



OCTOBER 2022

LPM

LEGAL PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

Sparking change

What are firms doing to keep themselves agile, customer-focused and prepared for uncertainty?

IS THE PRICE RIGHT?

Balancing client and firm considerations

WHAT'S NEXT IN TECH?

A look at the latest in legal technology

SUPPORT TO SCALE

A collaborative journey to agility, flexibility and scalability



Welcome

Law firms could use the wave of uncertainty to reflect on their efficiency and future-readiness

Times are uncertain, and law firms – much like the wider business community – need to stay on their toes and be ready for what might come next.

Certain capabilities are intrinsic to a state of preparedness – such as effective financial planning (p3), flexibility, agility and digital savviness (p5). To keep margins intact, firms need to examine their pricing models, although this comes with the caveat that clients might be more financially stressed, and desperate for help, than usual (p3).

But if we've learned one thing from the pandemic, it's that challenging times spark innovation and allow businesses to demonstrate their resilience. Read how firms are getting themselves future-ready – whether through cloud migrations (p4) or efforts towards greater agility and scalability (p6).

Here at LPM, we've been conducting research this year, in partnership with PracticeEvolve, to understand where law firms are on their digital transformation journeys – particularly their relationship with cloud technology. *Get your copy* filled with the latest insights, and join us for a webcast on *Wednesday 19 October* as we bring together a set of experts to unpack the research and understand its implications.

As always, do get in touch if you have something to share!

Aftab Bose, editor

@LPMmag | aftabb@lpmmag.co.uk

THE LPM TEAM



Aftab Bose
Editor

aftabb@lpmmag.co.uk



Michael Pestell
Client services executive

mikep@lpmmag.co.uk



Emily Nash
Head of client services

emilyn@lpmmag.co.uk



Richard Brent
Head of content

richardb@lpmmag.co.uk

HOT TOPICS THIS MONTH

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Is the price right?
Sarah Charlton of BlueSky Legal Finance Solutions dissects the concept of value pricing in legal services

020 3925 2769
LPM@lpmmag.co.uk
Burlington Media Group
20 Mortlake High Street
London, SW14 8JN

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Is the price right?



Pricing models need to balance firm needs with clients' individual circumstances, says Sarah Charlton of BlueSky Legal Finance Solutions

The word 'pricing' can invoke many thoughts – solicitors undervaluing their worth, costs information, fixed fees, hourly rates, legal aid, CFA's, bundled or unbundled. For the accountants hidden among you, perhaps thoughts jumped to realisation and utilisation rates? However, I would be intrigued to know how many of you immediately thought of value pricing?

The concept of value pricing feels like it is the new kid on the block but is it really that new? Or has it been around for a long time, just not in the regulated sector? Estate agents are always placing a value on a property – that doesn't necessarily mean it is worth that amount of money. It is merely a case that someone might be willing to pay that value for it. You may be content to pay over the market rate if it is close to a school/college or family member, if it is an adjoining piece of land or close to where you work. With all this in mind, we are often prepared to pay over the odds for something that we really want or we feel that we need.

So how does this map over into the legal sector? I think it is fair to say that pricing probably doesn't receive enough attention across the profession. As an

accountant and a compliance specialist, I am always looking to be as commercial as possible within the realms of compliance and the spirit of the law. However, value pricing does leave me very uneasy.

Why do I feel so uneasy? Is it because of the regulator? The Legal Ombudsmen? The courts? Culture? Or possibly all of them!

Having read the SRA's guidance around the transparency rules it is clear to me that it is not their intention to specify what pricing models you should use, or the prices you should charge. However, it is common for consumers (a word you either love or hate!) to procure legal services at a distressing time in their life – is this not a form of vulnerability? I am always advocating that the SRA Accounts Rules should never be read in isolation as there are much wider considerations to be taken into account such as VAT, Solicitors Act 1974 etc. With that in mind, perhaps the regulator doesn't need to interfere with pricing. [LPM](#)

Read more about finding the right balance with pricing models on the LPM website

Change is a constant



Mike Stevenson, managing director at Iceberg, discusses unforeseen disruptions and strategies for law firms to mitigate their financial impact

When last month I wrote of how legal firms should always have plans in place for the unexpected, I did not think we'd have seen two such dramatic examples of why such preparation was necessary.

Though last month it was court rooms closed due to failing infrastructure that was of a concern to some, the challenge soon moved to something much more fundamental.

While industrial action by the Criminal Bar Association (CBA) was anticipated, the scale and length of any strike will always be an open question. Depending on those around the negotiating table, it may be days, weeks, or months.

Financial planning for delays in invoice payments are one thing, and part of any legal firm's working lives, but the risk of whole cases potentially being cancelled, and with no certainty on when things may return to normal, is another thing.

The need then for having contingency plans in place is apparent and part of a sensible approach to business. After all, the financial obligations of legal firms have not been suspended, even if cashflow and liquidity are disrupted.

It may be necessary that a firm seeks support across over a year or more,

but with the right support this can be a manageable and effective measure of ensuring operations can continue and seeing the sector through present challenges.

On top of this sector-specific challenge is the impact of the sad death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. With a moment of great historical importance, and period of national mourning, comes inevitable change to working practices.

An unexpected bank holiday to concur with Her Majesty's funeral, and businesses choosing to adopt changes to working patterns in response to the events, created a period of unexpected flux. Invoices may have been further delayed. [LPM](#)

Read more about preparing your firm for unforeseen changes on the LPM website

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Migration station

Martin Holmes, head of IT at Harrison Drury, discusses key phases of his cloud migration journey undertaken in partnership with Cloud Geeni

Harrison Drury is an award-winning SME law firm with a strong borough presence in the north-west of England. With five offices across the region, Harrison Drury focus on providing an industry leading service to their clients, with a specific focus on community advocacy regularly hosting events and charity fundraisers throughout the north-west.

“Without cloud computing we would have not been able to deliver our services to our clients continuously and without issue. Our business was not affected in its capacity to deliver services due to the pandemic.”

MARTIN HOLMES, HEAD OF IT INFRASTRUCTURE, HARRISON DRURY

WHAT WAS THE MAIN DRIVER BEHIND THE DECISION TO ADOPT THE CLOUD?

With a desire to completely remove on-premise IT infrastructure from the business, such as servers approaching their end of life, Harrison Drury required their internal IT systems to provide an outstanding experience for both clients and end users while facilitating rapid business growth.

As Martin Holmes, the head of IT infrastructure for the firm reflects: “The biggest IT challenge we faced was the continuation of our desire to grow and improve our IT services, both for our staff and our clients.”

After initial meetings and a full audit of the current IT setup across the business, Cloud Geeni were able to present a proposal of services to the board of directors for the firm.

WHAT MADE HARRISON DRURY CHOOSE CLOUD GEENI AS THEIR MANAGED SERVICE PROVIDER?

Lee Fowkes, senior account manager



for Cloud Geeni says, “There were two main reasons Harrison Drury chose Cloud Geeni. We could explain confidently how we could implement the migration and maintain an infrastructure for 120 users, in a language that was understood by non-IT personnel. The second was the relationship built over the sales process.”

Cloud Geeni work closely and collaboratively with prospective clients, focusing on the end user experience and the ways in which adopting the cloud could allow a business to achieve its specific objectives.

“We worked for several months to get to a position where both parties felt comfortable - we weren't the cheapest and we weren't the most expensive, but we could clearly show value and the support needed to give Harrison Drury the confidence to sign off the proposal.”

THE PRACTICALITIES OF CLOUD MIGRATION

Harrison Drury settled on a full DaaS service with all data and infrastructure managed with Cloud Geeni. [LPM](#)

Read more about Harrison Drury's successful migration to cloud on the LPM website

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What's next in tech?



It's time for firms to rethink their tech stack in line with future priorities, says Kaden Smith of NetDocuments

Over the last few years, embracing cloud technology has been all but essential to business survival and continuity. But many teams were forced to fast-track the process as work-from-home mandates went into place practically overnight.

Now, there's a new challenge on the horizon: building the post-pandemic future. For many organisations, the 'return to normal' means it's also time to re-evaluate their tech stack and explore what they want that future to look like — whether that means leaving some "survival mode" solutions behind, going all-in on cloud-based tools, or both.

Fortunately, Legal Tech Publishing has recently released the 2022 Buyer's Guide series to help law firms, corporate legal departments, and the public sector get the information they need to make those essential decisions.

RISING TRENDS AND NEW PRIORITIES

In the 2022 Buyer's Guide, Jill Schornack, vice president of product at NetDocuments, shared insights into some of the key technology focuses for 2022. These new priorities will shape how teams evaluate both existing and

new solutions — and how they set their organisations up for success in the future. Here's a quick overview of what to be focusing on this year:

Implementing platforms to improve efficiency.

By bringing multiple technologies under one roof (and within one interface), platforms create a seamless user experience that takes less setup and produces faster outcomes.

Increased productivity using automation tools.

It's not just about using technology to do things faster, but helping users create more value. [LPM](#)

[Read more about what's new in the world of law firm technology LPM website](#)

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Digital-first, client-centric



A digital-first firm puts its clients and customers at the heart of everything it does, says Nick Hayne, head of professional services at Quiss

Given the expertise and experience of Quiss in the legal sector, it was hardly surprising that Osprey Approach, providers of the renowned all-in-one legal accounting, practice and case management software should seek our opinion, when shaping their product for the future. When developing your cloud-based legal software, it's critical to identify and resolve the persona of the intended users, much like we do when we tailor our managed IT services to our law firm clients.

The first step in creating a product or service that is attractive to those in the legal sector, who typically need to operate at peak efficiency and productivity if increased profitability is to be realised, is to recognise the importance of a 'digital-first mindset'. A digital-first mindset is about using technology to put the customer first – essentially creating a customer-centric culture. It means constantly looking to improve the user experience and ensuring that customer needs – rather than the path of least resistance – guide every decision made.

Digital-first means approaching any new challenge or opportunity with the assumption that the solution should be as digital as possible. This approach ensures

businesses that adopt a digital-first mindset can stay ahead of the curve and can capitalise on the latest technologies.

Using the appropriate technology allows firms to deliver a highly personalised experience, like using digital meeting technology, such as Teams, to engage more fully with clients. Technology also allows lawyers to communicate, connect and collaborate more effectively, with clients and colleagues. And of course, given the degree to which law firms have become the favourite target of cyber-criminals, cloud-based technology allows even small law firms to improve their security. [LPM](#)

[Read more about being a digital-first, client-centric firm on the LPM website](#)

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Support to scale

Read how Town Legal worked with CTS to move from a shared desktop to a laptop-centric model in order to increase agility and flexibility

Well-established and cutting-edge firm, Town Legal, chose to move from a shared desktop to a laptop-centric model in order to increase agility and flexibility as the firm continues to expand.

THE REQUIREMENT

As the contract with their incumbent came to an end, after being with them since their conception in 2016, Town Legal reviewed their business objectives and began to reassess what they required – and expected – from a managed service provider.

Having grown from six to fifty employees in just five years, the firm recognised a need to implement a new desktop solution that provided them with increased mobility and flexibility, enabling their fee earners to work more efficiently, no matter the time or location, to provide a superior service to their clients.

Town Legal took the strategic decision to partner with a legal sector specialist who had the knowledge and expertise to fully support their business objectives

of continued growth and improved user experience.

THE SOLUTION

Upon carrying out their due diligence and receiving glowing recommendations, Town Legal selected CTS who proposed a Microsoft Managed Desktop solution, combined with legal specialist 24/7/365 support and a strategy consultancy service.

With CTS' Microsoft Managed Desktop solution, the reliance on a hosted desktop environment was removed, and all IT was managed through Town Legal's existing laptop estate. This allowed the firm to cut costs on licensing and infrastructure, reducing the platform complexity resulting in a better user experience. The legacy phone system was migrated into the Microsoft Teams platform resulting in a unified communication system for smooth and efficient collaboration across the entire firm, including the NEAT video conferencing system.

Furthermore, the firm was able to



consolidate and optimise its existing Microsoft investments, such as its

“We chose CTS because they were able to demonstrate significant forward-thinking around IT solutions in the legal sector, including the ability to maintain a discipline in their service delivery that we require.”

GAVIN CURTIS, HEAD OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, TOWN LEGAL

Microsoft 365 licenses, as well as take advantage of CTS' Managed 365 security solution, which ensured its ability to continue providing a secure, high-quality

client service.

CTS also proposed 24/7/365 managed support, delivered by teams located in the UK and New Zealand. [LPM](#)

Read more about Town Legal's journey to scalability with CTS on the LPM website

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Emily Nash
Head of client services
emilyn@lpmmag.co.uk

