

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION IN LEGAL TEAMS



PAUL V.
SAUNDERS

Stewart McKelvey

The practice of law is changing. Legal service providers, whether they are law firms, solo practitioners, in-house legal departments, legal aid, crown attorneys or government lawyers, are increasingly expected to get more done in less time while maintaining quality. There are many reasons for this, but regardless of the cause, there is often a push to embrace technology to meet the increased demand.

Too often, legal teams want to jump to a technology solution to address their challenges before they fully understand the problem or the various solutions available to them. Lawyers are problem solvers by nature. Successful lawyers are generally able to quickly spot an issue, analyze it, and then develop a creative solution based on experience. However, with technology, the right solution is often not immediately apparent. Moving too fast will often result in failure. The following are some tips for legal teams looking to embrace technology and avoid common pitfalls:

Know your customer – It's important for legal teams to understand who

they are serving as a first step. If you are a law firm lawyer this is likely your client. For in-house lawyers it may be operational departments within your organization. Regardless of who it is, knowing your client and empathizing with their point of view is essential to success. Any technology solution must be focused on enhancing service from the customer's perspective. There are times where, for example, an organization's IT department may select technology without meaningful engagement by the people who it serves. This can often result in the development of flawed solutions and missed opportunities. It's important to know who your customer is and involve them in the development process as much as possible to ensure you are solving the right problems.

Secure buy-in on a clearly defined goal – You need to know what you're trying to accomplish from the outset. A lack of clear direction will doom a project. The goal shouldn't be to successfully select and install a new technology, but rather to achieve some meaningful benefit to your customers and stakeholders. An effective goal might be to reduce the amount of time, cost or effort it takes to resolve a frequent service request like drafting a contract or resolving a dispute. Once a clear goal is established, ensure you've secured buy-in on that goal from all key stakeholders. If they aren't bought in to

what you are trying to accomplish, you'll struggle with adoption down the road. Without a clear direction you also won't be able to course correct and prioritize needs and wants when times get tough.

Prepare for resistance – We often assume that the right solution will sell itself and that the benefits of new technology will be immediate. This is rarely the case. The natural human reaction to change is resistance. Even the most brilliant solutions will go unused and fail if the people side of change isn't properly managed. Leaders must assume their people will resist and prepare for it. Try to involve your people as much as possible in the process. They must feel that they "own" the solution rather than having it forced on them. The more time that is spent on communicating the need for the change and why it is necessary to achieve the organization's objectives, the greater likelihood it will result in success. Resistance is inevitable; how you prepare and respond to it is what matters.

Embrace technology at the right time – Meaningful change is a process. It is often better to start with a simple solution first before embarking on a larger, more timely and complicated undertaking (often involving new technology). Legal teams will often benefit by starting with more easily implemented

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solutions such as: leveraging existing technologies, visualizing their workflow using white boards and sticky notes, or developing standard work practices and checklists. These quick wins can generate momentum and success stories that can help secure buy-in from the team. This can also help build the business case for more challenging technology solutions that follow. Start with the solutions with the biggest potential benefit and least amount of effort. Those are generally not comprehensive technology overhauls, but simple common-sense solutions co-created by the team. When you are ready, embrace technology with some early victories under your belt once you've developed that foundation for success.

Develop sponsors – One of the most important steps you can take in launching a new technology is to develop a coalition of sponsors in your team that can champion the change. Your people are more likely to embrace it if someone they trust has already bought in. Your sponsors should represent a cross-section of your people. This wouldn't just include leadership, but rather influential individuals at all levels of the organization including lawyers, staff and managers. Sponsors will enable your teams to ease in to the change and help support organic growth and adoption. Rather than mandating compliance from on high, sponsors can help nudge people along and address the inevitable resistance. Just be sure to communicate to your sponsors what is expected of them and be specific on the role they are expected to play.

There is no guaranteed way to ensure your technology projects succeed, but if you follow the above tips, you'll increase the likelihood that they do.

CBA IN THE MEDIA A 2019 ROUNDUP

The CBA, both nationally and provincially, is an advocate and ally for the legal profession. This includes speaking out to advocate when issues arise which impact the profession and the justice system.

Throughout 2019, the CBA and CBA-NS issued public statements on a range of issues. In May, CBA-NS issued an important release applauding the statement of Hon. Justice Clément Gascon of the Supreme Court of Canada which shared his 20 year history of dealing with depression and anxiety disorders. The release included important information on the mental health of the legal profession and how to access support, including [CBA Wellness](#). Also in May, CBA-NS showed its support for the expansion of unified family courts across the Nova Scotia, and the extension of services in these court for litigants. The expansion of a province-wide unified family court has been a priority of the CBA-NS. The statement called on the federal government to fill judicial vacancies as quickly as possible to support the expansion.

In August, the CBA continued its advocacy for a fair justice system and issued a statement on legal aid for refugees, applauding the federal funding to support legal aid for refugees. The statement included a reminder that in June 2019, the CBA launched its #LegalAidMatters

campaign.

More recently, in October, the CBA-NS issued a statement calling for the Nova Scotia government to reconsider Bill 203, legislation that would to remove the right of Crown Attorneys to send any collective bargaining disputes with government to a fair, impartial, and binding arbitration process.

November 2019 was also busy, with the CBA-NS President providing media comment to CBC News on the impact that Halifax Regional Police officers facing criminal charges may have on eroding public trust.

The Sexual Harassment Working Group was also featured in the Chronicle Herald for its ongoing work to develop bystander intervention training for legal workplaces. A related press release issued by the CBA-NS explained that the training will empower participants to identify sexual harassment and give them the skills and confidence to take positive action. Interested legal workplaces are invited to register their interest in the training by contacting the CBA-NS offices.

You can read all of these public statements (and more) at <https://cbans.ca/News-Media>. In 2020, CBA-NS will continue to be a vocal advocate and ally for the legal profession and the justice system.