

# Celebrating two years of partnership between O Shaped and Browne Jacobson

11 June 2024

## In conversation with Dan Kayne and Claire Stripp

In May 2022, Browne Jacobson became the first law firm to partner with O Shaped, a purpose led organisation founded by former Network Rail GC, Dan Kayne. Based on the O Shaped mindset (Open, Original, Opportunity, Ownership and Optimism), the organisation's mission is to improve the legal profession by putting people front and centre of its vision for change. In doing so, O Shaped seeks to foster deeper, more collaborative connections throughout the legal industry.

As we enter our third year of partnership with O Shaped, we take the opportunity to reflect on the journey so far – from how it began and its impact, to lessons learned and future plans.

The beginning of this partnership can be traced back to a mutual curiosity and shared vision for improving legal service delivery. Recognising the important role law firms play in shaping the legal landscape, Dan emphasises the significance of securing their support: "For O Shaped to have the impact we hoped for, it was crucial to work with law firms that were ready to embrace positive change."

Identifying a natural alignment between O Shaped and Browne Jacobson's values, Claire Stripp, Head of Talent and Knowledge at Browne Jacobson, saw an opportunity for the firm to embrace something that would support internal professional development and be a differentiator with clients.

After initial conversations at a conference, and with the backing of senior leaders at Browne Jacobson, the partnership was formed.

## Impact

Through training sessions, leadership conferences, extensive collaboration, and various client workshops, our partnership has received firm-wide engagement and is fostering a culture of openness, sharing, and learning.

Reflecting on the impact of the many interactions, Dan observes: "We've collaborated with hundreds of lawyers and business professionals at all levels within Browne Jacobson, bringing the ethos and concepts of O Shaped to life.

Embracing O Shaped principles and operating in a more transparent manner can elevate client relationships to new heights, becoming a true differentiator in a crowded market. This impact extends beyond lawyers, it applies to all roles and levels within the firm."

Our learnings have been shared with our valued contacts and partners, engaging with over 20 clients and prospective clients through O Shaped-based workshops over the past two years alone.

Emma Capper, Partner and Head of Employment at Browne Jacobson, described the sessions as being unlike any other client workshops she's attended, stating, "It's a completely unique approach. The sessions facilitate open and honest conversations with in-house legal teams about how they're operating within their organisations. The focus is on encouraging everyone to reflect on what's working well, how an in-house team can add more value and how to improve the relationship between the in-house team and the business."

Claire adds "We've gained a much better understanding of the challenges faced by our clients, which has revealed just how big the gap between clients and law firms really is. We're working hard to close this gap by focussing on forging genuine connections with our clients and leveraging these connections to understand them better."

Shared insights between in-house and private practice have also had a notable impact, Claire states “I’m definitely noticing a significant impact in terms of gaining more insights from the in-house world. This allows us at Browne Jacobson to put ourselves in the shoes of in-house lawyers and I feel we’re genuinely better equipped to understand the in-house practice.”

However, the impact isn’t limited to Browne Jacobson and our client base. The partnership has actively contributed to the entire legal profession with initiatives like trainee and apprenticeship communities and AI collaborations highlighting both businesses’ dedication to industry wide improvement.

## Key learnings

Reflecting on the past two years, several key learnings have emerged. Claire reflects on the need for continuous reinforcement of the O Shaped mindset “It’s become really evident over the past two years that O Shaped isn’t a tick box or something you can do one course for and you’re done — that’s why we’re looking to build O Shaped through everything we do at Browne Jacobson.

We’ve got to a tipping point of firm-wide implementation of the O Shaped principles over the past two years, but a key learning for me is just how important it is to make clear that this isn’t just an additional thing already busy people have to do — it’s a mindset shift that should be integrated into everything Browne Jacobson colleagues do until it becomes second nature.”

Bridging the gap between in-house and private practice demands genuine understanding and collaboration. Dan comments on this journey, stating:

“In-house legal functions really appreciate the time, energy and openness that Browne Jacobson is investing in the joint workshops. From an O Shaped perspective, it’s so rewarding to see such a collaborative approach between in-house and private practice. You can quickly see the opportunities and commitment to operate as one team, addressing both the client’s business and legal challenges together.”

## Looking towards the future

As we enter the next phase of this partnership, we are committed to working together to deepen our relationship and expand our reach.

Claire articulates her vision for the firm stating “I am advocating for Browne Jacobson to be at the heart of an O shaped ecosystem. I envision us adopting the O shaped approach with our suppliers, and for them to reciprocate, as well as with our clients and future colleagues and vice versa, so that every interaction is valuable.”

Dan adds “We want to fully embed O Shaped into the fabric of the organisations we work with, just as Claire highlighted. We are part of a people centred industry where interpersonal relationships are so important, yet so underrated and under invested in. We want to help our partners unlock their talent, create more opportunities for people to demonstrate their potential and give them the necessary skills and resources to deliver the highest quality, most user-friendly and most client focused service possible.

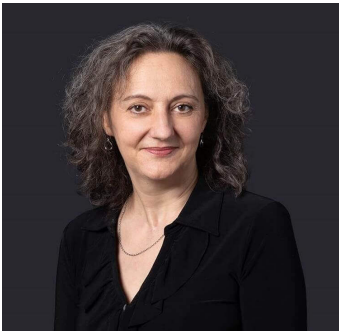
At O Shaped, we are constantly listening to in-house teams so we understand their challenges and opportunities. I know that with the support of Browne Jacobson, we can help their clients become even better at what they do. For example, we’ll soon be launching the O Shaped/Browne Jacobson training module on decision making and ethics, recognising its importance for Browne Jacobson’s clients. We see this module as a crucial step in adopting a more O shaped approach to ethical decision making, aligning closely with our commitment to meeting and exceeding client needs.”

Our partnership with O Shaped represents not just an industry first collaboration, but a shared commitment to benefiting the wider legal system. With a continued focus on building relationships, value creation and firm-wide integration, the partnership is set to redefine the legal landscape paving the way for a more transparent and well rounded industry.

## Key contact

Claire Stripp

Head of Talent and Knowledge



[claire.stripp@brownejacobson.com](mailto:claire.stripp@brownejacobson.com)

+44 (0)330 045 2134