

Winners take all

Adrian Jaggard on why technology is the key battlefield in the war for legal talent

The UK legal services market is undergoing a quiet revolution. Beneath the surface of a highly fragmented industry—historically heavily populated by community-led sole practitioners and small high street firms—there is a growing divide between those who can adapt to the demands of modern legal practice and those who cannot.

Rising costs such as professional indemnity insurance (PII), outdated infrastructure, the constraints of legacy partnership models and a lack of capital are putting immense pressure on traditional firms. Perhaps the most pressing challenge is attracting and retaining talent. The war for legal talent is intensifying.

There are many factors that influence where lawyers choose to work. One that is often overlooked is the day-to-day experience of working for one firm over another. Lawyers who feel the infrastructure and support is there to enable them to be the best, most productive professionals they can be will be much more satisfied in their working lives than those who are tearing their hair out several times a day because of administrative or process-driven distractions and blockers.

Key to this is technology, which across the industry is now a decisive factor in attracting and retaining top legal professionals. In a world where lawyers are increasingly mobile, discerning and digitally savvy, the firms that invest in the right technology are the ones that will win.

The consumerisation of work

Lawyers, like everyone else, are consumers. They've grown accustomed to the seamless experiences offered by platforms such as Netflix, Uber and Amazon. When lawyers step into their professional environments, they increasingly expect the same level of sophistication. Clunky case management systems, outdated interfaces and inefficient workflows are no longer tolerated and can be deal-breakers.

This shift in expectations does not exist only for younger generations. Whether they're newly qualified or seasoned

practitioners, today's lawyers want tools that empower them to do their best work. They want to spend less time wrestling with admin and more time delivering value to clients. In this context, technology is a significant differentiator in ensuring your primary assets are at their happiest and most productive.

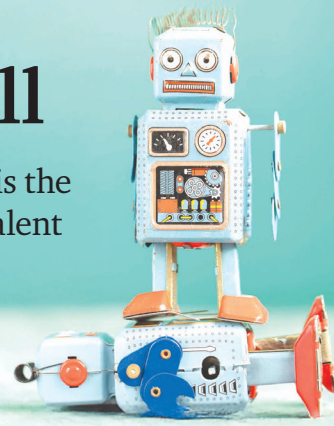
Productivity, efficiency & service

Modern legal technology has the power to transform how lawyers work. From intelligent document automation to integrated client communication tools, the right systems can dramatically enhance productivity and service delivery. As the CEO of a UK legal services group, I've seen first-hand the impact of investing strategically in platforms that streamline workflows, reduce duplication and enable lawyers to focus on what they do best: advising clients.

This is particularly critical with our legal consultancy businesses and divisions. In the past few years, we have witnessed the consultancy model grow as lawyers seek the flexibility, better work-life balance and lower costs of being able to work from home. It is proving particularly appealing to experienced lawyers, for whom—as well as flexibility—it can enable them to increase their income and employ their own sub-consultants and support staff, without the administrative burden of running their own firm, or compliance challenges such as PII, which are expensive and increasingly difficult to secure for small firms.

For these professionals, the ability to onboard quickly, access systems remotely and work flexibly is essential. Our technology infrastructure is designed to support this model, ensuring that consultants can hit the ground running, wherever they are.

Another particular benefit of technology in the consultant model is its ability to support scale. In a traditional firm, growth often means more overheads, more complexity and more risk. But with the right digital infrastructure, growth can become much simpler, faster and less risky.



The AI advantage

Of course, no conversation about technology is complete without considering the implications of artificial intelligence (AI). No longer a futuristic concept, AI tools are already helping lawyers draft documents, conduct legal research and analyse case law with greater speed and accuracy than ever before. These tools free up time, reduce cognitive load and allow professionals to focus on higher-value tasks.

At AIIC, we're exploring how AI can further enhance our service offering. From predictive analytics to intelligent contract review, the opportunities are vast. But more importantly, we see AI as a tool for empowerment. By integrating AI into our workflows, we're not just aiming to improve efficiency, but also to create a more fulfilling work environment for our lawyers.

We've tried to adopt the mindset of thinking of our lawyers not just as colleagues but as clients, considering their needs and their experience in the same way companies in all sectors do for their customers. By considering what tools our people need to make their lives easier, deliver better outcomes for their clients and ultimately be more successful, we're aiming to not only support better legal work, but also more satisfying legal careers.

Embracing change

Ultimately, lawyers want to feel valued, supported and empowered. They want to work in environments that reflect the best of modern working life—flexible, efficient and digitally enabled. Firms that fail to provide this will struggle to attract and retain the talent they need to thrive.

Effective use of technology is a strategic imperative in the new world of law. It's the foundation upon which modern legal careers are built. By investing in the right tools, we can create a better experience for our lawyers—and in turn, deliver better results for our clients.

The legal profession is changing. The firms that embrace this change will lead the way. The rest will be left behind. **NLJ**

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