

SEMINAR



Can Hong Kong Lawyers Avoid Extinction? Staying Ahead of the Curve in a Globalized Legal World

Mitch Kowalski

Legal Futurist

Tuesday, 19 November 2013, 12:30 pm - 1:30 pm
Room, 723, 7/F Cheng Yu Tung Tower
The University of Hong Kong

We now live in an era of virtual law firms like Clearspire, non-law firms like Axiom, online documents provided by Legal Zoom, publicly-traded law firms like Slater & Gordon, legal process outsourcers like Pangea3; an era in which outside investment in law firms in the United Kingdom have created law kiosks in retail shops and General Counsel are demanding that lawyers do more for less. Yet most law firms in Hong Kong still practice law the way it has been practiced for centuries: a labour-intensive endeavour carried out by high-priced personnel billing by the hour. Protected by a legislated monopoly, many Hong Kong law firms have grown complacent, fat and inefficient. However, in an increasingly globalized world these firms will, by 2025, become relics of the past; the old model can't deliver what 21st Century clients want and value.

This seminar discusses the main disruptors to traditional legal practice and how lawyers in Hong Kong can find new competitive advantage to deliver better client value so as to avoid extinction. Law students will gain understanding of the changes happening within the legal services industry – changes that will dramatically impact their careers.

Mitch Kowalski is a legal futurist, lawyer, and speaker. He is the author of the critically acclaimed, American Bar Association best-seller, “Avoiding Extinction: Reimagining Legal Services for the 21st Century.” He is highly sought after as the Canadian thought-leader on innovation in legal services delivery and in 2012, he was selected as a Fastcase Top 50 Global Legal Innovator.

Mitch advises and speaks internationally on legal service innovation as well as writing on legal matters for The Legal Post and on innovation in legal services delivery for Slaw.ca. He teaches innovation in legal services at the University of Ottawa Law School but for much of his 22-year legal career, he practiced law with the Toronto office of international legal giant Baker & McKenzie, before moving to one of the oldest, mid-sized law firms in Toronto: Aylesworth LLP which later became Dickinson Wright LLP. He also served as in-house counsel for the City of Toronto. His experience with a wide variety of legal service providers gives him a unique perspective on their operations. Mitch also maintains a boutique commercial law practice in Toronto.

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