



Q&A

Making IT happen

Victor van der Poel, director at Accesspoint Technologies, on some easy wins for SME law firms when it comes to leveraging their technology

Q What is the art of making IT happen?

A In short, understanding the all-important market drivers and creating different solutions much faster and better than your competitors.

Q Where should our thoughts and investment plans for IT be focused?

A How many times do we receive an email, only to answer the phone five minutes later because the caller has not had a response yet? Everything is more instant, and clients want their answers now. So, given the fact that most industry observers believe that success will, to a large extent, be based upon innovation around service delivery, it seems to me the next steps that should be taken from an IT development perspective are those that will bring about a much faster, closer and better structured 'sticky' collaboration between lawyer and client. Social media has changed how we interact and communicate, contributing to the pressure on business to be more personal and

responsive. Creating direct and highly secure personalised communication channels is becoming a key focus for modern law firms. Such channels not only answer the speed issue and make things sticky, but dramatically improve the client experience with improved information sharing possibilities and immediate communication between client and lawyer.

Q How can I get quick wins from IT?

A We don't want to have to continually reproduce or re-enter data which our client has already provided, or that they could provide electronically. We want to better structure and control the manner in which they provide it to us. We need to be more mindful of clients of the future - the generation that doesn't know what it means to live in a world where the internet or smartphones don't exist. We need to look at how they see the world and interact with one another. Many of them already balk at the notion of sending an email - it's too slow. They prefer instant messaging. Today we are able to, and must go, further. At a basic level, we need to increase our use of electronic forms. No, not more forms for more work, but more structured forms, for more immediate responses, and providing more meaningful



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interaction with the client. For example, the increased use of diagnostic forms to collect information from a potential or prospective client can greatly speed up the interaction between the client and their solicitor. This approach will also ensure that the client arrives understanding more about the complexities of the case, and therefore what value their solicitor brings. If we have the client respond to pre-prescribed questions we can collect and store all responses instantly and electronically in our systems for consideration or reference at any point in time. Of course, on arriving in our system the capture process from our electronic forms can go on to spawn a series of automated events via our practice management systems. Bringing all of this together is the art of making IT happen. **LPM**

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