to Bramall Lane. The supporters are the most important part of any football club.

Other proposed initiatives this season include the refurbishment and commercialisation of the Hall of Fame and further improvements at the Crookes Development Centre and the Shirecliffe Academy, while established businesses at the Lane, namely corporate hospitality, retailing, lottery, ticketing – now the football retailing division – are all on an upward curve.

The opening of our restaurant Bosworths at Bramall Lane also demonstrates the ideal "seven days a week" utilisation of match day directors' and sponsors' facilities.

Work on a new 149-bedroom hotel behind the new corner stand is proposed to start in the new year. We continue to support Sheffield City Council in the bid to secure regional casino status. We are confident that should Sheffield gain regional casino status that it should be located in the proposed Entertainment Complex at Bramall Lane.

The club places great importance on being involved in the communities in which it is located. This applies in Sharrow where we are a leader in the regeneration of the area. This not only includes the redevelopment of our own interests but as part of the wider Sharrow Masterplan. Equally at Shirecliffe where we are an integral part of the community and more recently with the development centre project in Crookes.

The club has a moral responsibility to be the instigator of the regeneration of the area and committed to the community in which it is located.

As we see it the club is the lifeblood of the city linking community, sport and business.