

This Month

- **The Challenges**
- **Perceived Obstacle**
- **New Solution Possibilities**
- **Information to Encourage Action**
- **Outsource for Efficiency and Delivery**

The Challenges

Law firms have many challenges to meet – strategy development and achievement, growth, on boarding, revenue and cash generation, efficiency and productivity, cost savings, client communication and satisfaction, MI & BI, compliance, regulation security.

In this changing world there are increasing options around resourcing – in house, outsourcing for required skills and volumes of activity resourcing – in house or third party (changing world), compliance and regulation and security.

I recommend a catch up with these two recent articles [June2023.pdf \(professionalchoiceconsultancy.com\)](#) [September2023.pdf \(professionalchoiceconsultancy.com\)](#)

Current Perceived Obstacle

For many years there has been a dependency on core Practice and Case Management Systems (PMS & CMS).

There is now a current and real uncertainty with regards to existing core PMS and CMS systems – seen and reported by many as a result of the multiple acquisitions.

The perceived impacts are currently mainly affecting small and medium sized firms - both commercially (forced changes in T&Cs) and also limited clarity about which of the current systems are continuing or being enhanced and by when. There are also reported perceived cut backs in client support, disappearing staff with previous good client support relationships.

Many firms need to know whether their current products are to be enhanced or substituted by alternatives or integrated with third party added value products for key issues such as on-boarding, client communications, MI & BI, compliance and other added value outsourced services.

In early September I did a post on LinkedIn [Post | Feed | LinkedIn](#) – **Are you in a happy place with your PMS/CMS supplier?** . It clearly touched a nerve and has had over 2,350 reads, 22 likes and 5 re posts. I feel strongly that there is an unmet need to bring the law firm community together to enhance understanding, especially mid-size firms, by bringing leaders together to gather current experience and future requirements from some of their key technology, especially their Practice & Case Management Systems (PMS & CMS)

As you will be aware there have been many acquisitions of PMS/CMS suppliers with The Advanced Group, Practice Evolve/Leap, Access Group and even Insight Legal now part of Dye and Durham. For many law firms and advisers/consultants it has been very difficult to gain the strategies for product developments. In addition, some law firms are feeling the effects of some dramatic price hikes – with revenue seemingly becoming more important than customer relationships. Legal sector consultants are also seeing the challenges.

www.theaccessgroup.com/en-gb/legal/ www.oneadvanced.com/software-by-sector/legal/ www.practiceevolve.com along with www.leap.co.uk www.dyedurham.com has acquired Insight Legal

Potential New Suppliers

Whether they like it or not, law firms need to be efficient, compliant, secure, insured and have some cash and have to provide added value to clients – on boarding, efficiency, communication. There's also an increasing need to move their key systems into onto cloud technology.

With all the pressures and lack of clarity the door is becoming open from potential new suppliers and including the latest cloud-based technology.

What is also interesting is that there is now a growing queue of potential new suppliers (some international – for example Australia and Singapore bases) all operating here now but relatively short term but beginning to sign up new firms – I am aware of eight and done due diligence on six so far.

The majority use standard accounting packages but have added the necessary SAR adjustments for compliance plus are cloud based. The necessary accessibility and security which is a growing demand.

Many of the current PMS/CMS are not fully cloud based but dependent on hosted arrangements with variable performance hosts.

The potential new suppliers also tend to have a more open mind with regards to integration with added value solutions – collaboration opportunities. Potentially quite a challenge to the current suppliers.

Information Gathering

In wanting to assist the sector I am very interested in some feedback from law firms on

- Their perception of the current status of the relationship with their supplier of PMS/CMS
- Their added value needed. What are regarded as priorities in terms of enhancements and added value to help achieve the business priorities - strategy development and achievement, growth, on boarding, revenue and cash generation, efficiency and productivity, cost savings, client communication and satisfaction, MI & BI, compliance, regulation security.
- Their relationship with suppliers – quality and pricing, support – performance against expected SLAs
- Their perceptions of the offerings currently being made – is there clarity in terms of what to expect going forward in terms of applications and infrastructure
- Maybe some initiatives/proposals to enhance the interface with the suppliers

This sort of information can potentially be a way to enhance client relationships and the achievement of the firm's business objectives.

Outsourcing for Efficiency and Quality

Whilst looking at the performance of the current suppliers and potential new ones there has been serious confirmation about the much more flexible approach to resourcing the firm's needs.

Reference again to the [June2023.pdf \(professionalchoiceconsultancy.com\)](#) article.

Irrespective of the size and shape of firm appropriate skills are needed – whether for legal work, finance, IT & Security, M&A considerations but with the technology of PMS/CMS from older or newer suppliers there is becoming real consideration for support services to cut costs and enhance delivery capabilities affecting client satisfaction, GP and Cashflow.

So integration with [MLS Advantage | Manchester Law Society](#) suppliers such as [Transcription Services & Document Production - Document Direct](#) [Employee Engagement and Performance Management Software \(weekly10.com\)](#) and [UK's Leading AML Software Solution | First AML](#) should be on the list, along with Outsourced Accounting from people like [Outsourced Legal Cashiering & Compliance | The Cashroom](#), [Law Firm Business Intelligence Software - Katchr](#) and many others should be on the list as well as outsourced and added value services from IT, Accountants, legal services.

There are great strategy, operational performance opportunities with a different resource consideration.

Bill Kirby is a director of www.professionalchoiceconsultancy.com offering advice to firms on business issue 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 and www.linkedin.com/in/bill-kirby-ab01632/