

Future-proofing the Bar - staying relevant, attractive and important to new generations of lawyers

Paul Gilbert, Thursday's key note speaker, will challenge the way you think about the traditional Bar Association. How can we be relevant, attractive and important to an evermore diverse profession? And what changes will we have to consider to ensure that we don't just survive, but thrive in the new world we work in today. Paul's experience is not just as a lawyer or as a management consultant to lawyers, but also as a former Board Member of the Law Society of England & Wales at a time of transformatory change for both the Society and the legal services environment in the UK.

The first thought about a subject like this is that if it were easy we would not be debating the issue. It is the very fact that it is so difficult to stay relevant, attractive and important that we need to think very deeply and act very carefully about our approach.

Get it right and we can deliver something of lasting value, get it wrong and we risk losing everything.

In this session I want to explore how we build a structure that can flex to changing times and changing demands while still reflecting the values of a traditional profession. I also want to explore the limitations of Bar structures and to reflect therefore on something Albert Einstein once described:

“There is nothing that is a more certain sign of insanity than to do the same thing over and over again and expect the results to be different...”

In this session therefore we need to look at some basics:

- What is the point of the Bar?
- What do lawyers want from their Bar?
- How does that compare to what they get?
- What should be the role of the Bar going forward?
- How do we stay relevant and effect change?
- What help do we need?

There will be no simple answers, but it would be great to at least identify the issues and to align those issues with some significant ideas for further debate.

What lessons can we learn from the failures and the successes of others? What are the implications of doing nothing, but what are the risks of change? In addition to consider these important questions while reflecting a context that wants to hold dear the values of a great profession **and** present a modern, attractive and thoughtful image to new lawyers maturing in a completely different environment?

In all of this, sooner or later, we must reflect on the quality of our ability to influence, to build relationships and to communicate.

Paul Gilbert

Paul Gilbert is Chief Executive of LBC Wise Counsel the UK based specialist management and skills training consultancy for lawyers. www.lbcwisecounsel.com