

Editorial News

Chair in Corporate Governance

The Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators (ICSA) has announced its joint sponsorship of a new Chair in Corporate Governance at Bournemouth University. This is the first position of its kind in the UK.

The considerable interest in corporate governance issues in recent years will be the major research focus for the new professor. This will include intensive research into the implementation of the Cadbury and Greenbury reports; business ethics; stakeholder theories; corporate democracy and accountability to shareholders; and the increasing level of statutory duties to which officers and directors are subject.

As well as examining the impact of corporate governance on commercial organisations, the new appointee will be responsible for looking at the ways it also impinges on local and national government and 'not for profit' institutions.

VAT and Business

The Chairman of HM Customs and Excise, Valerie Strachan, believes that Customs and Excise has a frontline role in making VAT simpler for business. Speaking at the British Chambers of Commerce national conference she said:

"Our extensive programme has already produced hundreds of changes – large and small – all focussed on making business compliance more straightforward and less costly, and so helping competitiveness."

She highlighted the wide range of measures taken so far and their effect: from savings of £20m for the UK construction industry through streamlining legislation, to special partnerships with businesses competing from contracts in countries where new tax systems were being introduced.

The Chairman emphasised the scale of the Department's progress which involved:

- closer working with the Inland Revenue and Contributions Agency on over 40 projects;
- a radical restructure of internal processes into single systems – LEGIS;
- more reliance on audit checks at traders premises; and
- more advance information through business systems to help enforcement.

Conferences

Three major conferences are to be held this autumn which may be of interest to readers.

Financial Regulation '96

This conference is to be held on two separately bookable days at Cavendish Square Conference

Centre, London, W1. On 23 September the subject will be "Bank of England Regulated Companies" and on 24 September it will be "SIB Regulated Companies".

According to the organisers highlights include:

- critical appraisal of the relevance of the Financial Services Act ten years on;
- regulation under Labour: how a change of government would affect your company;
- the future role of SIB and the SROs: the latest views from SIB and SFA;
- a fascinating insight in regulation at Lloyd's of London;
- cost implications of regulatory decision taking on your profitability;
- analysing the complications in supervising conglomerates and multi product financial firms;
- aligning the regulatory process with constantly changing financial markets;
- impact of current and proposed EC directives on UK financial regulation;
- regulatory and compliance issues posed by the EMU;
- reforming the UK regulatory model: lessons from US and European regulatory systems;
- the viability of centralising all financial regulation;
- regulating the constantly changing range of financial retail products and services.

For further information contact: ICM Marketing Ltd, 5 Cavendish Square, London W1M 0BX; tel 0171 436 5735.

Successful Management of In-house Services

This conference is being held on 29-30 October at St James Court Hotel, London and is to be followed by a one day interactive workshop on "Practical Implementation of a Quality Improvement Plan for the In-house Legal Function" on 31 October.

The conference addresses the key concerns of legal departments – how to:

- create standards to measure, manage and improve in-house legal performance;
- develop guidelines for the efficient and cost effective use of in-house time and effort;
- re-engineer the legal department to service your organisation's wider strategic goals;
- optimise departmental performance through controlling and minimising legal costs;
- utilise effective management techniques to better organise the corporate law department;
- discover the benefits of benchmarking your legal department;
- improve management and negotiations of mergers and acquisitions

For further information contact: AIC Conference Ltd, 2nd Floor, 100 Hatton Garden, London EC1N 9NX, tel 0171 242 2324.

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Current Legal Issues in International Commercial Litigation

The Faculty of Law, National University of Singapore is organising the 8th Singapore Conference on International Business Law from 30 October to 1 November.

The organisers states that eminent judges, practitioners and academics from all over the world are delivering papers on important topical legal issues such as "International Jurisdiction and Forum Shopping" (Dr Lawrence Collins), "Choice of Law Issues in International Arbitration" (Professor Michael Pryles, "Jurisdiction over Foreign Corporations" (Mr Toh Kian Sing), "Problems in the Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards" (Professor Albert Jan van den Berg) and "Role of Public Policy, Overt and Camouflages, in International Litigation and Arbitration" (Mr Yeo Tiong Min).

According to the organisers "it is not uncommon to find that a contract made between parties residing in two different countries includes a clause providing for arbitration in yet a third country, or selecting a court in a neutral country as the forum for dispute resolution" and the object of the conference is to "cover the major issues arising in situations of this type".

For further information contact the conference secretariat:

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