

FT NORTH AMERICA INNOVATIVE LAWYERS 2016: PRIVATE PRACTICE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

The Financial Times is pleased to announce the launch of the submission process for the 2016 FT Innovative Lawyers report in North America.

FT Innovative Lawyers is a unique programme that assesses lawyers on their innovation both for clients and in their own businesses. The programme consists of rankings and awards, based on independent research from RSG Consulting and robust journalism from the FT. The results are announced at an Awards event, and the rankings are published in both print and online in an FT special report.

Law firms are invited to submit to three broad sections only – legal expertise, the business of law and social responsibility. We have deliberately left the categories broad, allowing submitters more freedom to choose initiatives from any practice area or part of the business.

The legal expertise section will cover the work that lawyers do for their clients. The business of law category will cover law firms' strategic, operational and other initiatives to grow and develop their own businesses. The social responsibility category will cover both pro bono cases and ongoing programmes driven by the firm.

Law firms and other legal service providers are invited to submit up to four submissions to the legal expertise category, three to business of law submissions, and one to social responsibility.

There will be a separate section for in-house legal departments, which will cover the top company, government and nonprofit legal functions. (Detailed guidelines for this section are published separately).

As with all the reports in the FT Innovative Lawyers series – which now cover Europe, North America and Asia-Pacific – the opinion of the 'purchaser' or 'user' of legal services will inform the rankings. These will continue to be generated by the unique research methodologies devised by research partner RSG Consulting. The articles in the special report will be written by FT journalists.

Why innovation?

Since it was established, the FT report has sought to break with the usual criteria of measuring lawyers by revenues, profits or deal sizes and reputation. Instead, it aims to uncover the real value that lawyers deliver to business and reward the lawyers

consistently furthering the interests of their clients, their own businesses and the profession itself.

The FT programme looks at innovation in private practice in two ways. The first is in the legal solutions lawyers create to deliver transformational value to their clients, and the second is the business of running a law firm and how those legal solutions are delivered to clients.

How are the report and the awards assessed?

The rankings will be based primarily on submissions received but will also include fresh research, surveys and other qualitative research methods to uncover legal innovation in the region.

Background

The FT Innovative Lawyers programme was established in Europe in 2006, launched in the US in 2010 and extended to cover North America and Asia-Pacific in 2014. Over the past decade, it has assessed legal innovation in over 50 different countries from over 400 unique law firms and over 400 company in-house legal departments.

Timescale

The submission deadline is Friday 19 August 2016. The research process will run from August to November. The report will be published with the Financial Times on Tuesday 6 December 2016 and launched at the awards event in New York on the evening of Monday 5 December 2016. The awards event will recognise the standout innovators across all categories of the report.

There is no cost for submitting entries but the project will be subject to the terms and conditions outlined in detail below.

The research partner for the FT Innovative Lawyers programme is RSG Consulting, a specialist research and consulting company with decades of experience analysing the legal industry.

The project is supported in Europe, North America and Asia-Pacific by Integreon, the global provider of integrated legal, research and business support solutions.

PRIVATE PRACTICE CATEGORIES FOR 2016

Legal Expertise Section

Submissions invited from: private practice law firms, alternative legal service providers and in-house legal teams.

Submission limit: *A maximum of four submissions may be made to the legal expertise section by any one firm, legal service provider or in-house legal team.*

This section will look at lawyers' client work. The rankings will profile lawyers who have made a critical contribution to transforming their clients' businesses. It will recognise lawyers who have developed new structures, new legal strategies or new law to meet their clients' business challenges.

Submissions should focus on a specific matter or legal solution from any practice area. These may involve, but are not limited to, legal matters in the following practice areas: corporate and commercial, mergers and acquisitions, private equity, banking and finance, restructuring, structured finance, project finance, regulatory, investigations, white-collar crime, corporate tax, litigation, arbitration, competition, IP, private client, tax and trust, reputation, privacy, family, employment, real estate, technology, cyber security, data protection.

Business of Law Section

Submissions invited from: private practice law firms, alternative legal service providers.

Submission limit: *A maximum of three submissions may be made to the business of law section by any one firm or legal service provider.*

Law firms have traditionally been focused on delivering pure legal services. Client and market pressures now demand that law firms diversify and become more rounded as professional advisers. Those pressures have also required law firms to think differently about how they deliver services to clients, how they manage themselves as businesses and how they engage and develop talent at every level of the firm.

Submissions should focus on a specific initiative or project. We are interested in hearing about the internal or client-facing business of law innovations that are most original and have been most transformational for your firm, clients or market segment. These may include, but are not limited to, new practices or business lines, strategies for growth or to differentiate the firm's offering from competitors, internal operational changes, new uses of technology, initiatives to develop lawyers and staff, and social responsibility projects or cases.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY SECTION

Submissions invited from: private practice law firms, in-house legal teams.

Submission limit: *A maximum of one submission may be made to the social responsibility section by any one firm or in-house team.*

Law firms are increasingly active in corporate social responsibility, becoming agents of social, economic and legislative change. This category covers law firm initiatives with clients, staff, the legal profession, business and the wider community. We are interested in pro bono cases that show lawyers applying their expertise and experience in new ways, and in programmes that are creative, effective and sustainable.

Innovative Individuals

The report will feature the top 10 individuals who emerge from the research as genuine innovators on either a technical or an operational basis. We will look for individuals who have come up with original ideas, developed brilliant solutions and who have taken the boldest steps to change how legal work is done or to drive industry-wide innovation. The lead individuals for every submission made to the report are automatically considered for this category, but law firms are also invited to make additional submissions or nominations. There is no limit to the number of nominations which can be made for this category.

IN-HOUSE CATEGORY FOR 2016

Law firms and legal service providers are invited to nominate clients or other in-house lawyers who are driving innovation in their businesses or the profession. In the North America report, we will look for those general counsel and in-house legal teams who are innovating in their operations, and in the delivery of legal, risk and strategic advice to help their businesses navigate an increasingly challenging market. This year, the section will cover in-house legal teams working in companies, government and non-profit organisations. The section will also cover individual general counsel who are making the most impact as leaders in their businesses. There is no limit to the number of nominations which can be made for this category.

HOW TO SUBMIT OR NOMINATE

- All submissions must be made via the following online submission forms.
- Video content, images or submissions in other formats are also welcome and should be emailed to ftresearch@rsgconsulting.com

- Attachments and any additional material (to a maximum 20Mb) should be clearly labelled with the name of the law firm and submission title, and emailed to ftresearch@rsgconsulting.com or posted to RSG Consulting, Level 4, 39-41 Parker Street, London WC2B 5PQ, UK.

Online submissions and nominations forms:

- **Legal expertise** submissions:
<https://fs30.formsite.com/Rsgconsulting/form78/index.html>
- **Business of law** submissions:
<https://fs30.formsite.com/Rsgconsulting/form79/index.html>
- **Social Responsibility** submissions:
<https://fs30.formsite.com/Rsgconsulting/form82/index.html>
- **Innovative Individual** submissions or nominations:
<https://fs30.formsite.com/Rsgconsulting/form80/index.html>
- **In-house legal team** nominations:
<https://fs30.formsite.com/Rsgconsulting/form81/index.html>

Submission format

All submissions must provide the following details and address the criteria set out below. *Please note that the below word limits are enforced in the online entry forms.*

1. **The challenge?** What commercial problem or business issue was the innovation designed to address? **(75 word limit)**
2. **Description of the innovation:** a brief description of the matter or initiative, including key dates and the firm's role. **(75 word limit)**
3. **Originality:** Why is the work or initiative innovative? Which elements are most original? **(200 word limit)**
4. **Rationale:** How did you arrive at the specific approach and/or solution that was finally adopted? **(200 word limit)**
5. **Impact:** What was the impact of the innovation for the client, firm or key stakeholders? How can its success be measured? Where did the lawyers deliver the most value? Please include hard evidence. **(200 word limit)**
6. **References:** All submissions must include contact details for *at least one internal* and *at least one external reference* who can be contacted to discuss the details of the innovation on a confidential basis.

Nominations for Innovative Individuals and In-house Legal teams need simply to include contact details for the nominee and a brief reason for the nomination.

Rules for submitting

- **Time period:** the 2016 ranking will assess innovations from 1 January 2015.
- **Innovations must have taken place in North America or have been led from a North American office.** All law firms active in North America, regardless of country of origin, are eligible to send submissions to FT Innovative Lawyers 2016.
- **Number of submissions:** There is a limit of **FOUR** submissions for the *Legal Expertise SECTION in total, THREE submissions for the Business of Law SECTION in total, and ONE submission to the Social Responsibility SECTION in total.* If more than the maximum number of submissions are made, only the first in alphabetical order by title will be considered. There is no limit on nominations to the other categories.
- **Word count:** Submissions must be **no longer than 750 words** in total, following the word limits set out in the online submission forms. There is no word limit for nominations.
- **Language:** All submissions and nominations must be written in English.

ASSESSMENT OF SUBMISSIONS

- Submissions will be fully researched and will be assessed on their own merits, through detailed feedback sought from referees. The RSG Consulting research team also uses independent experts in the assessment process. Entries will be assessed against other submissions in each category.
- Innovations will be scored for their **originality, rationale** and **impact** out of a total of 30 points. Each indicator carries a total of 10 points. The submissions in each category are benchmarked against each other in the scoring process. The top ranked innovations therefore represent the best out of all the submissions received.
- Client referee feedback is critical to the assessment process. Contact details for internal and client or external referees must be included on every submission.
- Submissions should each focus on a *specific* innovation. The research approach is to examine case studies. Those that are more general and that cover several different pieces of work in one submission will do less well in the scoring process.
- All submissions are assessed by RSG Consulting, a specialist legal-market research company that uses a process of interviews with clients, submitting lawyers and experts. The submissions are then scored against a bespoke ranking methodology, devised for the FT to assess innovation in law firms.

AWARDS

An awards event on 5 December 2016 will be held in New York to coincide with publication of the rankings. For more details of the event contact Abigail Lewis abigail.lewis@ft.com

At the awards event, the FT will recognise the top-scoring entries in categories drawn from:

- Innovation in Legal Expertise*
- Innovation in the Business of Law*
- Innovation in Social Responsibility*
- Legal Innovator of the Year
- Most Innovative In-House Legal Team
- Most Innovative General Counsel
- Most Innovative Law Firm in North America

*The exact award categories for these sections will be determined by the subject quality of submissions received.

SCHEDULE

- **19 August 2016 – deadline for submissions**
- October 2016 – awards shortlists revealed.
- 5 December 2016 – awards and report launch event, New York
- 6 December 2016 – report publication

CONTACT DETAILS

- **For research or submissions questions** please contact RSG Consulting at ftresearch@rsgconsulting.com or +44 (0)20 7831 0300
- **For editorial enquiries** please contact Josh Spero, Commissioning Editor, Special Reports, Financial Times at josh.spero@ft.com
- **For advertising opportunities or other research sponsorship opportunities** please contact Robert Grange, Global Advertising Director at the Financial Times at robert.grange@ft.com or +44 (0)20 7873 4418
- **For enquires about the awards event** please contact Abigail Lewis, Marketing Executive at FT Live at abigail.lewis@ft.com or +44 (0)20 7873 4765

CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

- There is **no fee** for entering submissions to FT North America Innovative Lawyers 2016.
- The researchers reserve the right to move entries from one category to another if they feel it appropriate. The researchers' decisions are final and no correspondence will be entered into.
- The FT and RSG Consulting accept no responsibility for the loss or damage of material submitted.
- The FT reserves the right to publish the names of the firm or lawyers contained in the shortlist of outstanding entries, details and description of all entries and details of winners. All entrants grant the FT a perpetual, non-exclusive licence to publish details and descriptions of entries as referred to, and also agree to participate in publicity reasonably requested by the FT regarding their entry. The FT acknowledges that copyright in all entries remains vested with the entrants.
- Please do not include any confidential information in your entry that you do not wish to enter the public domain because the FT is unable to guarantee that such information will not be published as set out above. Any inclusion of confidential information in an entry is at the entrant's sole risk and responsibility and in knowledge of the FT's request not to do so.
- The FT reserves the right to cancel, postpone or suspend FT North America Innovative Lawyers 2016 at any time.
- By submitting an entry, entrants will be deemed to have read, understood and agreed to these terms and conditions on behalf of their firm or organisation.