

This month:

- **The time has come – we all have to change**
- **Data Security – whole thing and mobile devices (the no brainer)**
- **Managing costs and enhancing marketing**
- **Digital Revolution we all need to consider for our clients**

We all have the same challenges that need addressing. I attended the LSN briefing for suppliers at the end of January and what was made clear was that recent surveys, notably from PwC have confirmed **that irrespective of size of firm the majority** are having to address:

- Ways to focus on cost reduction and overhead savings to improve profitability
- A focus on saving time and avoiding delays in working practices.
- The management of working capital.
- Ensuring quality across all activities.
- Working flexibly.
- Being compliant.
- Being secure.
- Enhancing client service and satisfaction.

Outsourcing some key functions is becoming essential and there are many such examples like hosted IT, telephone answering and compliance.

Potentially a no Brainer

I am not going the way that everybody else does at the moment when we are just about two months away from the GDPR rules and regulations and severe enforcement. Without doubt however many lawyers and barristers are still a way from getting their acts together.

So a couple of points

In February MLS Advantage supplier www.nasstar.com issued information from research that within the top 500 law firms, more than 1 MILLION credentials are exposed on line and that hackers are being offered the “keys to the kingdom of client data”

<http://blog.nasstar.com/law-firms-exposed-new-research-reveals-a-growing-cyber-threat>

Contact CEO nigel.redwood@nasstar.com

As above I have written previously along with many other reasons even Top 200 firms are considering outsourcing – certainly hosted IT and telecoms (minimising cyber risk and ensuring availability) along with profitability, cash-flow and document production capabilities of outsourcing telephone answering and document production. The game has to change and it requires decisions from the top to force the consideration of change of old cultures and working practices. At least two factor authentication as a result of these exposed credentials should be a de-facto for any law firm.

Mobile Devices - One area of quick fix ahead of GDPR (if that is the incentive) is to gain control over the use of mobile devices - smartphones, tablets, and laptops in the workplace.

The average time malware sits on a firm's mobile device / network is 200 days plus. Having no awareness of breaches until hacked could be devastating for the firm; not only causing reputational damage, but fines of up to 4% of annual turnover, reports must be made to the SRA and clients notified of breaches.

Mobile Device Management MDM is available from MLS Advantage supplier www.matrix247.com for just a monthly cost per device – so no capital outlay. Contact Stephen Pritchard CEO ste@matrix247.com

Apparently MDM controls the securing, monitoring, integrating and managing of mobile devices such as smartphones, tablets. MDM optimises both the functionality AND security of barrister or lawyer mobile devices whilst also protecting the Law firms or Chambers network and any privileged information that has been downloaded or synced to the mobile device.

Information Audits under the GDPR articles states law firms and barrister chambers must keep a record of how and when an individual gives consent to store and use their personal data. The personal data your firm holds must be documented i.e. where it came from and who your partners and fee-earners share it with. An information audit is essential for this purpose to provide a clear record of any unauthorised access to your legal services, as well as accountability. MDM delivers this along with encrypting client data files transmitted and complete threat management.

Personal Data - Professionals use a single mobile phone for BOTH personal and business work. Personal media can be “hidden” from the view of the MDM software, done by creating a “Personal Container” on the handset, whereby the MDM software manages all the business applications only within the ‘Business container’.

Establishing a clear boundary between the user's personal data and the business data on their work mobile device is crucial. Ideally, the mobile device controller should not be able to gain access to personal apps or personal email accounts on the device. This will help to minimise data as well as complying with the integrity and the confidentiality principle of GDPR.

Gaining visibility of which devices and apps are accessing business services will assist in your Compliance with GDPR. In the event of a data breach, the IT administrator or allocated data protection officer can demonstrate through audit logging, exactly which actions took place leading up to the compromise and what, if any, actions IT or the data protection officer took as a result.

Your Shop Window

It's not all about technology however, for example have you considered dressing your shop window— are your privacy statements on your website up to date and GDPR compliant – if not the ICO will have easy targets for fines.

Sound Advice

In February MLS organised a conference geared to marketing your law firm but from a couple of non-traditional angles which carried a lot of credibility.

First speaker was Joe Reevy of www.words4business.com and <http://www.legalrss.co.uk> to name but 2. A bit of an expert in ensuring the firms do not spend too much money on their marketing.

His main points were to consider any campaign carefully with a principle objective clearly to get potential clients to contact and enter into a dialogue with you.

This means segmenting your target market and with content:-

- Getting to the right people in a targeted way
 - Use the right media for the targeted audience (Facebook and Twitter right through to hard copy)
- Recognising that no one is interested in everything
- Getting the timing right
- Remembering no one cares how smart you are but what benefits they will get from speaking to you
- Making it clear what working with you will mean to them

The seven mistakes often made are

- Making the communication too long
- Making it too technical
- Using the wrong language
- Not editing
- Lack of balance
- Inconsistent
- Not timely

Other points

- Shorten blogs – apart from saving production time Joe evidenced that blogs with more than 1,000 words get 45 readers whilst those with 400 get 790
- E-newsletters – still a market for them but segmentation and targeting with appropriate content is critical – make them regular, make subscribing easy (in the content)
- Social media – Twitter and Facebook build a presence. Regular use of LinkedIN with lots of likes and shares encouraged, put the sharing content with the content, build the firms brand – not that of fee earners

The second speaker was our own Sucheet Amin – previous MLS President, lawyer who has established himself as a Digital Transformation guru.

With his experience and handling clients with his law firm and trying to meet their demands and expectations he made very good use of technology and has subsequently developed a very useful application <https://www.in-case.co.uk>

He was very clear on what clients want

- Speed of communication and file handling
- Education – they increasingly want to know about the process and what will happen when – many these days do their own research that can lead to conflict
- Information – needs to be easy and in their language
- Customer service – the communication needs to be outward facing from the firm
- 24 x 7 communication even if the law firm is closed – even the nightshift man wants to ask questions

Other points

- Communication needs to be with the right digital application for the generation of the client from “Millennials”, through the Y generation – key demand area - and so on
- Apparently the average adult spends 2 hours per day on electronic communications
- What is the purpose?
 - Convenience – available information and easier decision making
 - Enhanced communication with clients
 - Positive user experience
 - The controlled delivery and receipt of documents
 - Feedback collection through the life of a file
 - Business Intelligence and Trends
 - Cost reduction

Bill Kirby is a director of Professional Choice Consultancy offering advice to firms on business issues from strategy, planning, business development, the effective use of IT applications and IT hosting for compliance, business continuity and DR. He can be contacted at billkirby@professionalchoiceconsultancy.com