

Embrace ESG: Act to Impact

A WHITE PAPER FOR LEGAL SERVICE PROVIDERS: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our responsibilities towards the environments and communities we live and work in cannot be met by any single industry, market, country, or organisation. As the intersection where many of these entities meet, the legal profession is uniquely positioned to act as interlocutor for our collective efforts to make progress against the ESG agenda. The five principles outlined below and in [impactvise's white paper](#) detail how legal service providers can be credible agents for change: namely, through being transparent and proactive, and having the courage and conviction to create impact, lead, and inspire.

Challenge

Opportunity

#1 Be transparent IT IS TIME TO BE OUTSPOKEN!

Clients and stakeholders are increasingly insistent that law firms must be clear and open about their approach to ESG and expect them to apply similar standards to their own supply chains. This is being reflected in tender documents and payment of fees.

Transparent law firms will not only win business, they will also differentiate themselves with their ability to apply their professional expertise based on their experience of dealing with the same issues their clients are facing.

#2 Act BE PROACTIVE & DRIVE ESG PERFORMANCE

Whether working in law firms or legal departments, we can all walk in the shoes of the business leaders we advise and take responsibility for the action inspired by our advice.

The legal profession has always been a key link in the value chain. Now, broad legal mindsets and rigorous intellectual training, means we're ideally placed to become proactive ESG enablers. We do not need to be activists, but we do need to act.

#3 Impact MEASURE, MANAGE & ADVISE FOR POSITIVE ESG OUTCOMES

Although the adage 'what gets measured gets done' is often true, there are a vast array of ESG related metrics available - from CO2 emissions to diversity targets. There are also potential ethical dilemmas to navigate, arising from options that might not seem compatible.

By choosing the most appropriate measures of impact for ourselves and our clients, legal professionals can be pathfinders and bridge-builders, evidencing the basis for robust, forward-looking advice.

#4 Lead IN THOUGHT AS WELL AS ACTION

Leaders in any field must do so in the full knowledge that their position is unlikely to resonate with everyone. The law tends to emerge from what is already being said and done, so today's ideas and precedents are tomorrow's regulations.

Legal professionals have powers of persuasion that leaders in other fields often lack. Combining this ability with the confidence and courage to demonstrate thought leadership evidenced by action will create clear advantages for shaping the way ahead.

#5 Inspire IT IS TIME TO BE OUTSPOKEN!

Experienced and accomplished lawyers, bright new recruits executives and support staff are refusing to join, or stay at, organizations with a poor ESG record.

Making a positive contribution to our world as a result of having a meaningful purpose offers the opportunity for personal and professional renewal for all of us.