International Regulation:
A change challenge for professional services firms?

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The third article of the Crelos Change Mastery Series explores the topical issue of how legislative, regulatory and governance changes brought about primarily as a result of the Global Financial Crisis are changing the way that professional services firms are required to operate. The phrase ‘change is a constant’ is now bandied around liberally and organisations are growing familiar with the implementation of change programmes and with using change consultants, now often employing their own internal change management experts.

At the same time many professional services firms remain steeped in history and tradition, working within a ‘networked partnership structure’ that emphasises cooperation and a collegiate approach, but that is perhaps not so suited to dynamism and transformation at pace. Crelos have supported business leaders across a range of strategic change challenges including M&A, business turnaround, organisational restructuring, cultural change and operational efficiency drives. This experience, together with interviews conducted with senior people from professional services firms and consultants who have a long history of working with these firms, has enabled us to develop this research.

During the research interviews two words were used time and again; ambiguity and complexity. The ambiguity of not knowing what form regulation will take and the need to plan for different eventualities and the complexity of making sense of the global context, how regulation applies to specific firms and what firms need to do to take advantage of the opportunities that might arise. Interestingly, the research also emphasised the diverse reactions of firms. There are those who are already delivering on strategic plans aimed at taking advantage of new opportunities. There are those who are waiting and watching as developments unfold – and there are those who see any activity that distracts from billable client work as a waste of time and resources.

Introduction

There can be no disagreement that change is all around us and that a key stimulus of change in recent history has been the Global Financial Crisis of 2008. Many causes have been suggested and debate is still on-going. The United States Senate did not take long to issue the Levin–Coburn Report, which found “that the crisis was not a natural disaster, but the result of high risk, complex financial products; undisclosed conflicts of interest; and the failure of regulators, the credit rating agencies, and the market itself to rein in the excesses of Wall Street” (levin.senate.gov).

Initially the financial sector took the brunt of the blame, with The Basel Committee introducing new principles for capital and liquidity and the USA passing the Dodd–Frank Act (banking.senate.gov), broad legislation affecting almost all areas of the financial sector. In the UK the FSA has been a casualty, with its responsibilities being divided between the Bank of England, the Financial Conduct Authority and the newly formed Prudential Regulatory Authority. Transition will be completed during 2012; however it is likely that further changes will continue to affect the financial sector for some time in to the future. The Evolving Banking Regulation report states that “we are no where near the finish line – regulatory
change remains on the G20 agenda and will continue so for years to come, as we enter the much longer marathon towards implementation and transformation of the industry” (KPMG, 2010).

More recently some of the attention has been turned to the area of professional services, with commentators and regulators considering the role of both accountants and lawyers in some of the key events that so negatively impacted the economy. Questions have been asked about what they could have done to have prevented events including the purchase of ABN Amro by RBS and the fall of Northern Rock. If auditors had the skill of spotting ‘toxic cultures’ (Powell, 2011) rather than just auditing, could they have intervened to prevent certain events?

**Our Research Approach**

With all this as a backdrop and with both a personal and professional interest in the subject as an organisational development and change consultant at Crelos, I felt that it was timely to explore how professional services firms are coming to terms with this increased ambiguity and preparing themselves for changes to their industries. The background to this research is underpinned by our experience as consultants in organisational change.

Our experience of working with professional services firms, which for the purpose of this research is narrowly defined as accountancy and law firms, has shown us that these organisations have specific change challenges often to do with their history, culture and network structure. Our research hypothesis is:

- THAT changes to the regulatory landscape are driving fundamental changes to the way that professional services firms will be required to operate in the future.
- THAT professional services firms have specific challenges when driving through business change, to do with their history, structure and culture, but their leaders and HR professionals are not sufficiently expert in change management, particularly the psychology and behavioural aspects of individual and group change, to support this effectively.
- THAT to grasp the opportunities posed by regulatory change and be successful in a more competitive and fast-moving environment, professional services firms will need to find effective ways of utilising the diverse experience and expertise of specialists to support them through their aggressive change agendas.

In writing this article a number of senior business people were interviewed with diverse interest and views in the area of regulatory change. These individuals either hold strategic roles within professional services firms, are strategy and change consultants with years of experience working with and in professional services firms or are experienced buyers of professional services. These individuals include: Meryl Bushell, ex Head of Procurement at BT Group and consultant to the Big Four; Ian Dilks, Global Leader: Public Policy and Regulation at PwC; Moira Elms, Global Leader: Brand and Communications at PwC; Jon Geldart, Global Director of Marketing Communications at Grant Thornton International; Ali Gill, CEO and co-founder of Crelos; Adam Gold, ex PwC and consultant to the Big Four; Charlie Keeling, COO at Field Fisher Waterhouse LLP; Paul Raleigh, Global Leader for Strategy, Development and Growth at Grant Thornton International; Peter Taylor, COO of CTSO at HSBC and Alex Talbot, Head of Strategy and Transition at Linklaters.
Is the transforming regulatory landscape driving change to the way professional services firms will be required to operate in the future?

The extent of the regulatory changes and the impact on professional services firms, particularly accountancy firms, is yet unclear. It is likely that a more law based approach will be brought in by Brussels and will be new to the UK which currently operates a Corporate Governance Code of comply or explain for listed companies. Although it is likely that regulatory change will occur, an issue for regulators and lobbyists is identifying and getting agreement about exactly what problems are being solved. As Ian Dilks of PwC says, "This is an incredibly complex area with different interests and experiences, all over-laid by the media reporting making it difficult for the public to understand what the problem is that is being solved and if the recommendations will solve them. Even if there is no problem, there is perception of a problem".

The lack of certainty about the changes, compounded by lobbying from firms wanting to protect their market position and on-going, sometimes sensationalist coverage by the media has caused an environment of ambiguity and discomfort. The resulting anxiety was highlighted during the majority of research interviews. The ability to deal effectively with ambiguity has been recognised as important leadership behaviour within the corporate world for some years now. Professionals who are used to working within one specifically defined technical expertise can find uncertainty more challenging to work through than someone with a general management background. There is a risk that firms may get stuck in the complexity and uncertainty and therefore in the status quo, rather than making sense of the uncertainty and moving forwards to develop strategic plans for the future.

European Commission proposals which would impact the UK and all other member states are around a number of main areas;

- Mandatory rotation of audit firms with a maximum engagement period of six years (nine if joint audits are performed) with a cooling off period of four years before re-engagement by the same client.
- Firms are prohibited from providing some non-audit services to audit clients if non-audit fees exceed 10% of audit fees. Where the proportion of fees generated from PIEs (Public Interest Entities) exceeds certain thresholds at a network and member firm level, the firm concerned should not provide any non-audit services.
- Mandatory re-tendering will oblige public-interest entities to have an open and transparent tender process for selecting a new auditor, closely involving the audit committee.
- Other points include the strengthening of audit committees, the European supervision of the audit sector and the introduction of a 'European passport' for the audit profession (International Accounting Bulletin, 2012).

Some of these proposals are controversial and may not progress further. However, it is likely that some of the proposals under review will move to legislation and may result in an opening up of the market place from the Big Four, a view supported by a number of interviewees. Some firms are seeing this as an opportunity to become a true option to the Big Four, whilst recognising that to do this they need to make strategic changes such as developing their global network, ensuring
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A high quality standard across the network and finding effective ways of managing a global client base.

If firms decide that they do want to ‘play with the big boys’ they will need to first engage an often disparate network of firms around this strategy which can be according to Jon Geldart “like herding cats”. A clear change plan is required, which would likely include M and A activity to develop a network capable of servicing a multinational organisation. The establishment of global standards, systems and processes, including a structure for managing global clients, and reward, recognition and promotion based on global rather than local success criteria would also be necessary. In addition to the structural and operational challenges, mindset, behaviour and cultural changes are also required to move from local to global. Affecting these types of changes is a complex and lengthy process within a corporate environment, but even more so when taking in to account the idiosyncrasies of a partnership network, where the contract between firms means that they are often left with minimal input from headquarters. Focus, commitment at all levels and change management expertise in process, systems, culture and behaviour is required. As someone who has gone through the long and expensive process of acquiring and then developing a global network, Ian Dilks said in his interview, “my advice to the smaller firms is to be careful what you wish for!”

An alternative view is that rotation may still only occur within the Big Four and actually effectively narrow real choice. Cynics have also suggested that the cost of more regular tendering will be passed on to the client, so pushing up audit costs. In addition the business of tendering may take the focus off the real job of proving a high quality, accurate audit.

A range of views were evident amongst interviewees on the impact of separating audit and non-audit services. There is a view that accountancy firms make less money on the audit than on advisory services and that they would be required to think through their commercial models. Another view is that the proposals don’t take in to account that “auditors are best placed to provide some non-audit services. To go elsewhere adds cost and duplicates work” (International Accounting Bulletin, 2012). Firms may need to take decisions about providing audit or non-audit services and the balance between these offerings and this could ultimately lead to a re-play of the late 1990s and early 2000s when all of the Big Four except Deloitte sold off their consultancy arms to avoid conflicts of interests in light of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act (Wikipedia, 2012). On the other hand, it may encourage smaller firms to focus more on clear niches. Either way, firms will need to make decisions about their core services and client base and adopt strategies to make them competitive in their chosen market.

The third key area identified above, that of an open and transparent tender process is, according to certain commentators “to be applauded” (International Accounting Bulletin, 2012). This proposal is likely to encourage tendering organisations to consider the mid-size firms that they might have discounted before. Paul Raleigh of Grant Thornton says of the proposals discussed above, “this will open up the market from the Big Four. It will make it more difficult for auditors to provide other services to listed firms. It will affect firms in the top 10 to 12 both here and internationally.”

Although it is as yet unknown exactly what form any legislation will ultimately take, it is likely that the market place will
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be opening up to mid-size players, who will need to make the important decision over whether and how to compete with the Big Four. To do so undoubtedly requires an effectively functioning global network as multinational organisations want to work with a global supplier who can guarantee a level of service anywhere they need it. Alternatively, firms may make the choice to become a niche provider of accountancy services, recognising that this might exclude them from profitable work with both existing and new clients.

A number of interviewees suggested that regulatory change provided opportunity for firms to provide advice to support organisations through the minefield of a changing regulatory landscape. As Ali Gill of Crelos says, “the environment might be recessionary, but there are increased opportunities for professional services firms driven by regulation. For example, organisations want support to find their way through Solvency II. There is a massive move towards helping people to stay out of prison. The fear factor is driving businesses to look at the way they are operating, but also to create a façade that they are coping with the legislation.” Interviewees from the legal sector reinforced this view, with Alex Talbot of Linklaters saying “In the short term legal firms will get more advisory work, advising on the impact of the changes. In the medium term legal firms will be the most knowledgeable in understanding regulatory changes and helping clients to navigate through them.” She went on to say that “we are starting to think about the different expertise required going forwards. The regulatory team will grow.”

With organisations under increasing pressure to cut costs the annual audit must remain competitively priced. The opening up of the legal sector to organisations such as The Cooperative, Tesco and even WH Smith has made the transactional end of the legal services market more competitive. A response to this is Legal Process Outsourcing causing, according to Alex Talbot “increasing pressure on established firms as legal process outsourcing companies provide services that can be commoditised. These can erode some of the services mid tier firms have perhaps offered causing them to try to move upstream in to more complex areas and in to direct competition with the premium legal market.” Charlie Keeling of Field Fisher Waterhouse has also seen this trend saying “there is a lot of outsourcing legal process to India, Asia, etc. The next challenge is how to bring this in to the new regulatory regime.”

The majority of interviewees suggested that a culmination of regulatory proposals, economic conditions and increased pressure from clients were driving changes to the way professional services firms will be required to operate in the future. As Jon Geldart suggests, “Entire Western economies are going through stress”. Many lessons have been learnt over the last few years and it will be important to apply these lessons systemically as Jon says as at “an institutional and societal level.”

**How have firms started to self-regulate to combat an increasingly regulated environment?**

A number of interviewees described nervousness at being implicated in an accounting scandal such as those of Enron, which led to the dissolution of Arthur Anderson, MCI/WorldCom or Bristol Myers Squibb. This view is supported by Paul Raleigh, “the level of oversight of regulators is just enormous in terms of implications for firms dealing with listed companies.”
companies.” While (paradoxically!) partnerships are not governed by the Corporate Governance Code, many firms are reviewing their own corporate governance and making changes like, for example, including independent board members on their Boards of Governors. Governors are also being challenged to transform their role from pure representation of a region to the governance of the firm as a whole. Both independence and quality are moving to the forefront of working practice today, with one interviewee giving the example of a PwC partner who said that “at most meetings we ask the question; are we really being honest about how we manage the quality of our audits and maintain independence?”

Lawyers are also finding themselves exposed as clients more readily implicate law firms and personal liability insurance becomes increasingly expensive. Charlie Keeling from Field Fisher Waterhouse described how his firm is reacting to the Solicitor Regulatory Authority’s increased focus on risk and compliance, including the appointment of a Chief of Legal Process and the design of a compliance plan. However, Charlie does emphasise that “the concept of self regulation is still a way off.” Linklaters is reacting by standardising process and increasing the use of risk management technology. Alex Talbot described how the issue of quality plays a key role in their strategic planning. “We continue to develop our risk management policies, systems and processes, focussing on ensuring compliance with developing regulatory regimes, avoiding reputational concerns and sharing best working practice across the firm.”

The importance of branding is discussed by a number of interviewees in the light of the break down in trust between the general public and professional services firms that occurred following the Global Financial Crisis. Interviewees talked about the requirement to rebuild this relationship and the image of these professions to once again be seen as, according to Jon Geldart, “rooted in probity, reason, ethics and rightness.” Grant Thornton is reviewing their brand to ensure that it strongly demonstrates what they stand for in order to attract both clients and talent and be seen as a credible alternative to the Big Four.

Self-regulation is a new concept for some firms, who are still reacting to legislation rather than proactively using regulatory change to increase their competitive position. Interestingly, there was little mention of the shift in mindset and behaviour required to support effective self-regulation. When things dramatically go awry within an organisation it is usually the result of a series of events that have been instigated by a breakdown in culture surfacing ineffective or dangerous behaviour. For example, risk taking can become out of control and not balanced by standards and procedures, or mistakes can be covered up if the culture is that of allocating blame rather than learning. Senior executives can become complicit to this negative behaviour especially when times are good, rather than taking the more difficult route of confronting the problem and sending clear messages that the behaviour is not acceptable. A senior partner in an accounting firm supported this view by saying “when bankers get to that age when they need a bit more money, where they’ve just got married, bought a house, things start to get tough. They are dealing with aggressive bankers who poach them, offering them lots more money than they are earning and the promise of more. They are putting up with the bad behaviour anyway so they
think they may as well go and earn more” (Gill and Sher, 2012).

Effective self-regulation requires the use of specific behaviour to support process and procedure. For example, the ability for individuals and groups to reflect on the situation, on their actions and decisions and on a number of appropriate responses is important, as is the ability to ask searching and challenging questions. A leadership team that does not encourage honest conversations by challenging and questioning can descend into “Groupthink” as highlighted by Ali Gill and Mannie Sher in Annex Four of the Walker Report. Groupthink can be observed when “group members try to minimise conflict and reach consensus without critically testing, analysing and evaluating ideas” (Gill and Sher, 2009).

For self-regulation to become a cultural norm, effective individual and group behaviours require adoption from the top, modelling from leaders and managers and reinforcement through processes such as performance management, reward, recognition and promotion.

**What specific challenges do professional services firms have when driving through business change?**

Although the new Legal Services Act allows for alternative business structures to the traditional partnership network, the partnership model is still the most common within both the legal and accountancy sectors. This brings with it particular challenges when it comes to acting as one firm to engage with transformational change.

One restraining factor is the way that power and authority is divided between the centre and the regions. This arrangement is deliberately loose in order that a whole firm can not be implicated in the affairs of another region. Ali Gill says of the partnership structure, “a key driver in how firms are run is to manage risk.”

As there is little experience of being engaged around one common strategy, any type of firm-wide change can take even more time and effort than in for example a plc. Adam Gold describes it as “the pressures of partnerships. If you work in a plc it is fairly easy to understand who is in charge – you know who the executives are. In a partnership the power resides with The Club and is therefore diffused.” The collaborative style within many firms can make decision making feel like wading through treacle, with a number of interviewees suggesting that whoever makes the most money for the firm has the most power, a comment being “If they earn huge fees they can get away with murder.”

In addition, the reward and recognition structures in place in many firms emphasise the importance of billable client activity above everything else and this performance indicator is the key driver behind important business decisions, including that of promotion to partner. Firms will need to rethink strategies for their own regeneration, including alternatives to partnership for motivation and recognition and how to make the route to partner more open and inclusive.

It is often difficult to understand the selection criteria and how this is applicable and relevant to minority groups. However, in Crelos’ experience, the most powerful strategic thinking is done by diverse groups representing all aspects of the organisation, often including clients, partners and suppliers, so it is important that firms working in a changing environment requiring robust strategic plans are able to utilise all of the diverse thinking available to them.

A business change already being debated
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“Firms who decide to use regulatory change as an opportunity to compete with the Big Four will have the challenge of how to be different rather than provide a smaller carbon copy.”

by some firms is that of developing a global operating model able to service multinational organisations where ever they are located, with the same quality standards throughout. Professional services firms tend to grow through acquisition rather than organic growth. This means that the acquiring firm firstly needs skills in merger and integration. Whereas in the past the firm may have been allowed to keep existing policies and methods, the requirement now is to service clients in a similar way anywhere across the globe, which means that firms must be engaged in this global vision and willing to sign up to global standards and practices. Control will be a particular challenge for professional services firms in the future where they will be obliged to negotiate the different regulations put in place by different countries. A firm operating in India but with a head office in the UK will need to be cognisant of both Indian and UK regulation.

An M and A strategy may provide a firm with the opportunity to shift long-held beliefs and mindsets and change enduring cultural elements that might have played a part in the Global Financial Crisis. The majority of interviewees described cultural barriers that prevented change from happening. As Adam Gold describes “there is a human aversion to change” and this aversion is even more prominent in firms seeped in tradition and history. A few interviewees gave examples of when a new leader came in to a firm and acted as a catalyst for change, but the majority described a situation of, according to Meryl Bushell, “not lifting their eyes from the horizon to change.” Meryl goes on to describe how this attitude has got worse in recent times “There is short term thinking and no particular willingness to change. If anything things have got worse rather than better as money is tighter and discretionary work is thought of as a distraction.” The acquisition of new firms should bring with them new ways of doing things, fresh perspectives and more diversity in backgrounds and experiences which can be utilised and built upon. Headquarters can spend time evaluating the old and adopting new ways of doing things and best practices. Ali Gill described the process adopted within an accountancy firm where she is supporting them through a challenging global change strategy. As with any change programme, peer group pressure is an important enabler and to overcome cynicism, she has found the most effective way of operating is to identify a firm or sub-set of a firm doing something leading edge, such as shifting behaviour on how clients are serviced or developing partners as coaches and ask them to present their approach to the other regions. This creates a wave of interest, draws others in to the debate and helps to gain traction. For this approach to work, anyone doing something very different should be identified and given the opportunity to question the desired approach in order that they can explain their concerns and positively engage to move forwards. This process works effectively in a situation where the headquarters has weak formal ties with the rest of the network and little remit of control.

Firms who decide to use regulatory change as an opportunity to compete with the Big Four will have the challenge of how to be different rather than provide a smaller carbon copy. To do this it will be necessary to get very close to their target clients and use this knowledge to build innovative plans based on points of differentiation. While smaller firms may find it difficult to build the necessary global coverage to service the largest global clients, they should be able to
provide a more flexible, tailored and fleet of foot service. It will be necessary to think innovatively about how to balance client requirements with commercial reality, while not trying to beat the Big Four at the own game.

To what extent are firms equipped to deal with these challenges?

A number of interviewees described how accountancy and law firms were different in their ability to deal with change challenges. A reason given for this is the links that some accountancy firms have with a consultancy arm, particularly when this consultancy arm provides change management services. However, it was also suggested that although these firms employed internal change management expertise, it was more likely to be billed out to clients rather than used on internal projects. A number of interviewees talked about firms that are familiar with hiring consultants for other organisations but that are not so comfortable or experienced with employing external experts themselves. An example was given of a firm with 30,000 employees using no external learning and development providers, instead relying on two internal staff to deliver all of their requirements. A number of reasons were given for this, including that of placing such a high value on technical expertise that it takes a long time to trust and see the value in someone with different expertise. Charlie Keeling gives himself as an example, saying “I had to learn that it is more difficult to sell change in to a law firm than anywhere else. In most roles it takes a year to sell yourself. Here it has taken two and a half years because there is massive resistance and a belief that we don’t need to change.”

Ali Gill described how individuals are placed in to general management and leadership roles without the associated structures, skills and knowledge of what good looks like, “they have limited understanding of and place limited value on general management behaviour, preferring instead those whose ability is deal doing.” The Legal Service Act 2007 (sra.org.uk) allows Alternative Business Structures with non-lawyers in ownership, management and professional roles, but so far only a few firms have moved away from a traditional partnership structure. It will be interesting to see who else follows the suit of listed Australian firm Slater and Gordon. This move will change the power base of law firms as equity partners become incorporated in to a larger shareholder group. In addition shareholders will expect professional leadership and management practices which are starting to be seen as standard in the corporate world.

Many firms, including their people and partners, have not gone through these types of changes previously and there is therefore a case of “not knowing what you don’t know.” High intelligence and a track record of success may lead to a view of not needing help and being able to do it all themselves. As one interviewee suggested “any lawyer that I ever worked with has thought that they could do my job better than I do it, if only they had the time.” However most interviewees suggested that behavioural and cultural change expertise was lacking; “behavioural change is completely outside their area of competence.” In addition to behavioural change expertise, many firms have little change management skills and tools such as the ability to develop an accurate project plan or knowledge of how internal communications should differ within a strategic change situation than to business as usual.
Both Jon Geldart and Paul Raleigh of Grant Thornton discussed how their roles are to provide expert input in areas such as M and A, marketing and branding and to help 'co-ordinate and orchestrate' the activities of the different regions. Both felt that external change consultants could play a key role in supporting this by continually challenging to think differently. During a period of change the importance of leadership is increased. Leaders should be selected not just for what and who they know, but also for how they behave and are therefore able to lead within a complex and ambiguous environment.

Leaders should be selected not just for what and who they know, but also for how they behave and are therefore able to lead within a complex and ambiguous environment. Leaders should be selected not just for what and who they know, but also for how they behave and are therefore able to lead within a complex and ambiguous environment. The crucial elements of a leader's ability to deal with the complexity of change from both a personality and behavioural point of view are therefore missed. Elliott Jacques reinforces this point by saying "It is precisely the uncertainty inherent in human work, the feeling of never being quite sure, that makes you close your eyes and agonize over decisions...if you are given tasks of complexity beyond your capability in a role with too long a time-span you become anxious and eventually confused – there is a longer run of uncertainty and more variables than you can cope with" (Jacques, 2006). There are not many leaders at the moment who would rebuke ever having experienced the anxiety and confusion resulting from the complexity of today's business environment. A dangerous consequence of this can be to revert to the safety of the known, rather than creating a safe space to innovate and create a new future.

Success will require a concentrated effort on real teamwork and deep strategic thinking.

Conclusions

Our research hypothesis was;

- THAT changes to the regulatory landscape are driving fundamental changes to the way that professional services firms will be required to operate in the future.

Changes to the regulatory landscape within the legal sector have led to the establishment of the world's first publicly listed law firm, Slater and Gordon and it will be interesting to see if other firms follow suit. In addition, diverse players including Tesco and the Co-op have entered the market. It is still too early to see just how regulation will affect firms. The challenge will be how to move away from the driver of size as the key measure of success and instead develop credible alternatives based on other points of differentiation. Scale may be delivered by other means, including joint venture and other types of partnering. Success will require a concentrated effort on real teamwork and deep strategic thinking.

- THAT professional services firms have specific challenges when driving through business change, to do with their history, structure and culture, but their leaders and HR professionals are not sufficiently expert in change management, particularly the psychology and behavioural aspects of individual and group change, to support this effectively.

Professional services firms do have unique challenges, largely to do with their network operating model and partnership structure. Cultural and behavioural factors also come in to play. A firm's capacity to manage change effectively is varied and reliant on a number of factors including leadership style and previous change experience. Leaders should be selected not only for...
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what and who they know, but also for their ability to work in a complex and ambiguous business environment.

Some firms are being supported by both professional management and internal change expertise, but few demonstrated an ability to design and deliver against an integrated set of change management initiatives where both The What and The How are tackled.

THAT to grasp the opportunities posed by the regulatory change and be successful in a more competitive and fast-moving environment, professional services firms will need to find effective ways of utilising the diverse experience and expertise of specialists to support them through their aggressive change agendas.

Regulatory change will lead to both opportunities and threats. Those firms wanting to seize the opportunities rather than reactively protect themselves from threats should learn how to blend together cross-functional teams of experts from both internal and external sources. This requires that neither leadership teams nor change teams can be made solely of partners. Rather they must contain a mixture of people with different functional and general managerial skills who should be part of both the thinking and the deciding process.

To ask for specialist help is not a sign of weakness. It is an art to bring a diverse team of people together to work through a complex issue. At Crelos we strongly believe that the role of the consultant is to develop internal change expertise with the client, rather than build a culture of dependency. Savvy leaders will choose to work with external experts who are willing to invest in developing the internal capability within their firm.

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Crelos consult in organisational development and change. Our expert team work in partnership with clients to understand their strategic business agendas and develop solutions that achieve improved business performance.

Our consultants use the best proven and scientific research regarding how and why people react and behave as they do to design bespoke solutions that effect change. Through consultancy, facilitation, executive coaching and professional development we support executive leaders and their teams to solve their most complex business issues.

If you would like to learn more about Crelos and our approach to organisational change please contact Alison Gill on +44 (0)7770 668776, or via email at Alison.Gill@crelos.com.