

New generation of law firms sparks life into legal services

Published 04 July 2013 00:46, Updated 04 July 2013 11:48



Legal Vision's Lachlan McKnight said legal services is the last big industry to get an internet shake up. **Photo: Christopher Pearce**

Need labour law advice at 7am on a Sunday? Ed Mallett can supply it. His firm Employsure did recently, in fact.

"A restaurant had a Sunday morning fallout with the chef," says Mallett, founder of the Sydney-based employment law consultancy.

"The chef had blown up the night before and was refusing to come into work. It was Mother's Day.

"[Without him] they didn't know how they could complete their service that day. They needed to know how to manage that."

The global economic crisis has shaken up the legal services industry and a handful of new companies, including Employsure, is tapping clients' needs – particularly small and medium-sized firms – for the provision of accessible, fixed-cost legal services.

In Australia's \$21 billion legal services industry, lawyers – just like their counterparts in engineering – have to meet the challenge of high wage costs in relation to tasks that are rapidly commodifying, unlike the higher-level services such as advice, which rely on experience and education. When traditional firms prove unable to service legal services, others will.

"People want access to quick legal services and that's what we're providing," says Lachlan McKnight, the founder of LegalVision, which provides document and legal advice services online. "They want value, they want to know how much they're going to pay."