

National/regional firm of the year

WINNER

Hill Dickinson

Peter Jackson, managing partner

Northern light



(L-R) Hill Dickinson's Peter Jackson, Russell Gardner, NetworkMP's Debbie Hill, Hill Dickinson's Ruth Lawrence, Maria Pittordis

Hill Dickinson won a tightly fought battle to top the North peer group of the *LB100* back in 2007 and has managed to dominate it ever since, boasting a three-year run as the top dog. Being top of that particular peer group is no mean feat – the group houses a larger percentage of the UK's top 100 firms than any other – so flaunting a solid £22m turnover margin over your nearest rival demonstrates real star quality.

Liverpool-based Hill Dickinson has had an excellent run since its first appearance in the *LB100* in 1997. At that stage its revenues hovered just below the £13m mark. Following a string of mergers, most notably the tie up between legacy firms Hill Dickinson and Hill Taylor Dickinson in 2006, and its savvy acquisition of commodities niche Middleton Potts in July 2009, Jackson's efficiently run outfit finished 2008/09 with a recession-busting turnover growth figure of 12%. Significantly, it was the only Northern-based firm to record double-digit growth, and revenues came in at £82m – a massive 179% increase on its 1997 total.

In the past five years alone, Hill Dickinson has leapt an impressive 12 places in the *LB100* and is now safely ensconced in the top 40, capping an excellent year for the firm. If it can maintain momentum, Hill Dickinson looks to remain the steadfast leader in the North for some time to come.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

BRODIES

Bill Drummond, managing partner

Reporting a compound annual growth rate over the past five years of 19%, the highest in the *LB100* Scotland peer group, Brodies is the embodiment of a consistent performer. In 2008/09 turnover grew by 6% to £39.6m, a good showing in a tough climate, but it is not just financials that shout quality; the firm also acted as lead counsel on two of the UK's four bank rescues.

DWF

Andrew Leitherland, managing partner

Few firms have managed to break into new markets with such aplomb as Manchester-based DWF broke

HBJ GATELEY WAREING

Michael Ward, senior partner

Diversification into public sector and regeneration work has paid off and this firm continues its upward trajectory towards becoming a fully-fledged national brand. Despite fielding large banking and property departments, turnover increased by a healthy 6.7% in 2008/09 to £47m and the Anglo-Scots firm successfully controlled costs without a formal redundancy programme.

MICHELMORES

Malcolm Dickinson, managing partner

For the first time in five years, the South peer group was not the worst performing in revenue terms in the *LB100* and success was exemplified by Exeter's Michelmores – a worthy addition to the group following its 10% rise in turnover in 2008/09 to £18.9m. Excellent progress but that represented a slowdown for this firm; growth has averaged 20% per year over the last half a decade.

TUGHANS

Ian Coulter, managing partner

In a confident display of dynamism, Tughans recently appointed Coulter managing partner – at 38 the youngest ever for the Northern Irish outfit. In a further bold move, the firm also invested soundly during the downturn, making a concerted effort to build profile through the development of a new PR campaign. The marketing drive has paid off, and all core areas have attracted growth.

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into Leeds in 2007. The firm followed that up with a bold move into London in 2008, hiring catastrophic injury specialists Graham Dickinson and Claire Bowler from Davies Lavery. Leitherland has made no secret of his firm's ambition to crack the top 30 and on this evidence it's a cert.

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Managing Partners Network

NetworkMP is delighted to have sponsored the National/Regional Firm of the Year.

Congratulations to the winners, Hill Dickinson, and to all the runners up.

General Counsels are taking on an increasingly strategic management role, while Managing Partners and marketers face financial pressures, demanding clients and a market that is both consolidating and – with LPOs circling – diversifying at the same time. The Legal Looking Glass report covers significant input from General Counsel from companies with an average revenue of in excess of £1bn, Managing Partners and Marketing Directors covering 6 of the top 10 and over a third of the top 100 law firms in the UK. To find out more, please contact:

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NetworkMP is the leading network of Managing Partners. It has a wealth of insightful and innovative solutions and benefits from the economies of a shared intellect and free advice. To learn more, please contact:

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