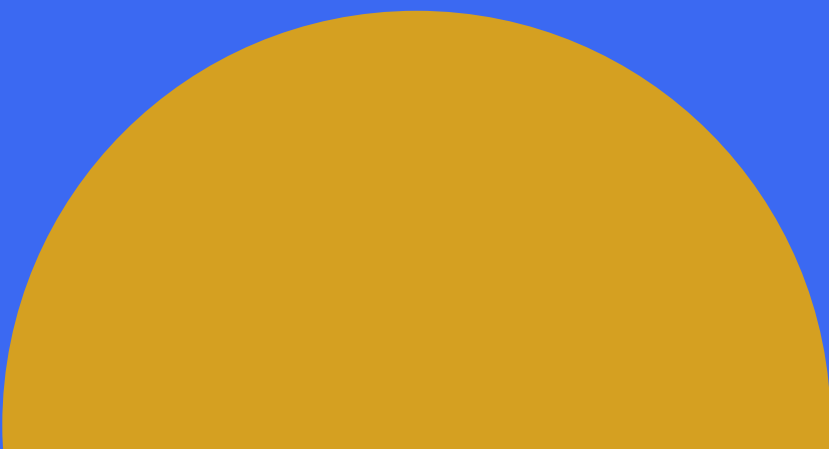# Athennian

The Role Technology
Plays In Employee Morale:

How Legal Teams Can Improve Efficiency, Operations and Increase Employee Engagement With Tech.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Ginevra is the President of the International Legal Technology Association (ILTA) and the National Director, Innovation and Knowledge Programs at Gowling WLG (Canada) LLP. She is a creative thinker best known for quickly turning vision into practical results and bringing out the best and most in others. She is a dynamic and frequent speaker and published author on the law, legal practice, innovation, legal technology, and related topics.

Written in collaboration with Stephanie Ford from Obiter Marketing

Obiter Marketing is a content marketing consultancy focusing exclusively on the legal industry. It caters to the unique marketing needs of lawyers, law firms, and legal technology providers.

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Introduction

Lawyers and paralegals use technology in every aspect of their daily personal and work lives. Computers, mobile devices, and the use of software are ubiquitous - but they aren't all created equal.

Mobile devices and computers are developing rapidly, but it's the development in purpose-built legal technologies that really holds the potential to change the legal industry. A dazzling array of purpose-built legal technology designed to improve accuracy, productivity, and client satisfaction is available, many of which offer a fast return-on-investment for the firms and legal departments that adopt them. By reducing the amount of time it takes to complete a task, lawyers and paralegals are able to do more in less time.

These benefits are attractive for law firms, especially those seeking to offer cost-effective services in an increasingly crowded market. More still, these legal technologies have a powerful and profound impact on the legal professionals using them.

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Nobody goes to law school or through a law clerk diploma program envisioning being mired down in repetitive, tedious tasks that leave little time for strategic thinking. It's the excitement of working on challenging transactions and navigating novel issues that drives professionals to choose the field of law.

Morale naturally increases the more you can remove the tasks that detract from the work that challenges and excites those doing it. I've seen it time and time again.

– Ginevra Saylor

5 Employee-Centric Considerations When Choosing Legal Technologies

Between The Great Resignation and higher-than-average levels of burnout in the legal industry, law firms and legal departments have plenty to gain by implementing measures to increase employee morale. Legal technologies are one such measure that can promote career satisfaction for legal professionals.

To help select legal technologies that benefit your employees (and, of course, your clients), consider the following:

1 Is the technology built-for-purpose?

Legal technologies are being held in increasingly high regard by legal professionals, particularly younger lawyers of whom 40% view artificial intelligence and technology training as crucial to their career progression.

The hiring process reflect this. Today lawyers and paralegals commonly ask what built-for-purpose technologies their prospective law firms use and what technology implementations are planned for the near team. Law firms are hearing more questions in interviews about innovation budgets and how much firms are willing to spend on technology and training for team members.

So, law firms and legal departments are talking about their built-for-purpose legal technologies to attract and retain talent. Leveraging cloud-software that makes managing legal matters easier gives firms and legal departments a competitive advantage in marketing themselves to legal professionals looking to work in a cutting-edge environment.

Naturally, clients also benefit from the increasing use of legal technology, which enhances client satisfaction. Given that managing displeased clients can be demanding, enhanced client satisfaction can also boost employee morale and job satisfaction.

Consider AI-enhanced due diligence, for example:

Humans involved in due diligence can perform only so many hours of this work to the high standards required before fatigue affects their attention and engagement. AI-enhanced due diligence enables the process to run more swiftly to everyone's benefit.

- Clients are satisfied with the speed, reduced risk, and improved accuracy.

- Lawyers and paralegals have time to focus on analysis and management.

- Law firms can perform the work for a lower and more predictable cost.

2 Does the technology allow users to collaborate productively from anywhere?

Cloud-based software was already enjoying increased popularity before the the pandemic hit. But, the pandemic certainly has highlighted the value of software that legal teams can use wherever they are. Almost overnight, legal teams needed convenient remote access to their files, workflows, documents, and data. Cloud-based platforms support this.

Going forward, workplace flexibility will undoubtedly play a key role in employee attraction, satisfaction, and retention. So, law firms and legal departments must continue to invest in technologies that promote workplace flexibility to attract and keep legal talent.

Equally important, these location-independent products must streamline collaboration and make it easy to access up-to-date documents, data, and information. Those responsible for selecting legal technologies should seek out products that eliminate data silos and give priority to platforms that create a single source of truth for the information and documents various stakeholders need. This eliminates the friction and frustration that could come with remote working, and replaces it with the morale-boosting benefits of improved collaboration.

3 Is the technology user-friendly?

Technology offers broad benefits, including increased employee morale. But, these benefits can only be realized when the technology is user-friendly.

The user interface is central to any technology's user-friendliness. A user-friendly interface allows users to navigate the platform with minimal training or difficulty. Attractive and intuitive visual elements help increase comprehension and navigability, without crowding the screen.

Reliability is also critical. Software that functions poorly can be a source of frustration for lawyers and paralegals.

To ensure any legal technologies implemented improve employee morale, they should include features that increase reliability. Examples include auto saving progress, fast and seamless upgrades, and infrequent program crashes.

Firms and legal departments should carefully evaluate the vendor and software before purchasing, and engage key stakeholders in later piloting the new software. Ultimately, if the users don't find the software convenient and easy, the software will bring no real benefit.

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> *Athennian is a perfect example of technology that benefits all parties. Athennian users and their clients are global. So, having access to virtual minute books and corporate documents changes clients' access to their records for the better. Clients have quick and easy access to the information they need when they need it, can ask questions based on current information, and save money by not needing to contact their lawyers for routine information. The convenient and user-friendly portal enables legal professionals to work more effectively and accurately from anywhere in the world to provide even better client service.*
>
> **– Ginevra Saylor**

4 Does the technology reduce the volume of repetitive and/or low value work for legal professionals?

Lawyers and paralegals are highly trained professionals who crave engaging and challenging work. When their work involves repetitive or low-value tasks, their satisfaction with that job can decrease. At its worst, decreased satisfaction can contribute to disengagement and attrition or burnout.

To reduce the likelihood of negative impact, law firms and legal departments should look to legal technologies that automate repetitive or low-value work. Common examples of automating technologies include:

- Passive time capture software.

- Entity management platforms.

- Contract review and generation programs.

- AI-enhanced due diligence.

These technologies improve employee morale by freeing legal professionals' time to focus on higher value work, without sacrificing quality. Additionally, legal technologies help improve productivity, profitability, and consistency - all of which can contribute to an professionals' self perception and overall value of their role.

Critically, reducing the volume of low value work through automation can also improve work/life balance for legal professionals. With demand for improved work/life balance increasing, law firms that implement changes that promote real balance will be in a better position to attract and retain legal staff.

5 Does the vendor support the team through the implementation process – and beyond?

With competition increasing in the legal technology sphere, law firms and legal departments look for a streamlined, thoughtful, and relatively stress-free implementation process. This comes down to careful project management, good communication, lawyer and paralegal buy-in, and collaboration between the vendor and the legal team.

Legal professionals receive the most benefit when they're able to make the most of the software's available functionality. To achieve this, legal technology vendors must provide training and support beyond implementation. Ideally, vendors' support services should reduce or eliminate any barriers to accessing their software's full potential.

The Bottom Line

Employees, clients, and law firm and legal departments all benefit from efficient, effective, and accurate internal processes. Implementing built-for-purpose legal software goes a long way to helping achieve these goal. And when this happens, everyone comes out ahead.

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