

“To: CC or not CC” – Clifford Chances’ subversive new branding

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Ever since the Global Financial Crisis, the private capital-powered charge on London by US law firms has left the UK’s Magic Circle looking a little less... magical in their home market. But if Clifford Chance’s new logo is anything to go by, the psychological toll might be far deeper than we thought.

Unveiled in September, the firm’s sleek new “Cc” branding is clean and modern, yet oddly familiar. We’re told that to some in-house counsel, it looks suspiciously like the email shorthand for being “cc’d.” Which, as every lawyer knows, usually means you’re looped in for visibility, not leading the charge. Indeed, some senior lawyers—but probably not too many Gen Z folks in marketing—may just about remember that “cc’d” is a quaint acronym for “carbon copied,” from the days of typewriters, when carbon paper was used to create duplicates and copies of letters were sent to additional recipients besides the primary one.

To be clear, Clifford Chance remains a legal powerhouse. Sure, like all its Magic Circle peers, it has lost ground in Europe over the past 15 years to more profitable, US-founded interlopers. Still, in a ruthlessly competitive legal services industry where every advantage counts, you have to admire those Clifford Chance rainmakers who have embraced going to market with a subliminal signal that hints at their firm’s diminished role in Big Law’s global elite. Respect!