

**Atsumi & Partners continues revamp**

Japanese finance firm Atsumi & Partners' one-firm crusade to exploit regulations lifting restrictions on foreign lawyers forging local partnerships with bengoshi has continued this month with the hiring of its first UK partner.

Private equity, M&A and general corporate lawyer Daniel Hounslow (pictured), who until recently was up for partner at Clifford Chance, joins A&P in early November.

Currently on vacation, Hounslow told ALB: "I am looking forward to this exciting opportunity. As an integrated partnership with the strength and depth of a highly respected Japanese practice, and experienced foreign partners and other lawyers trained in major international law firms, we will be in a unique position to serve both domestic and international clients in the Japanese market."

The hiring of Hounslow is the next step in a carefully planned recruitment strategy that began back in April 2005 with the appointment of Bonnie Dixon as the first non-Japanese partner of a Japanese law firm.

"[Hounslow] decided that this is the more logical career track for him as a partner," said Dixon. "It was always our intention to expand our foreign lawyers to include several foreign partners and eventually up to 20 or 25 foreign associates. We are moving in that direction by diversifying to include a UK partner as well as our existing New York partner."

The first of the foreign associate hires to be put on partner track at the Japanese firm was Mitsubishi Securities in-house swaps and derivatives lawyer Nicola Lawson, formerly London-based, back in January this year. And she was recently joined by US attorney John Shanahan from the Tokyo office of US firm Squire Sanders.

Dixon told ALB the firm had also secured the hire of structured finance lawyer Patrick Smith from Lovells. Smith will come on board in January after his required notice period expires.

"[Shanahan and Smith] have the potential to grow into partners of this firm, a track that we are committed to preserve for non-Japanese as well as Japanese lawyers," added Dixon. "As for practice areas, Daniel's experience in private equity and M&A rounds out my own experience in finance transactions, thus enhancing the firm's ability to handle English language documentation in various transactions. We hope that the presence of an additional foreign partner at the firm will solidify our place in the international legal community in Tokyo."

The Japanese Diet passed the regulations lifting restrictions on foreign lawyers forging local partnerships with bengoshi back in July 2003.

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