

What the Tech Are We Doing Now?

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You are here... resolutely navigating through the second half of the year 2020, arguably, one of the most memorable eras in modern history. Clearly, there is no better time to redefine success. While the world stood still, everything changed.

Yet, fortunately, there is work to be done. Somehow, in the middle of all this change, we must find a way to pick up where we left off. And where we left off is with corporate clients demanding more from their outside counsel.

Frozen in Place

Given the somewhat chaotic current environment, it can be difficult to challenge employees with even more change. They've just spent the last six months fumbling around on Zoom or Skype or some other "user-friendly" videoconferencing tool, determined to make work-from-home actually work. All the while homeschooling the kiddos and trying to get the little one to sleep long enough to get through the next virtual meeting.

And now you want them to focus on *another* technology?

Post-pandemic, you may find that your people are seemingly stuck. This is what psychologist Kurt Lewin referred to as frozen in place, resistant to change, even when faced with good opportunities. Though the theory is 50 years old, it couldn't be more applicable than it is right now.

That's why now is the perfect time to explore what technology can do for your firm. It doesn't even have to be something new. Dust off a technology solution that you already have available. How about one that supports legal project management (LPM), for example, and has never been fully utilized? Use what you already have. Just make sure the technology is not just technology for the sake of gee-whiz. It must be part of an overarching, strategic picture. It's about supporting your clients in a way that engenders loyalty and drives deeper relationships.

Technology isn't everything. But, a series of timely short-term technology wins could overcome a general feeling of malaise and strengthen your firm for an uncertain environment. Here are four things you can do right now to bring the focus back and help employees regain forward momentum.

4 Ways to Renew Firm-wide Focus

1. Position technology as a tool that will help the firm capitalize on new opportunities.

Acknowledge that the competitive landscape has changed. Firms must adapt and repurpose to stay in the game. Technology is simply the vehicle that propels the firm forward. Your people still need to provide the strategic roadmap. Properly implemented, the technology that supports our example, LPM, helps to ensure that the firm is optimizing workflow, performance and communication.

2. Reduce the number of barriers to adopting new technologies.

People can be resistant to anything new, but technology in particular. It's too complicated. It was easier the old way. Or maybe just because it's Tuesday. You can't overcome every obstacle. But avoid the things that make people say no. We have seen in our practice how easy it can be to overlook the obvious. Minimize the complexity, provide clear instructions, use large, easy-to-read fonts, and lose the techno-jargon. Then, clearly lay out the benefits, ensuring that they underscore firm and practice group strategic goals.

3. Emphasize the need to build strong remote relationships with clients.

Technology can feel distancing, especially right now. But what clients want more than face time is quality, transparency and predictable (sometimes lower) cost. Communication is a key component of the client relationship and the perception of value. Build onboarding processes that manage and elucidate client expectations. Gain agreement on deadlines, project milestones, and how you will communicate going forward.

4. Emphasize that workforce agility is critical to future success.

Once Covid-19 is behind us, global attention will focus on the next big thing. It could be environmental concerns that keep us all working from home in the foreseeable future. Be prepared with an agile workforce. Agility should be the touchstone of the new operating model. Build training that supports remote workforce capabilities. Ensure that you have integrated agile policies into job descriptions, evaluations, and processes.

Which technologies will take your firm to the next level? Technology that complements your firm and practice group goals can provide the competitive momentum you need and the value-add clients demand.