



Asia-Pacific Law Firm Brand Index 2022



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Regional Law Firm Brand Indexes 2022

How critical is it to the success of a law firm's brand to foster deep trust with clients and seek to maintain high-quality relationships? The global pandemic certainly taught the legal industry the importance of having a strong and clearly defined brand when it comes to attracting clients and gaining their trust.

During the pandemic, many clients sought out their most trusted legal advisors to help them chart a course through the uncertainty; and as such, crucial components of strong relationships — such as firm favorability and brand awareness in the minds of clients — were key factors.

All of this is underscored in the newly published *Regional Law Firm Brand Indexes 2022* from Thomson Reuters, which clearly demonstrates that those law firms that were among the most favored by clients saw the most growth in this year's Indexes. The new Regional Indexes cover the legal markets in five separate countries or regions — the United States, the United Kingdom, Mainland Europe, Canada, and the Asia-Pacific region. In this report, we'll be taking a closer look at the Asia-Pacific Law Firm Brand Index 2022. If you are interested in gaining a holistic view of all five legal markets, please download your copy of the [Regional Law Firm Brand Indexes 2022](#) report on the [Thomson Reuters Institute](#) website.

Considerations

All interviews were undertaken in strict accordance with the rules governing best practice in research. No law firm or other third party had any involvement in selecting sample, analyzing, or influencing responses or the Indexes rankings.

The sample is random across each individual country or region with all major industries and sections represented consistently allowing for reliable benchmarking. The sample of respondents that come from outside of each featured country or region are comprised of senior legal buyers who sit outside the featured country or region, including Canada, Latin America, U.K., Europe, U.S., the Middle East, Africa, and the Asia-Pacific region.

The Indexes are not a reflection of technical competence alone — they are a reflection of which firms are upper-most in clients' minds, to which firms clients are most attracted, and to which they are most likely to give their work. How the rankings in each Index change over time shows which firms are doing a better job of making and maintaining a meaningful relevant impression with clients through experience, relationship development, and taking an approach to the market that really aligns with clients' goals and needs.

To learn more about each Regional Law Firm Brand Index or to gain access to global legal market data to improve firm performance and sharpen your competitive edge, please contact strategic_insights@thomsonreuters.com.

Asia-Pacific Brand Index 2022

One of the big strategic challenges driving legal demand in the Asia-Pacific region is the changing complex regulatory environment in which global clients are operating — which, of course, is further complicated by the continued fall-out from the pandemic.

Asia-Pacific-based general counsel are looking for strategic partners who can help identify and manage these challenges across boundaries. As a result, we are anticipating that legal spend in the areas of regulatory work, litigation, and employment will all increase. Indeed, the portion of clients suggesting that they are actively increasing external spend has increased more than 50% in the last 12 months and is at its highest level in the last three years.

That means those Asia-Pacific law firms that were seen as able to connect the dots for clients internationally saw a big boost in this year's index. As our survey shows, the number of clients in the Asia-Pacific region looking to allocate more of their budget to cross-border work and seeking access to key markets across the region has almost doubled in the last 12 months.

Of course, with this increased spend comes a shift in what clients are seeking from their outside counsel. For example, as we move out of the pandemic, we are seeing that the importance of a law firm's professionalism, proven track record, reputation, and trustworthiness have all declined after having gained quite a bit of currency through the pandemic as clients gravitated to the firms that they felt provided them with a sense of comfort and safety in a time of massive uncertainty.

In their place, other attributes have risen in importance as to how clients view a law firm's brand. For example, we have seen technical specialty grow in significance as clients want to know that their firms are on top of all the latest developments and are the definitive experts in their field. The other significant shift is the increasing significance of both global coverage and local market knowledge. With markets opening up around the world and international legal spend anticipated to grow, international clients are looking for outside law firms that can offer a coordinated cross-border experience while combining it with local market strength.

What the Index showed

There was a slight reshuffle at the top of the 2022 Asia-Pacific Brand Index as Baker McKenzie regained the top position after delivering on the need for both global and local legal support. Clients noted that they favor the firm on the basis of its global platform and local market knowledge, and this has translated into incredibly strong levels of consideration for cross-border work. The firm received three times the number of points for cross-border deal consideration than the next closest firm, and twice the number of points than the next closest firm for multi-jurisdictional litigation. The ability to deliver that pan-regional promise of a connected global experience with deep local knowledge has put the firm at the top of the Index again this year.

The two other firms in the Top 3 of the Index — King & Wood Mallesons and Herbert Smith Freehills, ranked second and third, respectively — both had very strong showings. King & Wood Mallesons' premium proposition to the Australian and Chinese markets has cemented the firm towards the top of the rankings once again. Always a strong performer in the Index, the firm continues to combine quality and service focus to help guide clients moving forward. King & Wood Mallesons generated the highest levels of brand favorability and also was used more by clients for high-value work than any other firm in this year's Index.

Similarly, Herbert Smith Freehills' strengths have come from its ability to combine quality, specialist knowledge, and a real commercial focus. The firm's understanding of clients' sectors and strategic goals has been a big point of differentiation for the firm across the region.

Rounding out the Top 5 in the Index, Chinese law firm heavyweights JunHe and Zhong Lun were ranked in fourth and fifth place, respectively, and both firms were cited by clients for their impeccable service.

The biggest mover of this year's Index was Clifford Chance, which climbed 11 positions to reach the seventh-place ranking. Over the past year, Clifford Chance had positioned itself in the sweet spot of having a reputation for incredible technical specialty along with first-class service and a coordinated, consistent global promise.

Asia-Pacific Law Firm Brand Index 2022

TOP 5

1 **Baker
McKenzie.**

Change in Rank*: ↑ 1
Brand Index Score: 100

2 **KING&WOOD
MALLESONS**
金杜律师事务所

Change in Rank*: ↓ 1
Brand Index Score: 92

3  **HERBERT
SMITH
FREEHILLS**

Change in Rank*: - 0
Brand Index Score: 49

4  **JUNHE | 君合律师事务所**

Change in Rank*: ↑ 3
Brand Index Score: 45

=5 **NISHIMURA
& ASAHI**

Change in Rank*: ↑ 5
Brand Index Score: 36

=5  **中倫**
ZHONG LUN

Change in Rank*: ↓ 1
Brand Index Score: 36

Ranking 7-20

Rank	Change in Rank*	Law Firm	Index Score
=7	↑ 11	Clifford Chance	33
=7	↓ 2	Dentons	33
9	↑ 8	Nagashima Ohno	32
=10	↑ 4	Fangda Partners	29
=10	↓ 1	Mori Hamada	29
12	↓ 6	Kim & Chang	27
13	↑ 1	Norton Rose Fulbright	25
14	↑ 10	Anderson Mori	24
15	↑ 4	DLA Piper	22
16	↑ 18	AllBright Law Offices	20
=17	↓ 9	Allen & Overy	19
=17	↓ 3	Ashurst	19
=17	↓ 7	Linklaters	19
20	↓ 8	White & Case	18

* Change from 2020 Brand Index.

Source: Thomson Reuters 2022

Methodology for the Asia-Pacific Index

The Thomson Reuters Regional Law Firm Brand Indexes are all based on data compiled from Sharplegal in 2021. Sharplegal is a comprehensive market research study of the global legal market across 55 countries with more than 2,000 senior in-house counsel who have responsibility for buying legal services in organizations with revenues of USD \$50 million or more.

The Asia-Pacific Law Firm Brand Index is compiled of 377 interviews that were conducted with senior legal buyers in the Asia-Pacific region between January 2021 and December 2021.

The complete Sharplegal survey includes more than 50 questions about law firm brands, usage and market trends. Seven questions were used to generate the Asia-Pacific Law Firm Brand Index:

1. Top of mind awareness
2. Favorability
3. Consideration for top-level litigation
4. Consideration for major M&A work
5. Consideration for multi-jurisdictional litigation work
6. Consideration for multi-jurisdictional deals
7. Most used for high-value work

This Index also takes into account the views of an additional 265 non-Asia-Pacific-based senior legal buyers who were asked which firms they used for their Asia-Pacific-based legal needs.

Law firms receive points per mention in each of these categories and are assigned a total points score. The firm with the most points sets the index at 100, and all other scores are calculated off of this.

Conclusion

Last year, as more client businesses emerged from the pandemic crisis, legal demand became more focused on forward-facing factors like how well law firms understood their clients' business and market sector. Now, as we move through 2022 and beyond, we continue to see clients all around the world prioritizing this kind of specialist expertise.

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