

In a bad financial year, we're trying to be an **exception** to the rule



To counteract all the financial doom and gloom that's getting us all down, we'd like to lighten

the mood a little. No one can say that the past year hasn't been challenging, but we hope you'll be pleased to know that there is some good news amongst the bad.

Our service to our clients has remained exemplary and we've found some very creative ways of helping them stay ahead of the curve. We've also been lucky enough to welcome two new members of staff to the team.

Adam Carolan is our new Private Client Manager. A graduate of Durham University with a degree in Business Finance, he's bringing valuable experience of the financial services industry to the Chartered Financial Planning team and is also working towards chartered status himself. Lisa Codling, our Business Development Co-ordinator, has fast made herself invaluable, working closely with our professional connections, and her role is integral to the continuity of our business.

Over the past year we've been privileged enough to work with some of the North West's top professionals, including solicitors, accountants and sports agents.

As an exclusive, bespoke business, the majority of our new clients come through referrals and personal introductions, so we're extremely grateful for the trust our clients put in us (although it's fair to say we work very hard to earn it!)

The last bit of good news is that we've had some excellent feedback on Xentum eXtra, launched earlier this year. We're delighted it's proving useful and, although this is our last issue of 2008, we'll be back in the New Year. We hope you have a great Christmas.

Dominic Baldwin
Managing Director

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The outlook

The collapse of the world's banking system appears to have been averted, with taxpayers and central banks combining to inject capital into the banks' balance sheets. However, these moves will not avert a global recession, as the lack of credit will cause a sharp contraction in levels of economic activity.

Consumers in the UK and USA are looking to reduce their own expenditure, partly induced by fears of rising unemployment, but also caused by the sharp falls in values across property markets. However, contrary to fears that we are about to replicate the 1930s, measures have been put in place to ensure that markets ▶

Financial planning.
And a bit
eXtra





► and economies will recover within the next two years. Interest rates around the world continue to be lowered and are more than likely to hit historic lows, with the UK leading the way with the recent 1.5% cut. This will clearly be beneficial for bond markets. Reductions in the cost of borrowing do not have

an immediate effect but, with equity markets moving in anticipation of an economic recovery, we should see much stronger returns for investors in the second half of 2009.

Peter Botham, Chief Investment Officer, Brown Shipley

The Professional

Big Bang *Ian Muirhead, Managing Director, SIFA (Solicitors Independent Financial Advice)*

The new Legal Services Act is set to reform the way legal services in England and Wales are regulated by putting the consumer at the heart of the regulatory framework.

The Legal Services Act is causing shock waves throughout the legal profession. A recent survey* found that 58% of solicitors think that High Street law firms will be "drastically" affected by the reforms and 60% anticipated that High Street law firms would be a "rarity" by 2015.

The scene is therefore set for a new era in the provision of professional services which will break down the traditional boundaries between professions such as solicitors and accountants. Basic legal services will be commoditised by

large commercial concerns and we'll increasingly see advisory services being provided by multi-disciplinary professional groupings focused on individual client's needs.

Legal Disciplinary Practices, consisting of different types of lawyers and up to 25% non-lawyers, will be permitted as from 1 March 2009, with other combinations of professionals permitted by 2011/12. Firms are already jockeying for position, with strategic alliances being created between solicitors and accountants, in particular.

Thankfully, these momentous developments coincide with the emergence of professional financial advisers, with advanced qualifications, a service-orientated ethic and fee based remuneration. These advisers are now taking their place on the

professional stage to complete the package of services required by professional clients in the 21st century.

Ian is a guest speaker at our first Private Client Discussion Group in conjunction with Pro-Manchester on Tuesday 25th November, where he'll be discussing the Legal Services Act in more detail.

For more information on this and other events, please check our website at www.xentum.co.uk

*Survey carried about by Intendance

EXclusivity – on demand

Back by popular demand are our highly exclusive and rather exQuisite Xentum aprons. If you'd like one, please email your name and address to

lisa.codling@xentum.co.uk today, before we run out. Why aprons? Well, you could say that when it comes to finance, we know our onions.