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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**SURVEYS COME EASY AT THE LEGAL SERVICES COMMISSION**

When an organisation is looking to conduct a survey, it can be a daunting task at the best of times. When it is looking to collect and act on the requirements of several thousand individuals, this adds additional complexity. And when this needs to be done both online and offline with all of the results collated electronically, then you would expect to have to coordinate multiple suppliers which could have you pulling your hair out.

At least that's what the Legal Services Commission imagined when they instigated a nationwide census with the Bar Council of 15,000 barristers towards the end of 2007. Their aim in doing so was to get a clearer picture of what the profession looked like in order to ensure a robust Impact Assessment was conducted as part of the legal aid reforms. To encourage as large a response as possible, they rightly felt it was important to conduct the survey both on and offline, using both a printed questionnaire and a web based electronic form.

What they didn't expect was being able to find a company which could provide a full service offering which covered all their requirements. However, in Preview, the Legal Services Commission found a company which could demonstrate considerable experience with both online and offline data and one which was able to offer a service which covered all of the key elements needed to create, run and evaluate a full survey across a diverse profession. .

The first stage involved designing and creating the survey form itself. This was done in conjunction with the Legal Services Commission to create both an 8 page printed questionnaire and an online survey. For the printed form, the layout was planned and the printing organised in preparation for the direct mailing out to the members. The layout was designed in such a way that the returned forms could be immediately scanned and the information they contained recorded to then be collated with the results gathered online. The web page containing the electronic survey was also created to make it as easy to complete as possible and was then hosted behind the Bar Council's own website.

As soon as the questionnaires were sent out and the Bar membership was informed about the online survey form, there was a constant flow of responses back. As they arrived, the forms were scanned and indexed, and both the response and any additional comments recorded for each of the questions. All of this information could then be pooled with the results from the online survey and stored in the database ready for processing.

The response rates to both formats were good and a large amount of information was recorded from the membership eager to contribute their views. Once the majority of the responses had been received, Preview was able to pull together both summary results and a more detailed review of the comments and responses to individual questions. All of this information was collated and the raw data was sent to the Legal Services Commission in electronic form for analysis.

No matter what field you work in, having a clear understanding of what your customers want is key and, as the Legal Services Commission discovered, customer surveys and market research are excellent ways of achieving that. Nevertheless, gathering the information from multiple on- and offline sources and then coordinating and collating the results, is no easy task. Fortunately, with the full service offering from Preview taking care of these issues, the Legal Services Commission was able to concentrate on using the information they had gathered rather than worrying about how to collect it.

#### **About Preview Services**

Preview Services Limited ([www.previewservices.com](http://www.previewservices.com)) is a specialist provider of outsourced document management services to businesses and public organisations of all sizes. Clients include major sales and leasing companies, airlines, engineering firms and government agencies.

Based in Feltham, Middlesex the Company operates one of the UK's leading document scanning bureaux and is developing innovative and cost saving solutions for document management.

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