

Q&amp;A

## Uber SME

Victor van der Poel, director at Accesspoint Technologies, answers questions on keeping up with the tide of change and disruption in 2019, and what innovation should really mean for SME law firms



### Q How can we be more innovative?

**A** This is a question I frequently get asked and my short answer is: don't make things difficult, look at what you already have and what's readily available in the marketplace to join up the gaps where you perhaps need smarter thinking applications to improve efficiencies. Innovation means 'into new' but in today's business world, and for many, innovation is thought of as something 'completely new' – a disruptive service, product, device or novelty, generated and brought to life by using a certain mindset or thinking methodology, that goes beyond the present and into the future. A slight difference in perception.

### Q Do you have any examples of innovation?

**A** Uber springs to mind. Taking a basic, familiar idea (a taxi ride) and re-presenting the service offering to the marketplace via newer, more familiar, more progressive hardware and software (in this case, a smartphone and an app). Underneath all of that is a revamped and remapped service delivery methodology, but the end product remains the taxi ride. Often, innovation is considered time-consuming, risky and expensive: not something falling within the

immediate business remit or practising philosophy of today's pressured SME law firm. When we talk about innovation in our sector, we need to distill our interpretation of innovation into its basic and constituent parts – what separates actual innovation from everything else? For me, it comes down to improvement. Without improvement, innovation isn't really innovation, it's just the taxi ride.

### Q Why do we need to be more innovative?

**A** Relentless disruption, change and innovation. These are again the key themes in 2019 for lawyers and their practices. Law firms are seeing increasingly sophisticated technologies alongside peer and client pressures, plus ever-advancing regulatory systems and processes. Law firms are in a demanding race to keep up. However, these changes also present an opportunity to reimagine legal services to better meet market demands. Hundreds of companies across the globe now develop and sell technology to the legal market. Leading law firms are appointing dedicated technical teams to combine innovation and legal skills. The need for SME law firms to join the hype has never been more important.

### Q Where do I start?

**A** Work with what you already have (your taxi ride). This could be your PMS. Reuse existing PMS functionality to its full potential. Then look to the market for bolt-on best-of-breed products, which can leverage the stateless APIs (interfaces) of most PMS solutions. Then look at how other business process automation software could benefit you by integrating within and around your PMS. We work with firms who have started this type of thought process. They are the innovators in terms of how a modern law firm can operate using a totally joined-up business software platform. Soon we will have CRM solutions and full web integration as a daily automated 'take it for granted' process enhancing your PMS. **LPM**

Send Victor your questions:  
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## ABOUT

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