

# Global know-how: From design to delivery

Louise Fernandes-Owen discusses the initiative which won the 2017 MPF Award for Provision of know-how to clients.

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**M**ayer Brown's presence in the world's leading markets enables it to offer clients access to local market knowledge combined with global reach. Central to this offering is our active commitment to delivering high-quality know-how.

Know-how comes in all shapes and sizes, and there are many different ways to keep clients up-to-date with legal developments. We at Mayer Brown have, however, long-recognised that clients with a global presence often have a specific need for know-how to help them navigate, and apply, the laws of multiple jurisdictions.

In addition, we are firmly committed to investing in, and maximising, technology in our delivery of know-how. As we all become increasingly used to accessing information via different channels, Mayer Brown's global Employment & Benefits group wanted to reflect this in its largest, most ambitious multi-jurisdictional know-how project yet, *A Global Guide to Background Checks*. Covering 50 jurisdictions across the Americas, Asia and EMEA, the Guide was launched in 2016 as an app (via the App Store for the iPad and iPhone and via Google Play for Android devices), eBook and dynamic PDF.

## The challenges

One of the many challenges for employers is understanding the risks arising from a range of workforce issues in countries where the rights of employees can vary considerably. Employers therefore require unique resources at their fingertips to assess multi-jurisdictional employment law issues and risks. Without such resources, employers face several significant challenges:

- Limited insight – without expert guidance on multi-jurisdictional risks, implementing global changes can be fraught with difficulties
- Impenetrable resources – without practical, quick-reference know-how, navigating multi-jurisdictional issues is often complex and time-consuming
- Inflexible formats – without access to mobile, flexible formats,



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the value of resources is significantly reduced, particularly where guidance is required at short notice and on the move.

## Our ambition

Background checks are a particularly topical area of employment law, where the rules and regulations vary widely across jurisdictions. Given the continuing client interest in the topic, it was a natural choice for the next publication in the Employment & Benefits group's series of global guides. It would translate well into a multi-jurisdictional resource, and would enable us to provide guidance on the challenges and issues facing our clients.

With the topic for the Guide chosen, we were keen to put technology at the very heart of the Guide. The Employment & Benefits group had already made the transition from producing only hard-copy global guides to providing electronic-based delivery, recognising this would offer efficiencies and also flexibility for clients. We decided therefore to extend our approach to the Guide, deciding to cover more jurisdictions than ever before and enhance interactivity for the benefit of our clients. Our ambition was for this Guide to stand out as an innovative know-how tool, reflecting clients' increasing desire to have mobile



access to resources. Developing the Guide across multiple platforms would also provide both flexibility and accessibility which we knew would be highly valued by our clients.

### Developing the Guide

Developing a guide on this scale, together with the supporting technology, requires significant investment of time and money. Mayer Brown recognised this from the outset and the firm’s global senior leadership was fully committed to delivering a unique value-add resource and remained actively involved at all key stages of development. This leadership commitment reflects the firm’s wider strategy and continued support for maximising technology in delivering client services, and was critical to delivering a high-quality, innovative resource.

Developing the Guide involved two key objectives:

- Harnessing global expert insight – the content was drawn from lawyers across Mayer Brown and our local counsel network. All content underwent a detailed review and editing process to ensure it reflected our brief to provide the practical, multi-jurisdictional guidance valued by clients.
- Designing a multi-platform solution – a core Mayer Brown team developed the technology with an agency, briefed to create sophisticated client-focused platforms. Our focus was to ensure the Guide delivered the following (irrespective of whether it was accessed via the app, eBook or dynamic PDF):
  - Interactive navigation: facilitating easy access to multi-jurisdictional commentary by region and country
  - Colour-coded, quick reference Traffic Lights tools: flagging key risk areas by the type of background check, region and country
  - Author links: providing immediate access to the author of each chapter and their biographies, enabling clients to request further information
  - Flexibility: providing consistent, accessible, know-how across multiple platforms

Key to the Guide’s development was our understanding of the different ways in which it may be used. For example, to address an employer’s need for a rapid, high-level overview of the key risks in a particular jurisdiction and/or region, we provided colour-coded, quick reference Traffic Lights tools. For an employer who needed to drill down into the requirements in each relevant jurisdiction, we provided a Q&A to highlight the key issues. We also ensured that there was easy navigation between the Traffic Lights and Q&As, enabling clients to switch between the different types of content, depending on their requirements.

Delivering both the content and the platforms was a large undertaking and the Guide is a great example of global collabo-

ration across Mayer Brown and beyond – over 90 people, across 50 jurisdictions, made significant contributions to its development along the way. The enthusiasm, commitment and responsiveness of every team member, from concept to delivery, were instrumental in enabling us to achieve the ambitious objectives of the Guide.

### Promotion and reaction

The promotion of the Guide was a core factor in its success. When it launched in 2016, it was promoted globally in the following ways:

- across the firm, via all available internal firmwide and office channels. We were keen to ensure that the Guide was publicised across all offices given the cross-selling opportunities. The co-ordination of the global business development team enabled us to reach all corners of the firm and select the most appropriate channel for each office.
- externally via social media as well as tailored global mailings (capturing over 9,000 clients and contacts). Our external promotion provided a direct link to the Mayer Brown website page hosting each platform of the Guide. Compared with the last employment guide, traffic to the website page for this Guide tripled.
- targeted press coverage, which included global technology and legal articles, such as *Legaltech News* (*‘Tackling Background Check Law on the Global Stage? Mayer Brown Has an App for That’*).
- via our network of local counsel, many of whom took the opportunity to promote the Guide and their collaboration with Mayer Brown.

The feedback from clients has been consistently positive:

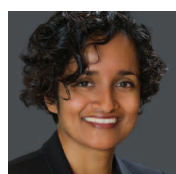
- “Comprehensive and useful... great to have it all easily accessible in one go... Traffic light feature is great!” General Counsel [Global Company]
- “Really useful, giving HR team instant access to key data on practices within different jurisdictions, support[s] the team’s mobile working.” Group HR Director [Global Company]
- “Easy to use and comprehensive... provides key information... at the click of a button.” European In-House Employment Counsel [Global Company]

We have also been approached by a third party who, having used the Guide and seen its value, would like to collaborate on the next edition.

### Next steps

Professional services firms rarely invest completely, and year-on-year, in developing technology to deliver client know-how. Mayer Brown’s approach to this project therefore sets it apart. The positive response to the Guide, from clients and beyond, has already elicited the firm’s investment in further global Employment & Benefits projects.

After achieving our ambition for this Guide, work is now underway on the next Employment & Benefits global guide as well as the next generation of the Employment & Benefits app. The innovation continues – watch this space.



Louise Fernandes-Owen is the Global PSL for the Employment & Benefits Group at Mayer Brown. Louise developed and project-managed *A Global Guide to Background Checks* from conception to rollout.