

Joined-up thinking



Gary Shaw at Accesspoint says firms should ensure their systems are integrated and interconnected

Despite the uncertainty created by the 'year of Covid', law firms may not have suffered as much as first thought and, somewhat unexpectedly, could come out of the pandemic in good shape.

One major trend we saw at the height of the pandemic, however, was many SME firms experiencing redundancies, furloughing staff and overall scaling down. Although this brought about the expected negative effects in many firms – including reduced manpower and increased workloads – these were to some degree offset by a rise in automation of tasks, offering firms the chance to bring back staff at their convenience. The result was more and more firms having space in their budgets to do other things, which, in turn, required more consideration around what to do with this extra budget.

So, now seems like the right time to closely examine what the future holds and really consider some of the more joined-up, forward-thinking options the legal IT market has to offer.

But, there are dangers. One seemingly harmless manoeuvre we've seen many firms take has been steering away from traditional procedures the legal industry has grown accustomed to, with the adoption of new gadgets and applications. Now, the idea of being more forward-thinking isn't the issue here – that's certainly something that should be embraced. The real problem is an oversaturated marketplace and products that stand alone or are difficult to integrate with a firm's practice management system. We've seen many

firms make somewhat hasty decisions without mapping out the long-term plan.

Unfortunately, the firms that got lost in an exciting array of products are now beginning to realise the problems inherent in their investments when they have to consider third-party applications and software solutions. In addition to the extremely long implementation timeframes, many of today's apps don't lend themselves well to a joined-up tech environment and lack the ability to integrate with existing systems – resulting in a disjointed collection of investments.

This shouldn't deter your firm from enjoying the many benefits that innovative technologies offer, but simply tip you off as to where legal should be heading: a totally integrated, secure, cloud-based legal platform. This new direction will set your firm at an advantage and maximise all the efficiencies a collection of disparate third-party products and bespoke solutions have to offer. **Continue reading why joined-up legal platforms are the future, here.**

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