

At the double: the growth of legaltech

As businesses rush to adopt the advantages of AI, Julaine Speight explains why it pays for lawyers to keep it personal

Legaltech is finally having its moment, with investment doubling year on year and UK legaltech start-ups making up 44% of all legaltech start-ups in the EU in 2019.

This industry benefits everyone, as technology enables firms to collect, promote, store and deliver using much improved methods than in the past. From proactive management software, online legal marketplaces, document and contract storage and sharing, it is helping to make the lives of lawyers easier, enabling them to provide services in a more efficient and time saving manner.

Firms across the UK are recognising the wealth of opportunities, with 81% considering technology to be the most important development activity for their firm—but in a world that is increasingly taken up with AI, it's vital for lawyers keep it personal.

Over half of respondents in a survey by MMA (55%) said they still want face-to-face contact with lawyers, and in a year that has sent us all online, people need it even more—95% of consumers claim that customer service is important to their choice of brand and loyalty.

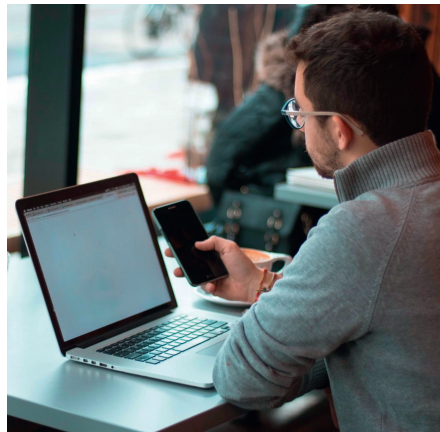
Your website is the first place most of your prospects will find you, so here are some simple ways to ensure you keep it personal and positive for your potential clients.

Promote your staff

2020 has seen us all embrace the likes of Zoom, WebEx and Teams to communicate with our colleagues and clients, showing that even if we cannot meet in person, face-to-face contact is key, even if it is digitally! People buy into people after all, and there is a huge level of trust invested in the client /lawyer relationship. It's important to get your personality across and endear yourself to your audience, ensure your website has a section that outlines the key personnel and use a blog to include stories that humanise your firm and set it apart from others.

The right image

The style you adopt on your website will depend on your firm's brand image—



you formal, or more casual? What is your message and what content / assets do you have already or would like to utilise? This message needs to be reflected through your site. Make sure you use language and assets that support your brand image and represent you in a way that is conducive to how you wish to be seen by the outside world. From a tech perspective, optimise your images (compress them so they are the optimal file size and use next gen formats): specify width and height so that they are uniform and well presented. Uploading large files will affect page speed; optimising images greatly improves experience, as does employing methods such as lazy load, so the user can scroll and interact with a page while off screen content loads as it's needed rather than all in one go, which can take much longer and be frustrating for the user.

Make it mobile

Over half of global traffic comes from mobiles (Statista), so you need to make sure your offering is suitable to use across all types of device and content is prioritised to cater for the different mind-set of a user browsing on mobile. In fact, your site should really be developed using a 'mobile first' mentality.

Keep it positive

Over recent years, Google has introduced several assessments to rank the usability of websites. These assessments are conducted to understand how positively or negatively a person responds to a web page. To create

a positive user experience, ensure your key content is clearly signposted and accessible, your messaging is clear and concise and you are guiding the user on their journey with strong and meaningful calls to action. Make the ordering process as simple as possible and make sure your comms are straightforward and easy to understand.

Security

The UK has seen a 31% increase in cybercrime during the pandemic as less secure home servers are manipulated (Security Magazine). Interpol's cybercrime threat response team reported a 'significant increase' in attempted ransomware attacks around the world. Legal tech is vulnerable to phishing, data breaches, ransomware and supply chain compromises so you need to ensure your security is tip top.

Reviews

93% of consumers read an online review before buying (Qualtrics) and this applies to professional services as much as it does for hospitality. It's hugely beneficial to generate good reviews for your firm and promote them on your website and on social media channels (they can be anonymous): they can help to build a feeling of trust which is essential in the client / firm relationship.

Even before Covid-19, we were living in a world where we can order things to be delivered within hours and minutes, tracking those deliveries every step of the way. Consumers expect the same kind of service from their legal providers. Law firms that use the right tech, and communicate effectively through a secure, efficient and attractive website, provide reassurance to the client of the best possible customer service, in the most reasonable way.

2020 was a real test for us all and in 2021 law firms will need to effectively use digital tools, and communicate well through digital channels, more than ever before.

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First Internet is an award-winning full-service digital marketing agency based in Altrincham, Greater Manchester. Services include website design and development, UX design, SEO, social media management and content marketing.



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