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KM Legal. London: Ark Group. ISBN 1752-0428: £245 pa

I must admit that I've always been impressed with Ark Group publications. Their journals are well written, informative and pleasing on the eye; and now they've gone up even further in my estimation by producing a new journal aimed at the legal information and knowledge management professional.

The bi-monthly *KM Legal* was launched in October 2006 and claims to be "the first knowledge management publication specifically tailored to the legal profession". If this claim is correct, then such a journal is long overdue. However, despite its welcome appearance on the market, the initial concern I had was whether it could adequately cover the vast, evolving, multi-faceted subject that is knowledge management in just six issues per year. After reading the first two issues, the answer appears to be yes (although I would still have liked it to be a monthly, or at least a ten issues per year, publication).

The journal is written by legal KM practitioners for legal KM practitioners, and the editorial board is reassuringly comprised of very experienced KM managers and solicitors, including Matthew Parsons, the author of the highly-acclaimed *Effective Knowledge Management for Law Firms*. With such a competent board in place, it is safe to say that the journal will undoubtedly remain relevant; this was further emphasised by the request in the editorial column for readers to send in articles or suggest topics that they would like to see covered in future issues.

So, what form does the journal take? Well, it is structured in very much the same way as its sister publication, *Inside Knowledge*, though its focus is exclusively on law firms, rather than the KM community as a whole. Broadly, the journal is separated into three key areas – opinion, case studies and advice. It contains opinion from KM professionals on issues that affect the sector; case studies, which look at the implementation of KM strategies and programmes in a variety of law firms; and expert advice to help KM professionals expand their knowledge and overcome common problems that they face in their daily work.

I felt that the content of the journal embraced the whole legal KM sector, with the first two issues providing something for everyone (irrespective of the stage your firm's KM programme is at). Articles looked at implementing a new KM programme from scratch; improving an already established KM resource; and re-assessing a KM strategy after a merger. These articles also included some useful colour screen shots of the KM systems being discussed. Other subjects covered included the growth and development of the professional support lawyer's role (an issue of some concern for librarians) and the all important issue of creating a firm-wide KM culture. However, with so many articles written by experienced KM leaders who have reached the pinnacle of their

profession, it was nice to see the second issue contain "a day in the life" article by a new KM trainee, outlining a typical day for somebody just starting out in the profession.

Overall, I found *KM Legal* to be a winner on two fronts. Firstly, its very existence is a triumph for the legal information/knowledge management profession as a whole and highlights the profession's continuing rise in importance within law firms; and secondly, it's an excellent read. My only criticisms are that I wish each issue had more content (it's quite a 'thin' journal at 30 pages long, although to be fair that does only include one page of advertisements). I also felt the news section, though again only one page long, is not really worthwhile in a journal that is produced bi-monthly.

However, the biggest compliment I can pay is... I subscribed!

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KRANSRORFF, A. *Corporate DNA: Using Organizational Memory to Improve Poor Decision-Making*. London: Gower Publishing Limited, 2006. ISBN 0566086816 (hbk): £55.00. 242 p.

This is an interesting book focusing on the common sense theory that decision-making in businesses is detrimentally affected by the loss of corporate memory each time experienced staff leave. This seems to be such an obvious suggestion that the reader initially wonders why it needs stating. A careful reading of the case studies soon illustrates that the proposition is not widely accepted as common sense and businesses are suffering reduced productivity from making repeated mistakes and reinventing the wheel, while only paying lip service to being learning organisations.

The book is well written and easy to read; although abbreviations are used, the list of explanations is conveniently located at the front of the book and are very easy to find for reference. The index works well to relocate case studies. Tables are used sparingly, which increases their impact and helps the flow of reading through the book. Each chapter is subdivided with clear headings and ends with an extensive list of references, thus compensating for the lack of a list of further suggested reading. One of the best features of the book is the liberal use of case studies based on large UK and international companies. The author's illustrations of the practical impact of losing corporate memory with vivid anecdotes, such as the \$1.6 million unsuccessful attempt in 2003 to recreate Orville Wright's first flight and the repeated instances of multi-million pound losses to banks through rogue traders, helps to reinforce the central ideas of the book and make them