

Case Studies to demonstrate firms really are taking action on mobility, agility and productivity

Over the last few years in this column I have written a great deal about how law firms should be taking seriously enhancements in mobility, agility, productivity and efficiency. Many of you get in touch with me to ask how academic I am about the topic with a doubt as to whether other firms are or are not adopting the latest ideas in order to become and remain for competitive, more profitable and in control of working capital at the same time as enhancing client experience.

This month I am going to share some real examples stimulated by Manchester Law Society Advantage members. http://www.manchesterlawsociety.org.uk/mls_advantage

Hosting and Agile Working Let's start with Olliers - <http://olliers.com/latest-news/olliers-goes-paper-free.html>

who are comfortable to go public on their good news – moving to a paperless office, having embraced a fully hosted digital environment:

Matthew Cloughton, managing partner of Olliers, the top tier rated criminal defence specialist firm, is a strong advocate of investing in the right technology to facilitate growth. Having moved to the cloud to enable speedier and more reliable access to IT systems, Olliers is better able to promote agile working, providing staff and clients with greater flexibility and benefits.

Their supplier <http://convergets.co.uk/> has delivered a fully hosted desktop service to Olliers. All fee earners are able to access the firm's systems from their electronic devices at court, at home, or indeed any location where they are able to access wifi.

Matthew explains: "We encourage flexible working and 60% of employees including the six consultants who have joined us in the last twelve months work flexibly in terms of hours and/or remote or agile working. As we continue to attract additional consultants nationwide, the flexible and agile approach of Olliers digital working is likely to prove instrumental in our recruitment" and "Technology enables our London-based consultants to access our systems, and distance becomes irrelevant as we can provide seamless representation for our clients. Our clients benefit from a service that is far more cost effective and we are in a position to provide them with local representation."

Telephony Contribution. Established for over 50 years, <http://www.hillyermckeown.co.uk/> Solicitors is a leading Northwest law firm with a reputation for delivering technically excellent and innovative legal advice. With offices in Chester (HQ) and Wirral, the firm's reception provides a service for over 250 users.

To maintain efficiency and enhance the client experience they needed an investment in upgrading telecoms with the clear objectives of greater call control for receptionists and everyday system users to enhance first touch client experience and introduce the most resilient telecoms infrastructure possible to protect client communications. Whilst of course reducing costs. The solution came from <http://www.matrix247.com/>.

Following an audit of systems, contracts and line usage which identified where operational gains and financial savings could be made. The firm could retain an element of the existing PBX equipment enabling previous investments to be optimised whilst a processor upgrade was recommended with a new hybrid call management platform at Chester and Wirral.

Receptionists were provided with a computer-based system enabling them to see the status of colleagues regardless of office location, whether they were working from home or on mobile, through a user friendly on-screen presence management system. A communication link between locations was provided with a centralised reception, with all calls being delivered to two receptionists at head office, with back-up and overflow available from two additional operators at an alternative location. Receptionists now have full PC screen visibility of where calls are coming from and for whom they are intended, allowing them to answer calls in the correct way every time.

There is enhanced performance – fast, seamless call handling and transfer; on-screen dialling.

Print Strategy and Efficiency - Now a couple of examples where <http://www.docutechsolutions.co.uk/> has enhanced client agility and reduced costs.

Pickering & Butters <http://www.pb4law.co.uk> were able to provide, with an audit current print usage which provided enough information to develop and enhanced print strategy. The number of printers have been reduced at the same time as the implementation of enhanced data communication and document sharing throughout the organisation. Staff now have the ability of agile working within the organisation. The whole resolution is applied on an encrypted and secure platform, more importantly, at significantly reduced costs.

Plus at <http://pannonecorporate.com> – from day 1 they established a future proof print and work flow strategy through the use of multifunctional devices plus Equitrac and print & management software. There are enhanced providing a robust & highly secure print flow. There is enhanced document sharing and reduced costs.

Outsourced Telephone Answering. David Eagle head of IT at <https://www.withyking.co.uk/> explains why the firm took the decision to switch to telephone answering specialists <https://www.moneypenny.com/uk>

“Prior to outsourcing we found we had been missing around 30% of our calls so inevitably opportunities were being missed and customer service was affected as a result. We needed total confidence in the people taking our calls, being absolutely sure they were portraying the right image for our business. We now know that our Moneypenny PA and her small team do just that. We now know we are never missing a call or business opportunity and with spot-on messaging, we are able to call new business enquirers straight back which is proving to be far more effective than previously. Emails sent directly to fee earners out of hours also means they have the option to respond straight away rather than have messages waiting for them at reception the following morning.

“We do have an occasional look at Moneypenny online which is great for management data but much of the time we actually forget we are outsourcing as it’s so seamless an arrangement between us. It just works – simple as that!”

Outsourced transcription and electronic signatures In the last few months I have covered the developments at <http://www.documentdirect.co.uk/> with their outsourced DD transcription and mobile app plus their electronic signature product – big topic with the Law

Society at the moment. I could of course quote a law firm but have chosen for something different an author and motivational speaker – Andy Bounds
<https://andyboundsonline.com/>

The motivation is similar to that of a law firm “Our business’s success hinges on me being relentless with follow-up. Every meeting throws up next actions, documents to be created, future diary entries etc. I simply dictate what they are, send them through to Document Direct, then get on with my next meeting while they are typing up what happened in the previous one. My customers regularly tell me I’m the fastest supplier they’ve ever worked with. The secret? Document Direct.

Even better, their “Out Of Hours – 24/7 service means I can dictate any sizeable stuff at the end of the day, send it through to them to type while I have tea with the kids. Later that evening, or the next day when I start work, it’s on my computer and I can crack on”

“They’ve enabled me to work the way I want to”. “And this has given me the life I’ve always wanted” “As I say... I love Document Direct!”

Slightly different – That PI specialism factor. I was not aware of the full range of services offered by <http://www.citadel-law.com> – not Advantage suppliers but certainly friends of MLS

The PI market is changing so fast with some giving up but also more specialism certainly demanded. Citadel Law is currently advising law firms, banks and accountants as they manage the changing scene.

Advice is going into businesses of all shapes and sizes that touch the PI market. Your business may mirror some of this

- Large commercial firm - WIP value, operational enhancements and options be they sale, trade out or expansion
- Medium sized PI firm - Operational and WIP review to increase bank
- Small PI law firm for sale - Seller due diligence and grooming
- Administrators and bank - Personal injury WIP earn out on a law firm in administration –to maximise recoveries and minimise timescales
- PI and general practices - Strategic review and inputting *LQC Analytics* to demonstrate current and future WIP value and operational/risk status of PI books.
- National law firm - Succession planning for a allowing senior partners to retire (WIP valuation based on *LQC Analytics* utilised by international accountancy firm)
- Numerous law firms and litigation funders - Assessing and assisting to finance personal injury claims by way of disbursement funding, court fees and WIP draw down

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