

## WINNER

# Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer

**John Blain**

*Leading the way with its externally verified global CSR report*

Freshfields continued to set the agenda for CSR in the legal sector last year, with the release in February of its internationally focused and externally verified CSR report. With the publication of 'Making a difference around the world' the firm extended its CSR reporting to cover all of its offices. In so doing, it met a key target set out in its groundbreaking 2006 report.

Corporate Citizenship, which reviewed the document, said: 'Producing a substantive CSR report, reporting against material global reporting initiative indicators, and having external, independent assurance, marks it out from current practice among other firms.' Freshfields also turned to the London Benchmarking Group to validate its community and pro bono work, and the Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Management assessed its carbon footprint. The firm was able to report notable success in this area, having made all offices carbon neutral.

The report clearly assessed the extent to which previous targets had been met and there are still areas where there is scope for improvement. Freshfields was unable to provide full data on ethnicity and disability, for example. Its approach to client selection also remains opaque, with the firm saying it has 'no standing policy on not acting for clients in any particular industry or sector'.

Nevertheless, in showing a willingness to increase transparency and open the firm to criticism, Freshfields has, undeniably, pushed CSR at law firms to a new level.

## HIGHLY COMMENDED

### CLIFFORD CHANCE

**David Childs**

Clifford Chance took another important step towards distinguishing itself among the elite of international law firms, when in September 2008 it published its first global corporate responsibility report. The firm already undertook a range of activities related to CSR,

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but has made important strides to draw these activities together coherently. The report formalised its approach, covering three main elements: its people, its communities, and the environment.

### EVERSHEDS

**Steven Butts**

Eversheds has had a longstanding commitment to corporate social responsibility. This has been exemplified by its record on diversity and, most recently, by the firm's new London headquarters, which attempts to raise the bar for environmental awareness. The firm also appointed an environmental manager to spearhead its approach of not just offsetting carbon, but reducing it.



Freshfields' Crispin Hain-Cole (centre) with James Lewis of *Legal Business*

## GARRIGUES

**Antonio Garrigues**

Garrigues joined a small but influential group of firms when it published its second annual corporate social responsibility report covering all aspects of its activities last year. The move places Garrigues alongside a select group that are setting the agenda on CSR in the legal world, and it is leading the way in Spain as the only firm to do so.

## SIMMONS & SIMMONS

**Daniel Winterfeldt**

Simmons corporate partner Winterfeldt is the driving force behind the immensely successful InterLaw Diversity Forum for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender networks. The aim is to encourage LGBT diversity and inclusion in the legal sector, and it holds monthly meetings at law firms throughout the City. Its launch event was attended by more than 40 law firms and 30 financial institutions and companies.

## TROWERS & HAMLINS

**Christopher Munday**

The firm has marked itself out for commitment to its local community. Trowers has established a simple but effective scheme that has helped people from the most deprived areas of London prepare for the workplace. This has included work with East Potential, a Tower Hamlets-based organisation, providing 16 work placements each year as part of the Routes To Work scheme.

PRESENTED BY

**LEGAL BUSINESS**

In recent years, *Legal Business* has reported extensively on the fast-developing area of corporate social responsibility among the world's leading commercial law firms. Indeed, we pride ourselves on having taken a strong lead in shaping the debate on CSR. Our awards play an important part in this.

We welcome the fact that an area that had little currency as recently as five years ago is increasingly becoming an essential benchmark for quality throughout the global legal community.

In this spirit, we believe that those firms that show themselves to be pursuing principles – and not just profits – deserve recognition. The judges identify the firms that have distinguished themselves by investing most heavily in CSR programmes. These include pro bono initiatives, projects aimed at benefiting the community, the environment and the workplace, as well as responsible client selection.

We would like to thank all firms for the variety of submissions received for this award, a category now in its third year. Submissions for the 2010 Legal Business Awards will open in October 2009, and we look forward to hearing what CSR initiatives firms introduce over the next 12 months.

