

# SUPER SERVICES

This year's annual BRW Client Choice Awards recognise innovation, specialisation and consistency in professional services across all levels and sectors. **Report: Kate Burgess**

● Efficiency, empathy, responsiveness, commerciality – these are the traits that clients of professional services firms value most.

Choosing a quality service provider isn't easy, and it can be near impossible to differentiate between seemingly identical firms. Often, the surest way to separate the wheat from the chaff is through word of mouth.

The *BRW Client Choice* awards celebrate the highest quality firms in the accounting, legal, engineering, consulting, architecture, actuarial and property valuation professions.

Based on research conducted by Beaton Consulting as part of its Annual Business and Professions Study, the awards are unique in that winners and finalists are selected by clients of the firms themselves. In 2008, more than 30,000 individual ratings were received by buyers of Australian professional services, who were asked to assess the quality of the firms they used.

The 2008 list of finalists is enormously varied – and includes some of the nation's biggest brands, alongside a number of small, virtually unknown partnerships. But in the service industry, size doesn't automatically mean better

service, Beaton Consulting research manager Grant Scott-Hayward explains.

"While large firms seek to attract the best university graduates and leading individuals, win the best clients and work, and build high-profile brands, they may also find it more difficult to provide a broad service offering at a consistently high level across the firm.

"But some of the mid-size and smaller firms often perform better with specialised value propositions based around client focus, product or service leadership, responsiveness or innovation."

Large or small, all of the 2008 Client Choice finalists have built a strong value proposition for their services. Consistent performance was evident across all of the professions – 20 of the finalist firms were also finalists in 2007, including Allens Arthur Robinson, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Coffey International and HR Advantage.

This year's finalists are to be congratulated on their strong performances. The winners will be announced and celebrated along with the finalists at the 2008 BRW Client Choice Awards in Sydney on March 12, 2008. **BRW**

## THE FINALISTS

### Accountants

Bentleys MRI  
 Ernst & Young  
 Ferrier Hodgson  
 KPMG  
 Lawler Partners  
 PricewaterhouseCoopers  
 Vincents

### Actuaries

Bendzulla Actuaries  
 Finity Consulting

### Architects and designers

Bligh Voller Nield  
 Cox Group

### Consultants

Booz Allen Hamilton  
 HR Advantage  
 Boston Consulting Group

### Consulting engineers

Alluvium Consulting  
 Arup  
 Coffey  
 Douglas Partners  
 Golder Associates  
 Parsons Brinckerhoff  
 URS

### IT Services

Oakton  
 SMS Management & Technology

### Lawyers

Allens Arthur Robinson  
 Blake Dawson  
 Freehills  
 Johnson Winter & Slattery  
 Mallesons Stephen Jaques  
 Minter Ellison  
 Piper Alderman  
 Swaab Attorneys  
 Truman Hoyle

### Patent attorneys

Phillips Ormonde & Fitzpatrick  
 Watermark

### Property consulting

Charter Keck Cramer  
 Herron Todd White