

LPM: Easing into Innovation

By [Carla Landry](#) on July 26, 2021

Innovate or die, they said. Well, you have a chief innovation officer, don't you? Whether you do or you don't, it turns out that innovation isn't so easy. For one thing, it could require a level of risk that many law firm partners aren't comfortable with. After all, managing risk is a big part of what lawyers do daily.

But there's risk, too, in standing still. Especially when the competitive landscape is rapidly changing. While some firms are ruminating about risk, ALSPs, law companies and Big Law are transforming the legal ecosystem. And despite all rumors to the contrary, these alternative providers are here to stay.

That's why law firms, both small and large, must find better ways to deliver their services. Innovative strategies, however, particularly the type that transform law firms, require partner buy-in. What can your firm do to introduce innovation without alienating the very people needed to get the job done?

They can start by reframing the discussion. What's innovation about in the first place? The first things partners may consider is optimizing processes, installing cutting-edge technology, or even inventing a whole new business model. These things might facilitate innovation. But let's not conflate the means with the intention. At the end of the day, innovation is about creating value, both for the firm and for its clients. When you start from the position of value creation, it's easier to get partners engaged. After all, value is a key driver of overall profitability.

Remember, too, that innovation doesn't have to be scary or radical. Transformational change is highly overrated. Not only is it risky, but there will be more than a few failures along the way. Give them permission to fail, the experts say. But here's the thing: Permission granted or not, lawyers really don't like to fail. To get partner buy-in to innovation, partners want short-term wins, long-term success, and mitigated risk.

Innovation generally doesn't flow from the top. And it certainly doesn't happen through the efforts of a rogue actor. The most transformative innovation will involve the legal team. They are, after all, the subject matter experts when it comes to the law. Partners must be included at the decision-making table and mobilized by the vision. Innovation succeeds through a handful of evangelists who will propel innovation forward and become further energized by the results. But where to begin?

Legal project management is one way to ease into innovation. LPM integrates legal technology and project management skills, providing more efficient ways to help clients meet their objectives. And LPM isn't just for big firms. Clients are increasingly demanding better, more cost-effective legal service delivery. These demands place downward pressure on pricing and increase the opportunity to rethink legal processes.

With LPM, legal teams find better ways to service clients, reimagining how they deliver legal services. The best LPM practices provide transparency into the process, simplify budgeting, and facilitate critical communication. Matter teams can resolve issues as they go rather than at billing time. Effective innovation can help lawyers reclaim the time they spend doing repetitive, low value-added tasks.

You don't have to sink or swim. LPM is a great way to kick-start successful innovation. It's the type of initiative most

partners can get behind. With a little planning, you can easily control the pace of innovation and establish a comfortable level of change. It's a strategic approach that quickly delivers efficiencies your clients will appreciate, as well.