

THE  
**BRITISH WILLS AND  
PROBATE AWARDS**  
**2020**

Speech by Dave Newick, MD of Arken legal

The British Wills & Probate Awards 2020

Good afternoon everyone.

I'd like to start my remarks by thanking you all for tuning in this afternoon.

First things first. I'm a proud New Zealander. If you have ever wondered how to approach the potentially awkward situation of determining whether someone is an Australian or a New Zealander, always go with New Zealander first.

If you're wrong, the Australian will take it as a compliment. If you're right, you have made a friend for life.

Once again good luck to all of the shortlisted finalists. The awards will start shortly so don't go anywhere.

It's customary as the headline sponsor to make announcements about the progress of Arken.

The last year has seen many private client firms move their systems to Arken to gain the accessibility and security of having their core systems in the cloud, rather than on servers which can't be accessed easily while working remotely.

During lockdown we have worked hard to release new products and integrations with Practice Management Systems. We have also delivered more than 300 improvements to our core Arken Professional document automation product, to assist our clients and gain even greater efficiencies.

Added to this is the development of significant digital tools to enable the sector to reach new markets, find new ways of doing business and re-establish profitability and growth.

These include Arken Acquire which is a digital fact find that prevents the need for rekeying data, and a re-release of our new and improved Online Will Service which has been very successful, as it enables new markets to be accessed and for the industry to start their digital journeys with low risk and quality outcomes.

Our most recent product – Arken Lifetime – allows practitioners to deliver the same sort of efficiencies they have using Arken Professional, to create Lifetime trust documents through providing a seamless transfer of data while creating a Will into the creation of Lifetime trusts.

We are actively hiring new staff to meet the demand for even further new products to assist the industry to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow.

If you don't partner with us as a client yet, I urge you to get in touch to consider how the Arken product suite can help support your business processes and resolve inefficiencies which are going to be critical as we confront the market ahead.

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In the speech I gave at the 2019 British Wills & Probate Awards, I laid a challenge for the industry, to consider how prepared you were for the challenges of tomorrow.

I followed that up by saying in a social post that I thought data was going to be one of the major trends affecting the industry in 2020.

Sometimes, you have to hate being right. The challenge of processing the amount of data we had thrown at us and the degree of change we have all had to manage since March was dare I say it – unprecedented.

But meet the challenges we did. From the shock and fear of the early days of Covid-19, dealing with profound changes in a very compressed time frame, to the ongoing battle to maintain productivity and profitability as the lock down stretched on, the industry came together, collaborated and found ways to adapt.

To change.

To lead and to win.

I'm not about to relive or restate the detailed challenges of the last year in this address. However, what I will say, is that we have proven without doubt that some of the finest people in the legal sector reside in private client.

We have also proven without doubt, that the British people are still, echoing those darkest days of world wars, incredibly tough and resilient. And for both of those things we should be grateful and proud.

When we look at the world historically, we see that great events like the impact Covid has had on the world, are generally followed by societal upheaval. We may be starting to see the beginning of this already. Regardless of where you sit in the political or socio-economic spectrum, regardless of the size of the practice you work within, we are likely to experience the impact of that change.

When we overlay this change with the impact of changing buying impacts as a result of the generational wealth transfer, the impact of Covid on buying behaviours and consumer spending and the accelerating digitisation of the industry which is occurring, we will be confronted with a rapidly changing environment even beyond what we have already confronted.

As I did last year, I ask you all here this afternoon, how prepared you are for these challenges.

But this year is different. We have been through a lockdown and learnt about quick but quality, decision making and how to manage rapid change effectively.

We have adopted new ways of working, which are digital rather than paper-based. We have proved that productivity is not necessarily about visibility.

We have discovered that our most valuable asset – time, can be used to enrich our lives and the lives of those around us professionally and personally in a positive and constructive way.

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We have learnt that the world can change quickly and that our freedoms and the things we take for granted can be taken away.

We have been reminded that life is precious, and time spent with loved ones is gone far too quickly.

All of these things have strengthened us.

They have equally hardened us and softened us.

They have made us focus on what is important.

On what is real.

These are attributes which will sustain us in times ahead.

However, we must be aware of the danger of waiting for change to come to us instead of stepping forward boldly and not only embracing change but seeking it out.

Driving it.

Owning it.

Making it a weapon we can use for both survival and competitive success.

We must assure our business futures by ensuring that our businesses are ready to do more with less.

Are more competitive.

Are ready to take advantage of the opportunities that will inevitably follow the turmoil.

Winston Churchill once said that 'To improve is to change. To be perfect is to change often.'

We confront many more challenges ahead. We will need to change often.

We must meet these changes with positivity and energy.

We must seek change and use it as an opportunity.

Together, we can and will win.

Thank you and good afternoon.

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