

## 30 people to watch in the business of law in Asia in 2016

In 2015, the Asia-Pacific legal markets saw a deepening of competition among a larger number and form of legal services provider. From [global law firms utilizing mergers](#) to international law firms seeking to [emulate market gains by NewLaw firms](#) – to the increasing [ascendance of legal startups](#) and [online legal services providers](#) – to the efforts by [small law firms to compete in liberalized and changing legal markets](#) – 2015 saw much innovation and competition in Asia’s legal markets. 2016 will see the Asia-Pacific legal market [continue to grow](#) in size as both local markets and the needs of clients expand.



The 2016 installment of 30 people to watch in the business law in the Asia builds upon [last year's list](#) and tries, along with the help of our readers, to identify some of the key people in the region who will be integral to the growth and change we'll see this year and in the years to come. If there's anyone you think we've missed, please add them in the comments section below. In the meantime, here's the 2016 list of 30 people to watch in the business of law

in Asia:

1. [Cherilyn Tan](#), Founder, [Asia Law Network](#), Singapore — As the [Straits Times outlined recently](#), “the tech enthusiast founded Asia’s first legal interactive database last August”, which helps clients “get an objective assessment and price quotation.” Since it’s founding, as [Straits Times details](#): “more than 2,800 lawyers have registered with [AsiaLawNetwork.com \(ALN\)](#), including around 1,000 lawyers based in Singapore.”
2. [Claire Mitsuru Chino](#), Executive Officer, General Counsel, [Itochu Corporation](#), Tokyo– As the [Asia Society recently detailed](#): “In 2013, Chino...achieved a milestone when she was named executive officer and general manager of the Legal Division at Itochu Corporation, making her the youngest and the first female executive officer of any major Japanese trading company.”

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3. [Anita Bennett](#), Director, People Development & Communications at leading Asia-Pacific NewLaw firm [AdventBalance Lawyers](#), Sydney – Bennett was named the [Marketing Communications Professional of the Year](#) at the fourth annual Lawyers Weekly Women in Law Awards event in Melbourne in November, 2015.
4. [Marcus van Geysel](#), Partner, [Peter Ling & van Geysel](#), Kuala Lumpur – van Geysel is the founder of influential Malaysian law blog [Loyar Burok](#) and in 2015 co-founded [The Malaysian Lawyer](#). As one nominee noted, “He can make the business of law fun both for those who practice it and to those who seek justice from it”.
5. [Lee Shih](#), Partner, Dispute Resolution Division, [SKRINE](#), Kuala Lumpur – in 2015 Shih joined with Marcus van Geysel to found [The Malaysian Lawyer](#). As one nominee told us, Shih has a “long track record of being passionate about sharing knowledge on legal developments and issues affecting the profession.”
6. [Amy Burton-Bradley](#), Partner, [Julian Midwinter & Associates](#), Sydney — In 2015, Burton-Bradley co-authored the [2015 ALPMA/JMA Winning Work in a Digital World](#) report which detailed that law firms “are still grappling with the same big external and internal challenges”: competition for clients in a mature and saturated market; firm differentiation; finding new sources of work; and keeping up with online, digital, and social media.
7. [Jayaprakash Jagateesan](#), Chief Executive Officer of [RHT Holdings](#) — In 2015, [RHTLaw Taylor Wessing](#) announced plans to publicly list RHT Holdings, offering a suite of professional services on the Catalist Board of the Singapore Exchange (SGX) in the first quarter of 2016, according to a [report at the time in Channel News Asia](#). This planned listing is the second of its kind in multi-disciplinary services in Asia. According to the same report, “Malaysia’s ZICO raised about S\$14 million through listing its professional services company, ZICO Holdings” (also on the Catalist Board).” Jagateesan, as CEO, is responsible for helping the firm navigate through the increasingly more competitive Singapore and greater Asia legal market with this listed, blended services offer.
8. [Anuj Agrawal](#), Associate Editor, [Bar & Bench](#), Bangalore – Agrawal is part of the team constituting one of India’s prominent digital news magazines, where he covers subjects ranging from [law school](#) to legal market liberalization.
9. [Pallavi Saluja](#), Editor, [Bar & Bench](#), Bangalore – Saluja [told Donnie Ashok of SuperLawyer.in](#) in 2014 that: “Legal journalism specifically in reference to websites in India is still in a nascent stage. I think the business of running a legal news portal is going to grow significantly as the market becomes more sophisticated. In fact, I think legal journalism is one of the tools for the market to become more sophisticated.”
10. [Anna Zhang](#), [The Asian Lawyer](#), Hong Kong – With experience gained with Asia IP, Shanghai Business Review and Forbes, Zhang covers all-things BigLaw related in Asia.
11. [Philip Jeyaretnam](#), Senior Counsel & Managing Partner, [Rodyk & Davidson LLP](#), Singapore — Rodyk merged with Dentons in 2015. Reacting to the merger, Anna Zhang [posed the following](#)

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- question in the [Asian Lawyer](#): “Will joining the world’s largest law firm help revive Singapore’s oldest law firm?”
12. [Giuliana Auinger](#), Regional Practice Manager, [Axiom](#), Hong Kong — Auinger plays a significant leadership role in Hong Kong, [helping the world’s largest NewLaw firm grow, and transform the way that legal services are bought and delivered in the region](#). As her LinkedIn profile details: “[Axiom] comprises 1,300 lawyers, process engineers and technologists who serve over half of the Fortune/FTSE 100 across 16 offices and 5 centers of excellence across 3 continents.”
  13. [Shaun Star](#), Co-Founder and Chair at [Australia India Youth Dialogue](#), New Delhi – A lawyer with his own practice, Shaun is also editor of the book: “[Australia and India: A Comparative Overview of the Law and Legal Practice](#)”, which compares the Indian and Australian legal systems. “With forewords from the chief justices of India and Australia, the book comprises contributions written by eminent judges, barristers, lawyers and academics from both nations.”
  14. [Prachi Shrivastava](#), Journalist, [Legally India](#), Mumbai – As Shrivastava’s LinkedIn profile outlines, she’s “a lawyer-turned-journalist. After having interned at more than 10 top Indian law firms, international organisations, legal publications and advocate chambers during my five year LLB course at Amity Delhi, I graduated and joined Legally India as a journalist.”
  15. [Lachlan McKnight](#), CEO, [LegalVision](#), Sydney — In 2012 McKnight launched LegalVision, Australia’s fastest growing tech-driven law firm. In 2015, he [told Australasian Law Practice Management Association \(ALPMA\)](#) that LegalVision was generating 20 new customer leads per day from their inbound content marketing strategy.
  16. [Stephen Kitts](#), Managing Partner – Asia, Corporate M&A Partner, [Eversheds LLP](#), Hong Kong –In addition to leading Eversheds traditional legal services offer in Asia, Kitts also heads up [Eversheds Agile](#), the firm’s NewLaw-style “flexible working, on-demand” service. More traditional law firms in recent years have been [establishing divisions emulating NewLaw](#). Evershed’s efforts in this niche will be instructive as to what other traditional firms may be able to do in this space.
  17. [Tan Mei Chel](#), Founder, [Office Parrots](#), Kuala Lumpur – A former tax & corporate lawyer and regional counsel at a venture capital fund, Tan Mei Chel [founded Office Parrots](#), a career website focused on helping professionals get a better insight into prospective employers in Malaysia and Singapore, and for employers to connect and match with qualified and interested candidates. The firm currently covers legal, accounting and finance related roles and industries. An integral component of Office Parrot’s success has been achieved with the help of their [social media presence, including their blog](#).
  18. [Harriet Warlow-Shill](#), Managing Partner and Co-Founder of [KWS Legal](#), Melbourne – In August of 2015, Warlow-Shill made a presentation at the [3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Managing Partners Forum in Australia](#), outlining the firm’s approach to harnessing technology to boost efficiency and offer

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staff greater flexibility. Warlow-Shill is a leader among small law firm managing partners in the region navigating their firms effectively into the future.

19. [John W.H. Denton](#), CEO, [Corrs Chambers Westgarth](#), Sydney — As head of one of Australia's premier law firms, Denton leads [the firm's strategy](#) of not maintaining a physical presence in the rest of Asia – while instead focusing on foreign direct investment from Asia into Australia. This strategy is employed by firms primarily as a means to secure work around [Asia's growing foreign investment](#) while not being exposed to some of Asia's domestic regulatory and competitive pressures. This strategy is distinct from those of mergers and acquisitions in the region being pursued by some of the global and international firms.
20. [Damien Andreasen](#), Co-Founder at [LawPath](#), Sydney – As [Angus Kidman outlined in a 2013 profile](#) in Australia's [Lifehacker](#), "LawPath is Australia's largest and fastest growing legal platform...connect[ing] people and businesses that are in need of legal assistance to the right lawyer who specialise in their area of need." As [Business Insider Australia reported](#) in October, LawPath "raised \$1.3 million in funding from investors including Macdoch Ventures and Adcock Group."
21. [Ranajit Dam](#), Managing Editor, [Asian Legal Business](#), Singapore – Asian Legal Business covers the business of law across the whole of the Asia-Pacific Region, while at the same time sponsoring events and hosting an employment section within their website. Ranajit Dam's coverage is must reading for anyone interested in the business of law in the Asia-Pacific region.
22. [Misa Han](#), Reporter, [Australian Financial Review](#), Sydney — Misa Han writes on news and business topics and has [authored a number of insightful works](#) focused on the legal profession and the business of law in the region – including stories about [in-house salary trends](#) and the [prospects for lawyers after adoption of the Trans-Pacific Partnership \(TPP\)](#).
23. [Lorraine Siew](#), [KL Legal Hackers](#), Kuala Lumpur – Lorraine Siew heads up the [Kuala Lumpur branch](#) of [Legal Hackers](#), "a global movement of lawyers, policymakers, technologists, and academics who explore and develop creative solutions to some of the most pressing issues at the intersection of law and technology. Through local meetups, hackathons, and workshops, Legal Hackers spot issues and opportunities where technology can improve and inform the practice of law and where law, legal practice, and policy can adapt to rapidly changing technology."
24. [Julia Charlton](#), Partner, [Charltons Law](#), Hong Kong — "A Hong Kong corporate legal adviser with offices in Beijing and Shanghai, China, Charltons [advises] on Hong Kong law and on international corporate finance transactions. Charltons is one of the few Hong Kong law firms with a law office in Yangon, Myanmar." The firm maintains a [superb blog](#) focused on the Myanmar legal and business market.
25. [Suet-Fern Lee](#), Partner, [Morgan Lewis](#), Singapore – In early 2015, "global law firm Morgan Lewis and Singapore's Stamford Law Corporation...[announced](#) they [were] joining forces to create the only fully integrated firm in Singapore that can practice across all legal service areas." This

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merger is an example of a foreign and local law firm tie-up business strategy in a competitive local legal market.

26. [Y.M. Elaine Lo](#), Senior Partner and Asia chair of [Mayer Brown JSM](#), Hong Kong – Y.M. Elaine Lo was “recipient of the managing partner of the year award at the [Macallan ALB Hong Kong law awards](#) in September”. In 2014, [Mayer Brown launched](#) a trade consulting arm. More recently, the firm [established an alliance with China’s Jingtian & Gongcheng](#). Lo told Asian Legal Business in an [extensive interview](#) in December that: ‘We need to be constantly ahead of our clients’
27. [David Doran](#), Chairman and a Founding Partner of [DFDL](#), Bangkok – The ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) has [just come into being](#) and Doran, as head of the pan-ASEAN region firm, is ideally placed to help it capitalize upon the region’s prospective [growth and legal convergence](#). The Financial Times named DFDL the [Most Innovative ASEAN Law Firm of 2015](#).
28. [Tom Brennan](#) – The Asian Lawyer, Hong Kong – Tom Brennan is essential reading for anyone interested in the business of law in the Asia-Pacific Region. His most recent article was an extensive report on the top 100 law firms in Asia – [where he noted](#): “Chinese law firms continued their remarkable growth spree to capture nearly all the top slots in our rankings.”
29. [Chiann Bao](#), Secretary General of the [Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre \(HKIAC\)](#), Hong Kong — As one of our readers outlined: “Under her stewardship [the HKIAC has] made great strides in putting Hong Kong firmly on the map in the world of Arbitration in 2015. Under Chiann, the HKIAC was recognised [in] the Queen Mary University of London International Arbitration Survey, which showcases the Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre (HKIAC) as being the most preferred arbitral institution outside of Europe and ranks it the third best arbitral institution worldwide. The survey, which was released at the annual conference of the International Bar Association in Vienna [in October, 2015], also found HKIAC to be the world’s most improved institution over the past five years. [Participants said](#) their choice of institution was based on an assessment of the quality of its administration, neutrality and level of “internationalism”. In 2015, the HKIAC also [launched the Arbitration Evaluation System](#) allowing users to evaluate the conduct of their arbitral proceedings and the performance of their arbitrators. Furthermore, [GARranked HKIAC](#) as the best for location, value for money, helpfulness of staff and IT services.
30. [Nguyen Ha Quyen Hoang](#), Managing Partner, [LNT Partners](#), Ho Chi Minh City – In 2015 LNT Partners spearheaded an effort to [facilitate foreign investment into Vietnam’s state-owned enterprises \(SOE’s\)](#). The firm also launched [Vietnam Law Insight](#), a blog dedicated to law and business in Vietnam, one of the fastest growing economies in the Asia-Pacific region.

**By [@JohnGrimley](#), Editor & Publisher, Asia Law Portal**

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## 2 thoughts on “30 people to watch in the business of law in Asia in 2016”



Shane Weir

January 6, 2016 at 6:18 pm

Chris Devonshire-Ellis of Dezan Shira & Associates deserves a mention, if only because he wrote so far the only business Guide to China’s New Silk Road, and included commentary on the Maritime Routes of South-East Asia in it. It’s a great read and I can recommend it. So he’s another one deserving of accolades.



**John Grimley** Post author

January 6, 2016 at 8:52 pm

thanks for your comment Shane. Chris was listed first in the 2015 list and the 2016 list is a continuation from 2015. As we noted in the announcement seeking nominations for this year’s list (<http://asialawportal.com/2015/11/01/nominations-open-for-who-to-follow-in-the-business-of-law-in-asia-in-2016/>), those listed in 2015 are considered part of a whole, hence we’ve included a link to the first installment within this post. Thanks again, John

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