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DLA Piper Targets Key Global Clients in Move to Update Practice Integration

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DLA Piper is ramping up its integration efforts with a major push to increase work from its top global clients.

The international heavyweight has started updating its list of key clients globally in recent weeks and is also in the process of reviewing the partners assigned to them. In addition, the firm is pushing to increase integration across its practice areas on a firmwide basis.

The firm's global client target list is understood to include around 30 key companies. The firm refused to name clients but key clients of the firm include Royal Bank of Scotland, Barclays, Cathay Pacific and Cisco.

The issue, including measures such as assigning global relationship partners who deal with matters such as global fee arrangements, and conflicts, was discussed at DLA Piper's partnership conference in Barcelona last month.

In addition, the firm is fine-tuning how its practice groups are managed around the world with sector heads in Europe, the Middle East and Africa and the U.S. expected to work more closely together on matters such as client pitches.

DLA Piper's strategic projects director, Steven De Keyser, was initially tasked with formalizing a target list of top global clients at the beginning of last year in a bid to bring more focus on clients' international needs.

However, the project has now progressed to a further stage of development. The firm has already moved to categorize clients as local, regional or growth clients -- those developing rapidly in either certain industries or geographies.

Chief executive Nigel Knowles said: "Global clients are getting what we are offering more than ever before. We have been picking up more clients in areas such as the Middle East who have requirements around the world. However, this is about servicing clients' needs, whether global, local or regional, and there is no hierarchical order."

De Keyser said: "We are continuing to streamline efforts in our global approach towards the firm matching our capabilities with clients' needs. We are continuously updating our global client list and fine-tuning our sectors."

The client efforts come after the firm last month decided not to go ahead with financial integration across its U.S. and international operations, which have remained separate following the tripartite merger with Piper Rudnick and Gray Cary Ware & Freidenrich at the beginning of 2005.

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