



Ten rising firms show they're hot on the heels of top 100 in standout 2007-08

The lower echelons of the legal market have thrown up some impressive success stories in the 2007-08 financial year, with some firms posting massive increases in turnover.

Data from this year's The Lawyer UK 200 Annual Report – published on 1 September – has built a picture of the 10 firms occupying places 101-200 in the table, which have witnessed the highest revenue increases.

Top of the pile, from the information gathered so far, is Leeds and London firm **Stewarts Law**, which posted a 53 per cent increase in gross fees to £11.9m.

In a bumper year for the litigation specialist, average profit per equity partner (PEP) hit £638,000, with plateau partners pocketing £816,000, in line with firms at the top end of the UK 200 table.

"We're a modest bunch and don't tend to shout from the rooftops about our achievements," managing partner of 10 years **John Cahill** told The Lawyer.

He added: "It's important for us not to get overexcited about the profits we've achieved because we can expect them to swing up and down due to the nature of our work.

"We aim to have a consistent benchmark of PEP of between £500,000 and £600,000 to attract the best talent, and maintaining that figure is what we care about."

The firm plans to strengthen its new practice areas, including divorce and employment, and will be expanding into new premises in both Leeds and London later in the year.

More down-to-earth results were seen at Devon-headquartered **ichelmores**, which reported a 25 per cent rise in turnover to end on £16.9m – up from £13.5m a year earlier.

Andrew Lovell, practice director at **Michelmores**, said growth through lateral hires in most of the firm's departments had contributed to the revenue boost. But despite the success, Lovell is "in no way complacent" about the coming year.

"There's no doubt it's a much more challenging marketplace in the next 12 months," he said. "But we're going to concentrate on attracting the right people and growing the business. We certainly don't intend on standing still."

Standout firms elsewhere among those placed between 101 and 200 in the list include **Napthens**, which with help from mergers saw a gross fees increase of 23.1 per cent to £8.5m; **Withy King**, which reversed a 3.5 per cent drop in fees last year to post an increase of 23.1 per cent in 2007-08 to £13.3m; and **Guildford-based Stevens & Bolton**, which recorded a 21.9 per cent hike in revenue to £17.2m.

It was a good year too for **Foot Anstey** (up 21.3 per cent), **Boyes Turner** (up 20.9 per cent), **Veale Wasbrough** (up 19.1 per cent), **Ledingham Chalmers** (up 18.9 per cent) and **Kemp Little** (up 18.5 per cent).

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