

The income profile of law firms varied by size of practice. Regardless of size, all firms indicated that their main source of income came from the area of litigation and ADR. Their proportion of income from this source ranged from 37 per cent for large firms to 55 per cent for small firms.

Large practices dominated in corporate law, with 32 per cent of their revenue generated from this area, compared to 6 per cent for small firms and 18 per cent for medium firms. This reflects corporate clients' preference to seek out larger law practices for advice and support in various aspects of corporate law (eg merger and acquisitions, etc).

After litigation and ADR, the next major source of income for both small and medium-sized practices

was conveyancing and property law, with 26 per cent and 25 per cent respectively.

In addition, some 55 firms reported that they derived about \$25 million from cross-border transactions⁵ in year 2000. Although this amount constituted only a small proportion of total operating receipts (3.0 per cent), it is likely to expand in the future as more firms internationalise their business. The most prevalent areas were corporate law, civil and commercial litigation, and arbitration and alternative dispute resolution. The top three countries cited were Malaysia, China and Thailand.

5 Cross-border transactions refer to transactions regulated or affected by Singapore law and at least one other national law.

Automating Wholesale Prices Surveys using Lotus Notes

The Singapore Department of Statistics has been conducting the Surveys of Wholesale Prices on a monthly basis since the 1970s. These surveys comprise:

- ◆ Import Price Survey;
- ◆ Export Price Survey; and
- ◆ Singapore Manufactured Products Price Survey.

One feature of the Wholesale Prices Surveys is the use of individually customised survey forms with pre-printed information of commodity products and past prices. These customised survey forms facilitate easy completion and reduce the reporting burden of respondents. In the past, they were sent out to respondents either by post or fax.

With the increasing use of e-mail, the customised survey forms are also sent to respondents as a softcopy file attachment via e-mail. To encourage the use of e-mail, the monthly covering letters accompanying the survey forms includes information on staff's e-mail addresses.

As customised forms include specific information, e-mails with these forms have to be individually prepared, making the work repetitive and labour-intensive. With more respondents opting for e-mail surveys, it became necessary to consider the automation of this process through the use of Lotus Script.

With the automated e-mail survey process, productivity is greatly enhanced. Before the automation, it was necessary to manually check that the correct file attachment was sent to each respondent. As the automation program has built in the necessary checks and validation, this manual check is no longer required. With automation, it would take only a single "send" command to execute and complete the sending out of customised survey forms to all respondents.

The successful automation of the survey process in the sending out customised survey forms via Lotus Notes has resulted in significant productivity and efficiency gains. The Department will be considering its extension to other surveys.