

Review: The Conversation

<http://clarerodwaysconversation.blogspot.co.uk/2015/09/john-gould.html>

I was proud to be a personal guest of John Gould at the launch of his new book "The Law of Legal Services" at the Royal Festival Hall. John is widely acknowledged as one of the country's leading regulatory lawyers, having acted in many cases establishing important legal precedents. He is described in the legal directories variously as "an important figure" on the regulatory scene, "very impressive", "intelligent and innovative" and having an "unsurpassed knowledge of regulatory powers". In person however, despite his formidable reputation he is an utter delight: eloquent, charming, approachable and funny, all in equal measure.

John has a particularly valuable perspective on legal services regulation, being both an advisor on the issue (his clients include solicitors and firms, more than 40 sets of barristers and all the main legal regulators) and manager of a legal business himself; John is Senior Partner of Russell-Cooke and has led the management team over the last 20 years in which time the firm has grown exponentially, in reputation as well as in real terms. Russell-Cooke is well known as "the solicitor's solicitors" (ie the advisors to whom the rest of the profession turns when needing advice) and John's regulatory practice has been key to this.

So given his special insights into law firm business and regulation, I was keen to know his view of the challenges facing both regulator and regulated in the post Legal Services Act world. Does he think that the bodies governing in this very changed environment have a handle on just how differently legal business is being, and can be, done? And what does he make of the differences in approach across the numerous regulators attempting to safeguard good practice across the breadth of the profession?

"I advise anyone trying to understand legal business regulation that it is essential to focus on the underlying principles, as well as the individual codes; and more on the commonalities between the regulators of the various sections of the legal profession, than the differences. The marketplace for legal services today is experiencing a faster rate of change, and seeing more business innovation than at any time previously, bringing new challenges in terms of the way these businesses are regulated. The trouble is the picture keeps changing and it can be hard for practitioners to keep up. Focussing on the principles of regulation will help practitioners keep track of the continual and multifarious changes to the various different codes that make the picture even more confusing, making it easier to keep up, both now and in the future."

Of course what would help practitioners most of all in keeping pace, would be buying John's new book! Praised by Supreme Court President Lord Neuberger in his foreword for being "authoritative, full and user-friendly", The Law of Legal Services is the first comprehensive, accessible single-volume guide designed for individual lawyers in all branches of the profession. It is published by Jordan, the UK's largest independent legal publisher, and includes contributions from solicitors Michael Stacey, formerly of the Ministry of Justice and the Legal Services Board, Michael Colledge and barrister Tom Bradford (all three being colleagues of John at Russell-Cooke), also Cilex Regulation board member and compliance consultant Andrew Donovan, formerly of the SRA.

"Our aim was to bring together in one volume the law which every lawyer needs to know, whatever their specialisations," says John. "The emphasis on principles and decided cases provides the legal context for the business and conduct issues which lawyers grapple with everyday."

Topics covered include lawyers' duties; negligence; regulation; indemnity insurance; the protection of goodwill; fees; and insolvency.

The book is available to buy [here](#). Updates will be provided through an internet portal, (very 2015), which you can visit [here](#).