

National/Regional Firm of the Year

WINNER

WEIGHTMANS

Patrick Gaul

Gutsy strategic acquisitions create a truly national player

Weightmans has always been a solid player in its local North West market, but in the past five years the firm has made the difficult leap to become a national firm with top-notch healthcare and insurance practices. The firm has had four years of consecutive year revenue growth and last year embarked on a string of strategic mergers. In 2011 the firm added to its national infrastructure with the acquisition of 200 staff through its takeover of Vizard's Wyeth in London and its May merger with Mace & Jones in Liverpool.

Managing partner Patrick Gaul has had his eye firmly on creating a sustainable future for the firm. 'We're obviously very much hoping the merger investments will kick-start the business' he says. The firm's strategy of focusing on healthcare and insurance has paid dividends, with 63% of its turnover coming from groups outside the four classic practice areas of corporate, finance, disputes and real estate.

All of this adds up to a firm that is very much in the ascendancy and is now a heavyweight player on the national scene.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

BRODIES

Bill Drummond

The only firm in the Scottish peer group of the *LB100* to record double-digit compound annual growth in revenue in the last five years and in 2011 added an office in Brussels.

GATELEY

Michael Ward

Gateley had a strong 2011 after breaking in the top-50 law firms for the first time this year. The firm's turnover rose by an eye-watering 27% this year to £63m thanks to the acquisition of 200 staff from Halliwells in Manchester. The Birmingham headquartered firm is now a truly national player.

HARPER MACLEOD

Lorne Crerar; Martin Darroch

Harper Macleod has defied convention in recent years, growing revenues year-on-year since 2008. The Scots firm saw fee income up by 14% to £17.1m

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(L-R) *Legal Business*' Georgina Bennett-Warner, Weightmans' Ian Evans, and Sir David Keene of Argentum Capital Ltd

and profit per equity partner climbing by 38% to £224,000. 'There are some areas that other firms may have turned their noses up at,' Darroch told *LB* in October. 'We don't turn our noses up at anything.' That strategy seems to be paying off.

HILL DICKINSON

Peter Jackson

Continued impressive financial performance has seen Hill Dickinson break the £100m mark for turnover for the first time this year. The national firm has made significant progress to become a dominant force in the North West.

SHAKESPEARES

Paul Wilson

An astonishing 71% leap in turnover is the result of this Midlands firm pulling off four mergers since 2007, including recently amalgamating Shakespeare Putsmen, Berryman and Needham & James. These significant strategic plays are intended to set the firm apart from the competition.

STEVENS & BOLTON

Richard Baxter

A standout performer in the South, with revenue growth of 13% to £17.1m and net income up by 28%, the firm is light years ahead of its peers. The firm has invested in major lateral hires from City firms and is now reaping the rewards.



Argentum Litigation Services congratulates all the nominees for the **National Regional Firm of the Year** award, which we are delighted to have sponsored.

**SPECIAL CONGRATULATIONS GO TO THE WINNERS,
WEIGHTMANS**

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