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Ten Years of Building a Responsive NewLaw Company

Titus Rahiri is the CEO and Founder of KorumLegal, an award-winning Alternative Legal Service Provider and NewLaw company headquartered in Hong Kong. Titus has earned Band 1 individual recognition as a leading NewLaw innovator, praised for his strategic, client-focused leadership. As KorumLegal celebrates its 10th anniversary, Titus reflects on the state of the industry and how KorumLegal has rebuilt the old model to directly address clients' needs.

THE FIRST UNFURL:

THE NEED FOR CHANGE

My early experiences in the industry have been instrumental in shaping KorumLegal and the ways in which we support our clients. Through KorumLegal, I have attempted to address the challenges and frustrations I encountered myself. As I say to our clients, “I understand because I’ve walked in your shoes.”

I started my career working at one of New Zealand’s “big three” law firms before moving to London to work in another firm and

then in-house. The shift in-house taught me an important lesson about the role of lawyers. In a law firm, you tend to focus on discrete transactions but working in-house, you are a small spoke in a big wheel driven by broader business imperatives. I realised that as lawyers, we risk missing the forest for the trees: we are there to serve the client, and the client has strategic objectives that go far beyond a single deal.

Years later, a second realisation arrived with the Global Financial Crisis. The legal industry - from the birth of the large firms in the 60s to

THE UNFURLING SPIRAL



In my home of New Zealand, the omnipresent Koru is a Māori symbol of perpetual movement. The spiral fern on the cusp of unfurling represents potential, change and the strength of an anchored core. It is a fitting representation of the legal industry today, and in combination with the concept of a legal quorum, captures KorumLegal’s philosophy of people-driven transformation.

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the golden age of the 80s - has always been an ecosystem built on high revenue, prestige and a deeply ingrained respect for precedent. This model served its purpose for decades, but then everything changed.

In the aftermath of the Global Financial Crisis, I was leading a large legal team as regional General Counsel of a US-listed technology company. As a client of many major law firms across EMEA and APAC, I felt a mounting frustration with the lack of diverse thinking, agility and technology integration. We were all being pressed to cut costs and deliver more for less, yet legal services remained anchored in an increasingly outdated, high-overhead era.

I saw an opportunity to unbundle those traditional legal services and give clients access to expertise in a way that aligned better with modern businesses operations. The turbulence of recent years has confirmed this, highlighting that legal services must be as dynamic as the global markets they support.

ANCHORED IN INNOVATION AND AGILITY

Reaching the milestone of our 10th anniversary has provided the opportunity to reflect on KorumLegal’s journey and the incredible community we’ve built – from a single desk in a shared space to a headquarters of more than 100 people over the years, a network of over 1,500 lawyers, and 5 hubs across Hong Kong, Singapore, Australia, the Middle East and London.



Building a business is a 24/7 exercise in resilience and problem-solving. But we’ve persisted and grown through the challenges by staying focused on our three pillars of innovation:

- **Product Innovation:** Constantly improving our products and services
- **Process Innovation:** Reimagining how our services are delivered
- **Strategy Innovation:** Rethinking how we create and capture value for our clients and ourselves

Alongside innovation, we’ve embraced agility. Businesses today are under relentless pressure to control costs. As revealed in our latest whitepaper ([Register your interest here](#))



on adaptive business models, 98% of in-house legal teams have experienced budget cuts due to economic uncertainty. At the same time, these teams are required to maintain uncompromising standards.

So we've designed our services to fit seamlessly into existing structures, enabling clients to maintain streamlined core teams and supplement them with added expertise as needed. This gives them the flexibility to stay lean or scale up quickly as the market demands. Our approach has helped organisations reduce overhead by up to 40% without affecting their core team's morale and effectiveness.

THE HUMAN CENTRE: REJECTING THE STATUS QUO

The legal profession is notoriously demanding, often wrought with a mental health burden that many accept as the cost of working in law. I've never bought into that. All members of our team enjoy the freedom to control their own careers, whether they are parents needing a hybrid arrangement, retired practitioners keeping their brilliant minds sharp or entrepreneurs with a side hustle.

Our lawyers bring the same intellectual rigour and vast experience as the industry Goliaths, but we do it on our own terms. There is immense satisfaction in providing an opportunity for legal professionals to have a life outside the traditional high-pressure landscape. By treating our people as key stakeholders (and in some cases shareholders), we've created a sustainable ecosystem that has in turn fuelled our growth.

THE OUTER EDGE: THE IMPACT OF AI

Of course, we can't talk about business growth or the coming years without addressing Generative and Agentic AI. To suggest AI won't impact the law is naïve; it will enhance how services are delivered, and those who don't

"It was about providing an additional avenue to access expertise in a way that was better aligned with how modern businesses operate."

embrace it will get left behind. KorumLegal is leaning into this shift, but I remain a firm believer that law is a people industry

at heart. Technology can produce data, but personal experience, judgement and critical thinking are still vital to developing the legal advisory piece. I believe the demand for those human skills will only grow.

My real concern for the next decade is whether there will be enough opportunity for those skills to flourish among our young talent. The traditional training of having your work torn up and starting again or spending hours 'at the photocopier' will slip away as technology takes over the groundwork and core learnings. There is a real risk of a critical talent gap emerging across the industry.

To address this issue, we've launched Korum Academy - a strategic project designed to bridge the gap, creating a knowledge exchange between experienced practitioners and current or aspiring law professionals. I strongly believe in using our position to help pass down the human heart of our profession. The work is just starting, and I'm optimistic about where we're headed.

PERPETUAL MOTION: LOOKING BACK, LOOKING AHEAD

Reflecting on the last ten years, I'm incredibly grateful, not just for what we've built, but for the people who helped us along the way. That includes the critics and detractors whose voices pushed us to be smarter, stronger and more agile.

If I could go back and speak to my younger self starting out in New Zealand, I would say this:

"Personal experience, judgement and critical thinking are still vital to developing the legal advisory piece - and the need for those human skills will grow."

commit 150% but have fun. The hard yards you do when you're young are a critical investment in your future, but if you lose the ability to have fun, you lose the very energy that makes the spiral unfurl.

Looking ahead to the next decade, our vision is to continue expanding across Asia Pacific and EMEA, competing with the Goliaths and standing up with the Davids. I see a perpetual unfurling in our future, like our symbolic namesake. It's a momentous time to be working in NewLaw, and I'm excited to embrace the changes on the horizon.



Titus Rahiri

Titus Rahiri is the CEO and Founder of KorumLegal, a Hong Kong-headquartered legal solutions provider with offices across Asia-Pacific, Europe, and the Middle East. A former General

Counsel with more than 25 years' experience across private practice and global companies including Expedia, Titus founded KorumLegal in 2016 to rethink legal service delivery. The company is a Chambers Band 1 ALSP in Asia-Pacific, where Titus is also ranked Band 1 Individual.

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