



FORUM TALK

The Oracle forum is conceived and run by Prima PR and The Progressive Business Group

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

BRAND, CULTURE AND DIFFERENTIATION

FRIDAY 22ND JUNE
NOTTINGHAM

FRIDAY 20TH JULY
CAMBRIDGE

MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS

FRIDAY 14TH SEPTEMBER
NOTTINGHAM

FRIDAY 19TH OCTOBER
CAMBRIDGE

WHAT IS ORACLE?

Oracle is a new and exclusive forum...

A series of highly focused discussion lunches designed especially for senior marketers in the professional services sector.

Each session looks at a strategic issue affecting the sector with a credible expert on the day's topic, followed by mediated, roundtable discussion where participants can share opinions and learn from experts and peers.

The ambition is to work together to forge future excellence, creating an environment where professionals demonstrate their worth - heightening reputation and together attracting more business to the area. So we all benefit.

The Oracle is the sum of the parts.

FIRMS FACE UP TO TENDERING

In the week that saw the outcome of the biggest ever bidding round for public sector legal services by The Office of Government Commerce (OGC), firms focused on where tendering fits in their future strategy, with many calling for a simplification of the process.

Law firms - including Mills & Reeve, Kester Cunningham John and Charles Russell from the East of England and Freeth Cartwright, Geldards and Brown Jacobson from the East Midlands - joined the debate at the launch of Oracle, a new strategic marketing forum for professional services firms.

Taking place in Nottingham and Cambridge on a bimonthly basis, the launch forum for Oracle - created by Prima PR & The Progressive Business Group - gave senior players the opportunity to share their views on tendering and together consider strategic solutions.

The aim, to share best practice and help create a stronger market and heightened profile for all firms in the Midlands and East of England.



Law firms gather for the Cambridge launch of the Oracle forum. Standing, from left: Rolland Keane, Charles Russell; Michael Frape, Kester Cunningham John; Maggie Taylor, Prima PR; Diana Johnson, Prettys; Tim Hill, Taylor Vinters; Mandi Short, The Progressive Business Group; Jonathan Younger, Hewitsons, Lynn Henderson, Lorimer Longhurst & Lee. Seated: Janet Rudge, Birketts; Phil Davies, East of England Development Agency; Tim Richards, Hewitsons; and Julie Murphy, Mills & Reeve.

Leading the debate from the procurement perspective were the Regional Development Agencies and discussion focused on enhancing the £ value for the local region.

It's reckoned that every £1 spent on services by public bodies translates into £13 worth of revenue back to the regional economy when the contract goes to a local supplier.

But if the work goes to London or elsewhere, £1 spent will generate only £3 locally.

The forum said the focus should be on simplifying the process and highlighted the resource cost to firms.

Rolland Keane, marketing director at Charles Russell commented: "We can certainly all learn from one another and use it to play to our strengths".

He added: "Tendering is being used increasingly across all markets, with the public sector leading the way. Their process needs to reflect what they are buying, but we have to be adaptive too."

ORACLE IN THE NEWS

The launch of Oracle and the debate around how tendering can secure a stronger economy for the local economy has been picking up headlines as part of the launch campaign by organisers Prima PR.

Rivals to unite for economy

ARCH RIVALRY is joining forces in the city to boost the local economy.
Leading law firms including Taylor Wessley, Birketts and Prettys will be meeting later this month for the first of what will be bi-monthly lunches set up by Prima PR and The Progressive Business Group.
Each session will focus on a key strategic issue affecting the sector, ranging from tendering, mergers and acquisitions, through to corporate social responsibility.
The first lunch is scheduled for Friday 22nd June at the Oracle, because at each session there will be an expert on hand to moderate over the topic of the day.
The first meeting is on Friday 22nd June at the University Arms when the subject will be "tendering in the strategic marketplace".
It will be interesting to see who opens up first on this one.



Oracle information and updates on the web : go to
www.primapr.co.uk/oracle.htm

WHAT THEY SAID ABOUT THE LAUNCH



At the Nottingham launch of Oracle, from left: Stephen Pearson, Freeth Cartwright; Mandi Short, The Progressive Business Group; Glenn Harris, East Midlands Development Agency; Sarah Warnsby, Brown Jacobson; June Smallwood Rose, Shoosmiths, Jonathan Younger, Hewitsons; Brigid MacDermott, The Progressive Group; Hilary Campton, Berryman; Richard Georgeson, Ringrose Law Group; Jamie Gordon, Geldards; Carley Ferguson, Harvey Ingram; Andy Hodges, Fraser Brown; Maggie Taylor, Prima PR; and Mat Slade, Fidler and Pepper.

"It was really useful from my perspective... a good exchange of views." Glenn Harris, Director, East Midlands Development Agency

"... particularly interested in developing any of the ideas which come out of this" Sarah Warnsby, Director of Marketing & Business Development, Brown Jacobson

"Thanks, it was a really useful event..." Stephen Pearson, Partner, Freeth Cartwright

"...very professionally-hosted ... interesting and fast-moving debate..." Mat Slade, Partner, Fidler & Pepper

"Oracle is a fantastic initiative... we really did lack a good forum for senior marketers" Hilary Campton, Marketing Director, Berryman

".... most useful contribution from EEDA..." Julie Murphy, Marketing Director, Mills & Reeve

"We all learn from one another...." Rolland Keane, Marketing Director, Charles Russell

"The Oracle forum is a superb idea - we have an opportunity to help each other and influence change."

June Smallwood-Rose, Marketing and Client Services Director, Shoosmiths

"I found it enormously interesting and beneficial..." Diana Johnson, Business Development Manager, Prettys Solicitors

"I enjoyed the discussions and meeting with fellow professionals..." Tim Hill, Business Development Manager, Taylor Vinters

"a stimulating forum..." Jamie Gordon, Partner, Geldards



COMMENT: Mandi Short, Partner with TPBG

the excellent trainers out there to work with fee earners to develop the skills they need to convert the 'pound note' opportunities. Then the relationships and connections made by marketing teams will be realised into profit.

The people I have come across and would be happy to recommend are:

Rob Brown — you can find out more about him on www.rob-brown.com

Kim Tasso who can be found on www.kimtasso.com

LIVING THE BRAND

Maggie Taylor, Prima PR

How can you differentiate your firm and reap the rewards of a clear and coherent brand that brings benefits in a competitive market?

The topic for the next Oracle forum is branding – and we're not talking logos, we're talking about core branding that penetrates every aspect of your business.

According to research, 85% of law firms now rate marketing as highly important, and the amount spent by firms has on average almost doubled in recent years.

Brands have a cash value that can make a difference to the balance sheet with research showing that brand-aware businesses outperform other businesses by up to 20% over a 15-year timescale.

In its broadest sense, branding has a real part to play in contributing to business growth and improved performance. It can make a real impact on employee motivation and it can help create positive client relationships.

By creating a point of difference to build relationships and bonds, firms can secure a competitive advantage. At the forum we'll be looking in more detail at all these issues and sharing knowledge to create mutual advantage.

LOOKING FOR SOMEONE SPECIAL?

It was great to see everybody at the Oracle launch events - and even better to see the commitment to share experiences at a strategic level.

One of the things that came up at the Cambridge session was how important relationships were in successfully securing tenders.

And that's what I am struggling with at the moment - relationships and getting fee earners to realise that only they can 'make the sale'.

Marketing can create leads, make connections, keep contacts warm, open doors and bring together a potential client to the right fee earner - and a thousand and one other things as well! - but at the end of the day only the fee earners can actually convert the potential into pounds.

A friend of mine, Rob Brown, says all business is personal and even the biggest deals come down to two or more people making a connection. I think he's right and my dilemma is how do you make people go for the people you are trying to promote? How do you put the right people together? And how do you actually generate fees from relationships?

I think the answer is, make sure that fee earners are also marketers and an extension of your team – another point that came out in our Oracle session discussions.

So we shouldn't be disappointed when introductions fail because the potential client's expectations aren't met.

Instead, we should concentrate on using some of

ABOUT US

The Oracle forum is conceived and run by full service public relations and marketing communications consultancy Prima PR with The Progressive Business Group, specialists in business development for the professional services sector.

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the
**Progressive
Business Group**