
LAW

LETTER

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EST 1812

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■ *Fairbridges Maintains Top Spot*

FOR THE second year in a row Fairbridges has been awarded the coveted Diamond Arrow Award at the annual PMR Award ceremony in Johannesburg, for being ranked as the top law firm in the country in its category.

The prestigious *Professional Management Review* (PMR) survey of top legal firms is conducted by an independent research team which sources ratings from hundreds of in-house corporate lawyers, financial directors, chief executive officers, company secretaries and other senior managers, randomly selected from a comprehensive database of the top companies in South Africa.

We are proud to have featured as one of the top firms in our category, the largest category, for the past five years. We scored 4.10 (out of a possible 5) in 2006, improving to 4.14 in 2007, rising to 4.19 in 2008, and climbing to 4.48 in 2009, the highest national rating across all categories. In 2010 we have been rated 4.38, top in our category, and a close second across all categories. Our score was rated “outstanding”.

Law firms were assessed overall across a range of attributes, including:

- ◆ Quality of service / attitude
- ◆ Response time
- ◆ Response quality
- ◆ Knowledge of clients’ business and business environment
- ◆ Competence / thoroughness
- ◆ Attention to detail
- ◆ Cost effectiveness of the whole legal process
- ◆ Added value
- ◆ Value for money
- ◆ Follow-up
- ◆ Success rate
- ◆ Specialist knowledge / expertise
- ◆ BEE compliance
- ◆ Infrastructure / resources of firm
- ◆ International affiliations

We are thrilled at this achievement and inspired to continue with our strategy of seeking to improve and further develop every aspect of the professional services we are privileged to render to our clients. Our goal remains to consistently maintain the highest standards of quality, and it is gratifying that this has been independently recognised.

A big thank you once again to all our personnel for their excellent contribution and to our clients for your continued support and encouragement.



Louis Rood, Tiffany Scheepers, Marié Joubert and Robert Humphries admire the PMR 2010 Diamond Arrow Award.



■ *Freedom of Speech
is not Free*

“THERE ARE several reasons the English libel system is unfair, but the greatest problem is that of costs. A report by the Centre for Socio Legal Studies at Oxford University pointed out that the costs of defamation litigation are 100 times higher in England and Wales than most other

European countries. Trials rarely cost less than £100,000 and often exceed £1m. Even if a journalist is convinced that an article is defensible, the risk of a poor judgment or losing on a technicality, with the ensuing financial disaster is just too great to take. Therefore good journalists are forced to apologise and important articles are withdrawn. Worse still, journalists are increasingly likely to avoid investigating certain subjects for fear of a libel action. And it is not just individual journalists who feel intimidated, but also local and national newspapers. The result is that British readers do not get to hear the truth.”

– *Simon Singh, in The Sunday Telegraph (June 2009).*



■ *Breaking Down Barriers*

“PERHAPS THE most important obligation for law firms at present is to realise how South Africa’s particular history has erected barriers to participation in the profession which remain significant obstacles in the present. Much needs to be done to ensure that black lawyers and female lawyers can enter the profession and excel. In the context of both, this might require frank consideration of institutional practices and culture which might themselves be obstacles to achievement.”

– *former Constitutional Court Justice, Kate O’Regan.*



■ *Taking Your Medicine*

“WHILE I will not stop anyone from approaching the court, I will advise that matters of this nature are better discussed among communities and families. Courts usually give hard, cold judgments that at times leave a bitter taste.”

– *President Jacob Zuma (July 2010).*



■ *Experience*

“ONE CANNOT be a weather-beaten lawyer without learning a thing or two that, at times, can be useful.”

– *Judge Nigel Willis (May 2010).*



■ *Croaking Cuisine*

“BUT YOU know, monsieur, we cannot use French frogs any more. The law says no. These come from, I don’t know, Africa, Russia.”

– *owner of Le Viex Moulin restaurant, in the Beaujolais village of Allix in France, famous for its traditional delicacy of frogs’ legs (2006).*

Law Letter is a complimentary service to our clients. Should you wish to receive Law Letter regularly, or if you have changed your address, or if you no longer wish to receive Law Letter, please let us know. Any suggestions or comment on Law Letter will be welcomed!

Please contact Bronwen Reid at telephone 021 405 7300 or fax 021 419 5135.

- Winner of the *Professional Management Review (PMR) Diamond Arrow Awards* for 2009 and 2010 as the best law firm in its category in South Africa.



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