

This month:

- **A practical guide to mobility and agility – a must for all**
- **Wellbeing – a must**
- **Bullying has to stop**

Mobility and Agility – the benefits and application

We have written about inertia in businesses and our New Year resolutions

<http://professionalchoiceconsultancy.com/articles.php>

Numerous surveys and implementations are now really showing the benefits that law firms are gaining from mobility and agility implementation

- Mobile and agile working is becoming the norm

10 years ago almost unheard of and still inertia resistance with some firms but this can no longer be afforded. It is a strategic must for any firms that want to be successful and grow.

The benefits at a glance

They are critical for a business and in line with many potential star recruits and performers work:life balance - for many only just being recognised

- **Key skilled staff recruitment - flexibility to meet personal circumstances and a high demand for technology adoption**
- **Key skilled staff retention**
- **Efficiency by being able to work effectively and securely from anywhere - maintains productivity through easy access to tools, contacts and information wherever they may be**
- **Significant cost savings by not having to staff to deal with peaks and troughs but in an optimal way or totally outsourcing**
- **Significant enhancement in client satisfaction through enhanced communication - rapid response and out of hours PLUS files being actioned within expectations**

However - Do it properly

Mobile working also needs to be effectively implemented technically and culturally - staff do not want to be feeling excluded from communication and their technical devices - mobile phones and laptops need to be the right tools otherwise it has a negative impact on morale and productivity.

Apparently 64% of employees cite poor user experience as the reason for limiting the use of enterprise mobile applications.

Job satisfaction goes down without access to the right information, contacts and tools when away from the office. Further frustration affecting performance having to carry separate business and personal devices - many not designed for the mobile environment.

This can impact upon

- Response to customers without available information
- Important decisions can be delayed or wrong without information availability
- Security risks if non secure devices and applications are used to store client data
- If someone leaves the business with client data on their personal devices - there is an issue

Nigel Redwood CEO of MLS Advantage supplier <https://www.nasstar.com/> advises me *“With more and more of our law firms we are having to provide solutions that not only allow the fee earners to login from anywhere and any PC, but also to be able to work off line when no internet is available and for the solutions to sync back up when connection to the internet is established. This is all now being delivered without the fee earner having to have a technical grasp of what to use and when. In addition, this then means that the device that is being used to work off line has to be secured and fully managed by the provider in the same way the servers are. Therefore could talk about that off line working and on line working should now all be possible from all locations etc.”*

Steve Pritchard MD of MLS Advantage supplier <https://www.matrix247.com/> providers of hosted telephony and mobile phones with all the necessary security devices with Mobile Device Management – keeping personal and business information separate and enabling data to be wiped if a device goes missing says *“Since 2013, work-life balance has been the number one choice. The search for jobs that allow for remote working is not all about the creature comforts of home; many feel they simply do a better job when they can choose where they work. Most people think that remote work is mainly done by caregivers, students looking for extra cash, or working parents. However, the survey discovered that only 35% of respondents were working parents, and only 9% were caregivers or students. Other categories of respondents included freelancers (26%), introverts (23%), and entrepreneurs (21%). Employers are further embracing the remote work and flexible schedule dynamic as well. There have been many companies advertising for more remote workers, deciding to close their offices and go more remote instead of having the in-office work model”*

Have a look at October’s security article
http://professionalchoiceconsultancy.com/articles/October_2018.pdf

Another aspect of mobility and agility for a business is handling those difficult peaks and troughs of business alongside of being available to clients 24 hours a day - including 09.00 - 17.00

Martyn Best MD of MLS Advantage supplier <https://www.documentdirect.co.uk/> document production and transcription experts says that their contribution to agile working is in response to law firms recognising and adopting new working practices and technologies which enable them to deliver better advice to their clients.

“DDs typing and transcription service provides benefits that manifest in a quicker response to clients matters, to a significant reduction in overheads, such as administrative salaries and office space, and to a better work/life balance due to the ability to work remotely at the location of choice. As with any modification or evolution in working practices, agile working does require an attitude which embraces and welcomes change, and the benefits can be quickly realised and very easily quantified.”

The same applies with services from MLS Advantage supplier <https://www.moneypenny.com/uk> offering a telephone answering service 24x7 x 365 ensuring that client needs are handled at any-time of the day or night in a professional manner – enhancing satisfaction and conversion of enquiries both very valuable without the potential savings in overheads that are available.

As I have said in a previous article – the movement to virtual firms like Keystone Law is already supported by Moneypenney, Document Direct and Nasstar

Wellbeing

Diversity and equality are major questions in the workplace and I recently became aware of Employee Wellbeing programmes and they seem to me to offer similar returns to mobility and agility. I have also heard that a good number of Manchester law firms have adopted such policies in order to enhance the work environment.

It is also a hot topic for our new President Michelle Garlick who provided me with this

“I am delighted to see that a number of firms in Manchester are adopting a wellbeing policy. A study in 2017 revealed that workplace absence costs the UK economy a huge £18 billion in lost productivity each year. Combined with the fact that there is a clear trend of new recruits choosing benefits over higher salaries, it is clear that investment in staff wellbeing is not a luxury but a crucial investment – especially where firms want to minimise the effects of stress while maximising staff productivity and efficiency.

Poor health (both physical and mental) leads to long-term absence and a high staff turnover. Take a proactive approach to employee wellbeing and you have a much better chance of preventing problems that might otherwise lead to long-term sickness. If an individual isn't looking after themselves, or if a company advocates heavy workloads or long hours, this can result in ill health, poor performance, mistakes/negligence claims and complaints, all of which will almost certainly have a direct impact on a firm's bottom line, claims record and, as we have also seen in recent SDT cases, significant reputational damage for firms. It's imperative that we all ensure we have wellbeing policies in place – and that we stick to them.”

Something for us all to consider for the benefits of the firm as well as the individuals. Adoption of such a policy is quite well covered here <https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/build-employee-wellbeing-programme/>

Horribly on the other side – Bullying

Coincidentally in the Lawyer during January there was this headline **“In the wake of #MeToo revelations of last year, calls from lawyers to the mental health charity LawCare regarding bullying and harassment almost doubled in 2018”**

It went on to say *“In the wake of a series of high-profile allegations of sexual harassment and assault, including some in the legal profession, calls about bullying and harassment rose from 38 calls in 2017 to 68 last year.*

Overall the charity received with 932 calls from 624 callers in 2018, a 5 per cent increase on the number of calls in 2017. The most common reason for calling remained stress (26 per cent), followed by depression (19 per cent) and anxiety (11 per cent)”

It has to stop and is a serious concern for management and all colleagues
<https://www.lawcare.org.uk/>

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