

Accelerated Best Practice

Also by Fiona Westwood

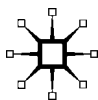
ACHIEVING BEST PRACTICE: Shaping Professionals for Success

Accelerated Best Practice

Implementing Success in Professional Firms

Fiona Westwood

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Preface

The Model for Success

Some of you will be familiar with my first book, *Achieving Best Practice – Shaping Professionals for Success* (McGraw-Hill, 2001). It grew out of my frustrations with being part of the management team of a professional service partnership. We used external consultants and undertook formal management training. As a result, we were told we needed to manage our firm better but no one was able to tell us how to do it. We looked at management books, seeking advice on putting theory into practice in a professional firm but with limited success. In addition, we found that some of the recommended strategy and human resource tools simply did not work as suggested. For example, when we tried to develop a formal Business Plan, we failed to achieve any kind of consensus from the partners. When we attempted to introduce partner appraisals, this process did not appear to improve morale and performance at all.

Frustrated by this lack of practical help, I resolved to write my own book to provide answers to the challenges of managing a professional firm. Once I moved full time into management consultancy, I supplemented my own experience with detailed research into why some firms were growing and successful in the same market as others who were dying. As a result, I devised the Model for Success for professional service firms.

That was in the year 2000. Four years on, the Model has been applied in a wide range of professional organisations. It has been adapted and improved. This book encapsulates the results of those applications and provides the 'accelerated' Model for use in ambitious firms who want to change and change fast. It provides a holistic view of a professional firm, looks at its internal workings and external focus. Its Segments encompass leadership and management, strategy and processes and provide practical techniques and solutions. They build into a complete circle of knowledge and understanding of management and its application, and deliver the ability to change which is so vitally needed in today's marketplace.

For readers familiar with my first book, Chapters 1 and 2 provide a reminder to the concepts developed there. For new readers, they introduce the Model and its application to professionals and professional practice.

Acknowledgements

This book is a reflection of working in partnership with people we trust and respect. I value the help I receive from these relationships. These include all of the professionals and their organisations involved in the research into the Model for Success, as well as my clients who continue to allow me to develop my skills and expertise.

As always, I have to acknowledge the role my family and friends have in supporting me through the process of creating this book. In particular, I must thank Caroline for her concern, Henry for his help and Alistair for being such a distraction.

About the Author

Fiona Westwood graduated with LLB (Hons) from Glasgow University in 1974 and became an enrolled solicitor with the Law Society of Scotland in 1976.

During her professional career as a solicitor which spanned 20 years, she had a wide and general experience of client work. This ranged from running a branch office specialising in legal aid through to establishing and running a large commercial property department. In 1987, she was headhunted to help manage an ambitious amalgamation of three long-established law firms, where she had particular responsibility for business development for the new firm.

She set up her own management consultancy in 1994, specialising in working with the professional sector. Her clients include large multinational practices, niche and regional professional service firms as well as public sector and commercial organisations. Services include business planning, management and client development projects.

Prior to its publication, McGraw-Hill nominated her book, *Achieving Best Practice – Shaping Professionals for Success*, as their September 2000 Book of the Month. In addition, she writes regularly for business and professional publications and speaks at business conferences in the UK and in Europe.

In 1994/5 she held the position of UK Chair of Women in Property, a multi-discipline network for professionals working in the property and construction sector. She has served as a co-opted member of the Practice Management and Client Care Committees of The Law Society of Scotland and as a part-time Post-Graduate Tutor at Edinburgh University and the Glasgow Graduate School of Law.

More information about the author and her firm can be obtained from her website: www.westwood-associates.com