

## training

important to merge both these aspects to agree on aims and a time scale so both parties can see the results and value," she says.

McNamara agrees that some law firms are not up-to-speed with employees' needs and may pay the price in the long term. "Staff now have higher expectations of their employers, with regards to career development and choosing the proper path to go down. Firms that don't help staff develop their management skills will suffer as time goes on. From what I've seen, small and medium firms aren't investing in the idea as much as they should, and are choosing to focus more on CPD and technical training, rather than the 'softer' skills."

While many training schools cater for lawyers who may be lacking in the more 'business and leadership' side of things, many solicitors may be well schooled in these disciplines and need refreshing on the developments in their legal field. However, while legislation and case updates are easily found electronically, practical skills are harder to brush up on

without personal contact. Business giant Euromoney provides courses on developments in financial and banking law to "senior lawyers who need a refresher and those who have recently moving to the area".

The head of legal training in Europe and Asia, Jocelyn Murphy, says the company mostly provides these courses to lawyers from City law firms and in-house counsel from banks. The training, delivered to groups of between 10 and 35, deals with all practical aspects of banking law, which are constantly changing.

Rather than brushing up on existing skills, Winchester-based LawSkills has launched a business for lawyers who want to change field completely. The company has developed a five-day residential course for lawyers who feel they have spent long enough in their specialisation and want to change disciplines – as long as the area they want to move to is 'death and taxes'.

The 'immersion course' is the brainchild of LawSkills director Gill Steel, who explains: "Since the Law Society

removed probate from being a core subject on the Legal Practice Course, it has been a stressed market and we can't get enough people on it. However, with other areas becoming less financially viable, death and taxes (D&T) can offer a steady stream of work. Probate needs more people to handle all the work and people are looking for new opportunities. I know a lot of senior lawyers who were looking for suitable courses to help them convert to D&T."

Steel says she appreciates that D&T is an area that will not "make millions, but it is a constant earner". She also says many experienced lawyers feel it is a good thing to go into as "they have grown old with their clients, who now see them as their solicitor".

The conversion course is run out of Basingstoke Management Centre and fills five full days with a variety of talks and seminars from leading lawyers in the field. It is an example of the possibilities available to lawyers who feel their career needs a boost or that they are short of a skill to make the push for partnership.



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