



Working from anywhere

ALTERNATIVE INSIGHTS: LEGAL IT HANGOUT #9
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ISCG

Top 3 takeaways:

- 1** When it comes to implementing a tech solution, law firms often have limited resources and experience. IT partners can help them keep up with that tech knowledge but need to understand the firm's business as well.
- 2** Flexibility around working at home or in the office needs to be balanced with the demands of clients. For example, by mandating core hours when staff must be available.
- 3** Most clients don't need to know where lawyers are working from since they are paying for legal knowledge and advice – which can be delivered remotely.

Our final Legal IT Hangout of 2020 focused on going beyond home working to the rather exciting prospect of 'working from anywhere'.

Are firms ready to meet the challenges when it comes to people, client services, technology, and operations? We gathered together IT experts from leading law firms to share their experiences and insights. The right IT partner can prove indispensable to navigating this largely uncharted terrain. Our sponsor, ISCG, was present throughout the discussion, leading a fascinating Q&A session on legal client workplace collaboration. The IT solutions provider has over 15 years of experience helping international enterprises build and maintain critical IT systems; implementing custom-made applications, security systems and processes to protect data and streamline operations.

CONTRIBUTING COMPANIES



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The People

We first looked at how a trend toward working from anywhere could impact the contract that firms have with their people. How will it change what people expect from their firms?

Tolan Collins, IT Manager at Hewitsons Solicitors, said that staff would want to work from home going forward. The firm is looking to a blended approach to remote working: "We have provided guidelines to sit alongside employment contracts. And we're encouraging staff to spend 50% of their time in the office if they can because it's important for team development, exchanging information, and collaboration." However, this flexibility is balanced with the demands of clients. "We've promoted the core hours of the business as being between 9:30am until 3:30pm. We need everyone to be available," he said.

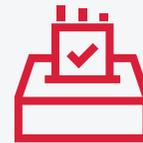
Keystone Law has been 'virtual' since its inception and their lawyers have always worked from wherever they want, said Maurice Tunney, the firm's Director of Technology & Innovation. "Our lawyers have close relationship with our clients in that we focus on small medium enterprises. The clients don't know where the lawyers are half the time, and they don't need to because they are paying for legal knowledge and advice," he said. Though they have had to transition back-office staff to work from home more effectively: "We're flexible with how they're working anyway so it hasn't been a major change."

Marek Laskowski, IT Director at Domanski Zakrzewski Palink (DZP) said that clients have quickly adopted the technology in terms of legal services.



"At the beginning of 2020 we implemented a new collaboration platform. Now with respect to any meetings, we send the documents and the link to the calls and everyone realized how remote meetings can be very productive" he said. "Our Lawyers initially had a problem with adopting new technology. But when lockdown happened, and whole team was faced with new reality, digital transformation has been adopted very quickly."

Alasdair Sowerby, Head of ICT at Devonshires, was particularly struck by how unprepared lawyers were in contrast with IT departments. "Working from home isn't a new concept. New people coming in from different verticals will expect this from day one," he said. The firm had remote working solutions ready to go: "VPN, Citrix, that kind of stuff. We were piloting it and within three days we had scaled up all our technology and moved from being a 100% on-site law firm with 300 staff, to a 100% working remotely law firm."



PROFESSIONALS WHO ATTENDED THE SESSION

Poll results:

1 How does your cooperation look like with external IT integrators/ partners?



40% We have an IT partner that we are happy with and don't plan to change it

36% We are constantly looking for new solutions with them

24% We do all on our own

0% We outsource everything

2 What is your strategy in reference to migration to the Cloud?



60% We already utilize Microsoft Office 365 and/or Azure

24% We are planning to migrate to the Cloud in 2021

16% We are evaluating the Cloud but not planning to migrate yet

0% We would like to migrate our systems and solutions to the Cloud



A view from Europe

The next part of the hangout took an international turn. Attendees were treated to an inside look at innovation within DZP, Poland's largest law firm. Anna Jacobi-Konik, International Sales Manager at ISCG, had worked closely with Marek to deliver a legal client workspace collaboration. In this Q&A, Anna interviewed Marek about how they had optimised processes within his law firm.

Anna: What were your challenges at the beginning of this year that drove these changes?

Marek: On ongoing basis our organization is looking for new ways to optimize different processes which help both our staff and customers. Recently more than ever the changes or new modifications were much needed as a result of the challenges related to Covid crisis. We needed to be able to quickly adapt to remote functioning of our stuff and help our clients without much disturbance resulted in digitalization of some processes. And of course we needed to stay competitive while keeping the costs down. So the main points on our agenda were:

- Back then the costs of VDR were quite high, were looking for a more cost effective solution and transaction cost cutting
- There were security constraints with the rented VDR solution, which was highly linked with the transaction risk
- Need to better secure the after transaction data
- Higher than ever need to have access to data via mobile devices

Anna: In law practices, those challenges can negatively impact the duration and satisfactory result of a particular case. Tell us about your journey to this successful solution.

Marek: We have been working with our IT Partner ISCG for quite some time now, where they have helped us modernize our IT infrastructure and began the digitalization process of a number of services. Just recently we have implemented Office 365. During our many discussions we elaborated on our current challenges and came to an agreement that there is one solution that would help us be more competitive in our market while optimizing some processes and costs. It was implementation of Virtual Data Room which is part of Microsoft Office 365. VDR is an online solution which is used for collaboration and data exchange/storage and file management. It is especially utilized for transactions in the area of: M&A, LIFE SCIENCE, MEDICAL APPROVAL, LITIGATION. I have to say that I am very pleased how much of an impact this relatively small implementation have had on our security levels, closing time of cases and transaction costs.



PROFESSIONALS
WHO ATTENDED
THE SESSION

Poll results:

3 What do you think summer 2021 will look like?



100%
Hybrid work model with flexible work patterns, places of work, and methods of work

0% Normalities of 2019 will have returned with meeting, working and networking face-to-face

4 What security aspects of remote work are the most important for you?



36%
Strong authentication

32% Application security

23% Security of workstations and mobile devices

9% Data encryption

0% Privileged accounts management

0% Other not listed above

Anna: We're thrilled that we helped your law firm achieve success in such a short period of time. What were the major parts of this success?

Marek: There are actually a few benefits of this implementation. But one of the major ones was that we have saved over a few hundred thousand dollars per year in costs of VDR rental as our solution has been deployed for a very small fraction of that cost and even with the ongoing support of this solution by ISCG the overall costs is 10% of what we were paying before. Another one of the key benefits over the last few quarters was the availability of mobile devices uses via VDR which has helped us close very time sensitive cases when people were on quarantine. This would not be possible AT ALL with the rental solution. And lastly with the new function of rights management now we ARE FINALLY able to manage and mitigate risk related to file and security management. As an example now we can be sure that documents that are not intended for forwarding or copying will not have that option by the document recipient

Anna: That's a great example of the impact that a small change can have on the business. How can other firms achieve similar, if not better, outcomes?

Marek: When doing digital transformation meaning migration of services to the cloud, it's a Myth that you will no longer need a technological/integration partner anymore. You need a partner that not only understands the available technologies (and we know that what's currently available is changing very fast) but also its benefits and risks depending on a specific client needs or an industry or a country the company is in. Timing is also critical, because when you choose a partner that doesn't have sufficient amount of resources to deliver the services you need with quality that you expect your business can really take a hit. In addition, in the Law firms/organizations the IT departments in many cases have very limited resources and experience plus current technological knowledge and capabilities so again I recommend teaming up with a good partner that also have international experience like we have. Partners have cross sector experience which can be utilized to propose optimal solution. Because ISCG has international customers with multiple locations globally in different industries they have on many occasions shared valuable examples of utilization of specific solutions or services in areas we have not thought about before.

The Q&A undoubtedly encouraged attendees to think about how they were driving their own digital transformations. When we polled them on where they were at with digital transformation, 64% said 'We have many processes digitalized and it's an ongoing process'. As Anna pointed out, digital transformation is about security processes, proper technology, educating users, and consistent support. Pulling together all of these elements, and more, is where ISCG excels, using their strong expertise and experience to develop innovative, personalised solutions to deliver measurable business outcomes.

We also polled attendees on 'How does your cooperation look like with external IT integrators/partners?' 36% said 'We are constantly looking for new solutions with them' and 40% said 'We have an IT partner that we are happy with and don't plan to change.' One of the strengths of partnering with ISCG is the strength, in turn, of their own partnerships. They work closely with systems, hardware and software manufacturers and are a Certified Partner of several major tech vendors (including Ivanti, Thycotic, TrendMicro), in addition to being a Microsoft Gold Partner in business infrastructure solutions.



Technology & Operations

The discussion then turned to what working from anywhere meant for technology and operations. How were firms dealing with issues such as equipment provision and data security?

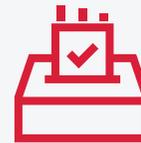
Keystone Law had the advantage of starting from scratch and building systems knowing that the firm was going to be dispersed, said Maurice. His advice was to keep it simple so lawyers wouldn't find another way: "Partners who joined us from big firms have admitted that when they were working remotely the systems weren't working for them, so they would email confidential documents to their Gmail accounts, then email them back to themselves."

Alasdair said that one of the biggest problems for their lawyers around tech was the unwillingness to let go of paper. "We were piloting a digital mailroom solution at the time. It went from being a pilot to going live to the entire firm in three days," he said. However, he acknowledged the need for hard copies in some cases: "There are lots of documents that can only ever be on paper. There still needs to be an office and they still deal with physical paper. So, we put a lot of processes in place around that rather than the tech."

We polled attendees on their strategy in reference to migration to the Cloud, and an overwhelming 60% said that they already used Microsoft Office 365 and/or Azure. Cloud services and system migrations are one of ISCG's specialities, integrating and delivering scalability and security, be it SASS, Office 365, Azure, or AWS.

When we polled attendees on what security aspects of remote work were most important for them, 36% pointed to strong authentication, followed closely by application security (32%). ICGS – with one of their stated missions being 'to protect' - is an ideal partner with regard to the many aspects of cybersecurity, including IT Systems, data security, and security maintenance. Their solutions include building and implementing security systems and conducting security audits.

It was an illuminating hangout with which to finish this year of upheaval, with firms definitely looking to harness the benefits of working from anywhere. The 'right partnership' was an overriding theme, and ISCG's success with DZP demonstrated just how much their in-depth technical knowledge is matched by their business expertise. They also operate from a philosophy of constantly looking forward – always on the lookout for innovative technology that can benefit businesses dealing with rapid change.



PROFESSIONALS WHO ATTENDED THE SESSION

Poll results:

5 Digital transformation - where are you at?



64% We have many processes digitalized and it's an ongoing process

27% We are at the beginning stage

9% We would like to start the transformation process

0% We are not interested in it

6 What is the most pressing challenge your firm is currently facing managing your data and content right now?



59% Working collaboratively/ Operational Efficiency

18% No issue with document management

14% Compliance

5% Document Security

5% Search and retrieval of your content



About ISCG

For the past 16 years, ISCG has worked with international organizations and help them with:

- 1 Increase sales by implementing custom made applications
- 2 Strengthen security systems and processes to prevent valuable organizational data or secrets from unauthorized hands
- 3 Streamline operations through the implementation of digital workflows
- 4 Providing tools like BI for making better business decisions
- 5 IT infra transformation to the cloud to allow for better and cost-effective and on-demand infrastructure for quickly changing business needs and facilitate ongoing support of needed IT services.

Doing complex and challenging IT systems implementation has always been our strength since we have an excellent Infrastructure, Cloud, Security and Business Application Development Team.

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