

TRANSFORMATION EFFICIENCY INNOVATION









The hybrid workspace is here to stay.

As hybrid workforces continue to emerge and grow, law firms are establishing smarter ways of working that enable employees to be productive at any time and any place. By using the right expertise and technology, these hybrid workspaces provide organisations with the resilience and scalability they need to thrive in a rapidly changing world. Kyocera's ability to provide a comprehensive solution designed specifically for law firms means that customers only have to deal with one organisation, and Kyocera can manage the whole process.

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Call change

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or a long time, it was common to hear that a transformation agenda was especially hard to pursue in the law firm environment. There were just so many stakeholders to get and keep onside, and if something was already working perfectly well, why risk making it worse?

Of course, it wasn't necessarily working quite that well for everyone involved in the effort. But in any event, now the prevailing narrative has changed. That 'burning platform' was well and truly engulfed in 2020, and the risk of doing nothing different rather clearly outweighed the headaches that invariably accompany a change, even for the better.

Firms where transformation teams had seen relative success in gradually building greater appreciation of their efforts over the years were probably in a stronger position for responding to the pandemic on various fronts. But it would be a big mistake for anyone to think that organisational appetite for change can now be assumed.

The hybrid working many now expect to see take hold won't be as easy as saying 'work anywhere you like, whenever you like, until you get the job done'. It'll be good to see focus on achieving outputs rather than notching up inputs, for sure - perhaps it'll even shift the status of the billable hour a touch - but people don't work in bubbles. Whether or not you agree a physical collaboration space will be needed to keep forward-thinking firms challenging their status quo, project teams and wider cultures need to be kept together.

At Briefing TEI (Transformation, Efficiency, Innovation) 2021, we heard that firms might consider several alternatives to their current technology to remain competitive in the emerging landscape - and those business cases for new infrastructure, devices, access points and views should certainly be carefully weighed. But firms will need to keep investing in meaningful ideas exchange and empathy as well.

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BRIEFING PEOPLE



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Does your data connect all the dots, from people to process and finance? Imagine a single source of truth giving you 100% visibility into your firm, inside and out. Get the right insights to the right people at the right time, and be ready for anything.







Change your mindset

Natalie Kuebler, director at Altruistic Ventures, outlines a process of enabling firms to collaboratively come at questions of business transformation, efficiency and innovation from creative, fresh angles – and, of course, while working remotely

s we creep toward 18 months since the Covid-19 pandemic began, the legal industry has undoubtedly changed. Professional social media exchanges are now filled with personal perspective on topics historically considered taboo, professional meetings are gatecrashed by family pets and the odd child's request for a snack, and homes and hearts are open to clients and colleagues. What better time to consider the balance between these newfound humanistic data points and the more traditional ones? At the **Briefing** TEI conference 2021, this was exactly the challenge set down by the two-hour 'lightning' version of the Altruistic Ventures (Alt-V Law) Legal Meth Lab.

What is the Legal Meth Lab?

Starting out as a podcast in mid-2020, the 'Legal Meth Lab' immediately conjures

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Problem Statement

Identify client segments which have been the most impacted by change in client experience throughout 2020. How do we preserve positive elements and what should change about the client experience in a 'post-COVID' world?



notes of Breaking Bad. It is in fact a reference to meth(odology) – and the discipline of considered and combined use of complementary methodologies to support sharing insights and skills to conceptualise ideas and implement innovative solutions across the legal industry with confidence and zeal.

The Legal Meth Lab officially launched in partnership with law firm Taylor Wessing's innovation programme in late 2020, when 40 innovators from across that firm, together with four global corporate clients, pioneered a path to solving a set of contemporary problems through an interactive, multimedia experience. Guided by the 'Essentials for the legal methodologist' card set (below) and digital assets, the teams were able to consider and

select a set of methods to support their exploration and generation of solution concepts.

Partnering up for **Briefing's** annual Transformation, Efficiency and Innovation (TEI) event on 24 March 2021, Altruistic Ventures delivered its 'lightning' Legal Meth Lab as a taster for the UK market, together with an exclusive invitation to delegates to contribute to the upcoming 'Collaborators' edition card set, due for release later in 2021. By imbuing a culture of deep creativity and groundbreaking innovation in the legal sector, Altruistic Ventures is determined to transform the industry – for the better.

Riding the lightning at Briefing TEI

First, delegates from firms including Bird & Bird, DAC Beachcroft, DLA Piper, Eversheds Sutherland, Herbert Smith Freehills, Osborne Clarke, Pinsent Masons, Slaughter and May and White & Case were invited to select an area of interest. Working

The Legal Meth Lab officially launched in partnership with law firm Taylor Wessing's innovation programme in late 2020, when 40 innovators from across the firm, together with four global corporate clients, pioneered a path

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in three multidisciplinary groups, they were rapidly guided through a set of immersive problem-exploration and solution-ideation activities.

Led by a team of industry experts -Natalie Kuebler (director, Alt-V Law), Allister Spencer (director, Alt-V Law), Jay Dunning (NED, Alt-V Law; and creativity and design lead at DWF Ventures) and Harriet Loach (innovation manager, Taylor Wessing), delegates transcended traditional design thinking. Through four 'lightning' rounds of activity, teams were reminded of the value of combined multidisciplinary techniques to problem-solve, with the aid of digital assets to support collaboration in the remote setting. The intensive session introduced techniques for efficient and effective solution ideation, which the delegates can now embed in their respective firms.

The powerful combination of sharing individual learned experiences, coupled with the introduction of iterative ideadevelopment methodologies, allowed the delegates to formulate solutions to compelling issues – in the safety of the lab.

Key areas that were identified for focus across the three core themes were employee onboarding and wellbeing, firm premises, facilities and tools, leveraging influence, and non-traditional funding methods for operational initiatives

You got a problem?

In the first lightning round, each team was introduced to the allocated problem and guided through a traditional empathy exercise to aid divergent thinking – with a twist. This activity supported introductions and shared perspectives across the team in the context of the problem at hand (p6).

Problems were developed ahead of the event in collaboration with the **Briefing** advisory board, prompting delegates to consider how we can preserve the positive elements of law firm culture (and lose those we can live without), optimise operations, standardise cybersecurity practices and transform client service delivery.

In the second lightning round, teams were introduced to methods to encourage focus on the problem (aid convergent thinking). Through combined quantitative and qualitative techniques, they translated the findings from the first round and looked at themes and priorities for redress (example above). Key areas identified for focus across the three core themes were employee onboarding and wellbeing, firm premises, facilities and tools, leveraging influence, and non-traditional funding methods for operational initiatives.

Not another app, dashboard or AFA solution

A lifecycle map was completed by the delegates to help to visualise a nextgeneration client delivery experience fit for a post-Covid world, while those looking to

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optimise operations completed 'user stories' to frame the associated stakeholders, their needs and business cases (example above). These divergent techniques helped the delegates to conceptualise solutions, agreeing their merits and viability.

A final lightning round saw each group capture and communicate the value of the solution via a model that enhances organisational clarity by identifying strengths, weaknesses and priorities. This process advanced ideas towards a tangible outcome - rapidly formulating a scope of initiatives that firms could prioritise. The concept solutions developed included references to reward and recognition through key performance indicators, productive budget, senior endorsements, influencers, acceptance of the possibility of failure, non-traditional resourcing (for example, staged budget approval, alternative resourcing models), ROI and benefits measurement, and communications surrounding all these elements.

Calling all collaborators

The Altruistic Ventures Legal Meth Lab is a uniquely digital experience curated to help legal methodologists to harness the power of methodology and discipline and build the future legal industry. In addition to your very own 'Essentials for the Legal Methodologist' card set, our intensive sessions are all led by industry experts, using various multimedia and interactive tools for change. ►

If you are interested in hosting a bespoke Legal Meth Lab, or contributing to the 'Collaborators edition' card set, please visit: www.altruisticventures.com/lightning-lab, or email info@altruisticventures.com

The Altruistic Ventures Legal Meth Lab is a uniquely digital experience curated to help legal methodologists to harness the power of methodology and discipline and build the future legal industry

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TRANSFORMATION, EFFICIENCY, INNOVATION: 2021

Productivity puzzle

Guy Phillips, VP, international business at NetDocuments, says the choice between collaboration and security is simpler than you think – it's a single solution

he year 2020 was a unique one for the legal industry.

Traditionally averse to any sort of change, legal professionals

everywhere have suddenly been thrown into situations that demand it – and lots of it. New communication, information sharing and security challenges cropped up overnight, and technology vendors from every sector have offered their services as firms searched for solutions to new roadblocks.

In the recent **Briefing** Frontiers 2021 Legal IT landscapes report, we saw some key trends that emerged from this quick adoption of new technologies. It was unsurprising that 'agile working solutions' – along with business intelligence, compliance, security and collaboration - were top of the investment agenda.

Let's explore those in some more detail, and consider how firms can use the right cloud applications to solve their governance challenges while maintaining productivity.

A swift move to the cloud

In recent years, law firms have, slowly but surely, been making purposeful moves towards the cloud. But with 83% of their leaders saying the document management system (DMS) would be fully in the cloud by 2024 – a big jump on the number predicting this in 2019 – it's clear the pandemic has made the benefits of cloud technology difficult to ignore. Those are, namely, improved client and colleague communication and 'anywhere' access without the pains of a VPN.

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Many firms now find themselves in a troubling predicament: lawyers and teams are able to communicate effectively and productively, but content is everywhere – often ungoverned and unsecure

Certainly, there was significant growth for cloud technology in the legal industry within the last year. Firms quickly adopted cloud-based email, e-discovery, time and billing, records management, and of course DMS. While the pandemic encouraged many law firms to move straight to the cloud, it also required quick decisions. Accommodating working from home orders almost overnight expedited timelines for implementing several new technologies, and many firms now find themselves in a troubling predicament: lawyers and teams are able to communicate effectively and productively, but content is everywhere - often ungoverned and unsecure.

Bridging gaps in the tech stack

Keeping client information and documents secure will always be top of mind for firms, but when a crisis occurs business continuity becomes the top priority. As firms worked to provide lawyers and their teams with the tools to deliver services at pre-pandemic speed, focus was placed on solutions it would be quick for people to learn – and even quicker to implement – as opposed to what would work well with existing technology. This would give lawyers the best chance of meeting client expectations.

But as all CIOs, and other IT professionals, are acutely aware, when you adopt technology that doesn't work in unison with an existing tech stack, security gaps are quickly exposed, leaving once ironclad networks full of holes.

Briefing Frontiers Legal IT landscapes

2021 revealed that, while 48% of leaders said they can track admin productivity at home as well as in the office, there is now consideration of the fallout of focus on productivity, as information has become scattered across applications, laptops, tablets, uploaded to file-sharing sites like Dropbox, and stored within email systems. While the focus on productivity isn't likely to take a back seat anytime soon -law firm leaders anticipate 66% of people working from home at least two days a week in a post-Covid future - there's no doubt that the longer this data fragmentation continues unchecked, the more challenging it will be for IT to recapture documents released into the 'wild.'

Embracing change management

As firms have resisted cloud technology for some time, many weren't familiar with the nuances of the cloud – and there's a lot to learn. Contrary to the popular notion that cloud applications are generally the same, when architecture, security, governance, integrations, and productivity features are taken into account, it's clear that no two applications are created equal.

That's why the question firms must ask themselves is no longer whether they will have to change cloud applications. They must choose applications that minimise the number of changes and restore their security and compliance standards without cutting productivity gains.

Forsters, as an example, chose to put its document management in the cloud – implementing NetDocuments during

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Firms must streamline the number of new systems their lawyers and other employees need to adopt. As documents are the lifeblood of law firms – and a DMS is often where doucments live – a new cloudbased DMS is a natural place to begin

> lockdown – alongside HR and risk systems. In the case of future projects "it's a matter of prioritisation – there's no nervousness from our partners, we have a clear strategy that is well supported and funded," said CIO Anthony Stables. "We certainly won't bring any new technology on premises if we can help it."

> With a growing acceptance that digital workflows are needed to enable people to collaborate in real time, change issues are not insurmountable. With the right technology choices, and a clear changemanagement strategy, firms will be able to fully embrace remote work, protect their data, and let lawyers continue to enjoy their newfound tools.

No choice between productivity and security

But as firms consider their next technology moves, one big question remains: how can they minimise the required change? Many firms are prioritising their investment in technology, with 77% of leaders agreeing that remote-team and agile-working solutions are their number-one priority. To roll something new out efficiently, firms must streamline the number of new systems their lawyers and other employees need to adopt. As documents are the lifeblood of law firms – and a DMS is often where those documents live – a new cloud-based DMS is a natural place to begin.

Wih multiple systems, the fact remains that data and documents are becoming fragmented because applications are unable to connect to a single source of truth. However, adopting a cloud-based DMS like NetDocuments will help firms to avoid this security risk.

NetDocuments provides a platform firms can use as either a single-source solution and/or connect to applications that are already familiar (for example, practice management, time and billing, and so on). As the tech stack will be completely connected to the very core of the firm, documents are no longer at risk of being removed from the safety of the DMS, and remain subject to selected data lossprevention standards and ethical walls. By virtue of being a cloud application, NetDocuments is available anywhere, on any device, with native iOS and Android applications to keep workflows both intact and familiar regardless of where lawyers work - supporting their productivity.

Additionally, with NetDocuments, firms don't have to worry about troublesome upgrades that add additional security and financial risks. With a true-cloud infrastructure, NetDocuments provides every single client and user with the latest technologies and updates, without the hassle – and a highly intuitive user interface for directing process improvement makes it an efficient as well as effective transition. Couple those with a powerful change management strategy, and firms can increase productivity without risking compliance.

Make the switch today

If one thing is clear, it's that many firms

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In the last year, lawyers have proved they are not incapable of change, and firms have proved cloud technology is essential to business continuity in times of crisis. Now it's time to adopt the right cloud that will balance the priorities of productivity and security

have done an admirable job of finding creative solutions to the recent realities and challenges of remote work, while at the same time staying competitive. Embracing new technologies and workflows isn't an easy task for firms in even the calmest moments, and to do so during a global pandemic is nothing short of astonishing.

Understandably, just over half (51%) of leaders reported their firms are increasing technology spend in response to the pandemic, with technology adoption focused on solutions that will ensure productivity, security and business continuity in the shortest time possible.

NetDocuments customers were wellprepared for this moment and experienced little, if any, hiccups as they transitioned to remote work. John Turner, chief operating officer at Ellisons Solicitors, notes: "In light of the circumstances with Covid-19 we closed our physical offices, but remain in operation. All our staff are working from home, and we are able to save files, collaborate with clients, and create documents seamlessly because of NetDocuments. A big part of our success in working from home and having a competitive edge, even in this time, is NetDocuments."

In the last year, lawyers have proved they are not incapable of change, and firms have proved cloud technology is essential to business continuity in times of crisis. Now it's time to adopt the right cloud that will balance the priorities of productivity and security.

To learn more, visit: www. netdocuments.com/demo-request

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TRANSFORMATION, EFFICIENCY, INNOVATION: 2021



The path to profitable growth

From building innovative alternative fee arrangements to assessing and assimilating acquisitions, a law firm's commercial success lies in how well it interprets and acts upon a vast array of information. Paul Suffield at OneStream Software says this requires flexibility from performance management processes in law firms – known as corporate performance management in the wider market – as strategic goals and competitive pressures continuously evolve

he **Briefing**/HSBC strategy and investment report 2020 found 77% of leaders reporting IT investment as a priority for agile working. But what does it take to achieve true agility? Delivering the agile law firm takes transparency and alignment across people, process, and technology – and no single piece of technology can fully deliver that out of the box. Yet the rapidly changing legal market has been piling greater demands onto firms than ever before. Their ability to respond to change will be the difference between those that survive and thrive, and those that are the next targets for acquisition.

Data v intelligence

Future success for today's firms requires daily – evidenced – performance insights to support decision making. Furthermore, not only must the right people be empowered to make those decisions, but the right processes also need to be in place to support and implement them. A firm needs the ability to turn data from process, financial and operational systems into a single source of accurate, timely information about clients, resources, operations and financial results. This connectedness has never been more mission-critical than it is right now, in the context of the pandemic's devastating impacts on health, wellbeing, and the global economy.

Considering the vast amount of new data generated daily in a global law firm – not to mention historic data – how do you determine what comprises the most crucial

information? With almost half of the UK's leading law firms still intending to grow internationally, according to Briefing's research, the most valuable intelligence will come from financial and operational information. However, to first extract and then act on this information requires the ability to analyse vast amounts of operational data, and then blend that data with aggregated financial actuals and forecasts. Firms need a holistic view of performance, as well as the ability to drill into specific detail, whether at a firm, practice, or individual level. But how common is this capability?

Clearly it's not enough merely to hold financial and operational information if it is neither in context, nor in the hands of the finance department to enable an effective, informed business partnership. Furthermore, the agile firm also needs to enable decision makers to implement their decisions effectively if they are to take advantage of changing market demands and ensure they deliver the best possible service to clients.

Ensuring quality and consistency in service delivery

Two of the biggest challenges in the legal industry are how to improve service delivery to clients, and how to maintain that high level of service across all clients. So, let's consider two key themes in the current market linked to these challenges and examine how technology could support both people and processes to enhance service delivery.

Firms need a holistic view of performance, as well as the ability to drill into specific detail, whether at a firm, practice, or individual level. How common is this capability?

First, the industry has seen an exponential rise in demand for alternative fee arrangements. What if technology could empower your fee earners to model different fee arrangements and instantly understand the impact on profitability and resource utilisation in front of a client? With the right performance management technology, we can empower users to answer that kind of complex question quickly, and without requesting support from central finance or IT.

A second key question in today's market is how to service the global needs of clients more effectively. Not incorrectly, the answer has often been international expansion through acquisition. However, how much more effective could that process be if the acquiring firm were first able to identify the trends in the required legal service delivery by region? Furthermore, what if the acquiring firm could identify the profile of the firm most suitable for acquisition in accordance with

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client needs?

Historically, acquisitions have rarely been seamless or pain-free. Consider what a positive difference might be made if you could model multiple funding scenarios. The right information could ensure acquisitions are executed in the most cost-effective way. Finally, and most critically, imagine onboarding an acquired firm into your reporting and operating structures in just weeks, without impacting existing structures until required. This would also ensure visibility of how the acquired firm satisfies the requirements of your clients, ultimately improving ability to respond to their changing demands.

The linchpin

Technology is critical in enabling the agile firm to achieve outcomes like these by enriching the decisionmaking process of executives, partners and all fee earners with accurate. timely information. However, delivering the level of service your partners and clients demand, while ensuring the firm remains agile, is not a static target - nor will it be delivered overnight or by one new piece of technology.

The transformation that has occurred in almost every other traditional market has now firmly taken hold within the legal industry, as highlighted by the success of alternative legal service providers. The legal market has been slow to transform, with senior leadership in many firms working towards the goal of agility for many years with varying degrees of success. But the pace of market transformation has accelerated in the past year, and the importance of being agile has now skyrocketed. Firms need to look to other markets, learning how other organisations have thrived through transformation and delivered agile-working practices to respond to the pressures of change.

A single source of truth

The key lesson that OneStream Software has learned is that the right information must be in the hands of the right people, at

> the right time. This context is critical to success, and all the more achievable with the emergence and scaling of machine learning and cloud computing. These technologies have given software vendors the ability to innovate at a rate never previously thought possible. It's demonstrably possible to deliver complete transparency into data, metadata, and process changes to granular levels of detail for complete confidence and control.

> How does OneStream Software deliver this level of intelligence? It starts by consuming the data of your

practice management and operational systems with built-in financial data quality and transformation capabilities. Those datasets are then intelligently blended in one of the most secure platforms on the market, and this provides a single source of information with built-in financial intelligence, enabling the firm to analyse information at any level of detail to

level of service your partners and clients demand, while ensuring the firm remains agile, is not a static target – nor will it be delivered overnight or by one new piece of technology

Delivering the

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practice or

empower more profitable decision-making.

For example, the firm can track matter progress in traditional or alternative fee arrangements, flagging if the matter is tracking outside of the deliverable tolerances. The partnership can empower practice or regional leads to tailor and report daily on KPIs such as lockup or utilisation, depending on the performance improvement The partnership requirements of the can empower individual practice. This is all while maintaining regional leads to corporate control through full auditability. This key tailor and report benefit of the OneStream daily on KPIs platform is already being such as lockup used in other professional or utilisation, services firms, including depending on BDO Group. At a firm level, the performance finance can model the impacts on profitability, improvement working capital and human requirements resources of a new acquisition, as well as analysing the impact of the acquired firm on delivering

the firm's strategic goals. OneStream's best-in-class platform is designed to answer the most complex questions in your firm with full data transparency of how the information was derived, without requiring support from IT.

Performance management technology, if

supported with the right processes and culture, can unlock agility, even in the most traditional firms. It opens the door to arguably the most valuable asset: data. Technology is only a piece of the transformation puzzle, but it is a foundational one. It's an important first step for firms looking to maximise agility and be ready to respond to the ever-changing demands of both the market and their clients.

For further information, visit: https:// onestreamsoftware.com/resources/sb-legal-services/



TRANSFORMATION, EFFICIENCY, INNOVATION: 2021



Hybrid times

Spencer Lea, sales director, comprehensive services at Kyocera, suggests key questions firms need to ask themselves to get set up for a successful switch to hybrid working

n 2020, many organisations were forced to adopt new ways of working as the coronavirus pandemic had an unimaginable impact on the workplace. By the end of the first half of the year, an estimated 93% of global workers lived in countries with workplace closures in place according to the International Labour Organisation. Research from Gartner now predicts that at least 48% of employees will continue to work remotely in some capacity after the pandemic.

Digital transformation began long before 2020, but the rapid adoption of remote working practices accelerated this transformation from being likely to take years to in fact taking just weeks. With many workforces split between the office and home, hybrid workspace solutions have evolved to cater to employees who now work at any time and from any place. Organisations that evolve with this rapidly changing workplace will see most benefit, both now and in years to come, especially as there is continued uncertainty worldwide around both the pandemic and the economic pressure it has brought.

As economies reopen and the global workforce begins to move back into the office, it's clear there isn't a one-size-fits-all approach to the hybrid-working model. However, the right technology can be the difference between a hybrid workplace that is effective, efficient, collaborative, productive and scalable, and one that is not.

As economies reopen and the global workforce begins to move back into the office, it's clear there isn't a one-size-fits-all approach to the hybrid-working model

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Document management is evolving to include a greater focus on the business as a whole, taking a more comprehensive approach to reducing costs and improving processes across the entire document lifecycle

Invest in hybrid workspaces

Hybrid workspaces present numerous advantages in both the short and longerterm. They provide firms with the flexibility and agility to respond to the constantly changing working environment, and allow operations to continue through economic and social disruption. Furthermore, they provide employees with benefits such as a better work-life balance, reduced commuting time and opportunity to live away from major city hubs.

To make that happen, law firm leaders need to take a strategic approach to implementing their hybrid-working environment, identifying the new technology and services they need to foster productivity, connectivity and security in this new way of working.

The role of digital transformation in hybrid workspaces

Hybrid workforces rely on digital solutions and processes to succeed, so aligning your digital transformation initiatives with your hybrid-workspace strategy will ensure that each supports the other.

In a hybrid workspace, paper becomes largely redundant as people are working in a decentralised environment. It goes without saying that when content is stored on paper, then filed away in filing cabinets, it's much harder to retrieve what you're looking for. The benefits of digitising documents include reduced business costs, instant access to data, increased efficiency and improved data security. This is why managing content with content services is the modern-day standard.

Step one: Equip your team

The first step in implementing a hybrid workspace is ensuring that you equip your people with the hardware and solutions they need to work from any location. While this can include a wide range of equipment depending on your employees' needs, most critical are computers, printers and collaboration tools.

As more teams work remotely, increasing amounts of data, including sensitive information, are being uploaded and shared to software-as-a-service (SaaS) platforms. Most businesses naturally assume that this data is backed up natively by the platform provider, Microsoft and Google. The reality, however, is the responsibility sits firmly with you – the user. Solutions such as Kyocera Protect, a fully-managed service, has been designed to back up and restore data within SaaS platforms, protecting your users' Microsoft 365 or G-Suite data against unintentional or malicious data loss, including ransomware.

At the same time, as digital transformation increases, managed print services (MPS) no longer means simply managing an organisation's printer fleet and consumables. Document management is evolving to include a greater focus on the business as a whole, taking a more comprehensive approach to reducing costs and improving processes across the entire document lifecycle.

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Also, hybrid workspace printers need to be multifunction printers (MFPs) that allow workers to print and scan directly into digital workflows securely.

Step two: Connect your people

While traditional workplaces enable collaboration through proximity in a centralised office, hybrid workspaces challenge this as employees attempt to work together from multiple locations. To enable effective collaboration, you need the right tools and solutions to connect your people and infrastructure across different locations.

This includes sharing documents or accessing files remotely, and providing communication tools for both formal and informal interactions.

As with the physical infrastructure, it's important to set yourself up for future growth when investing in software and services that connect your team. Ensure that any new services can be scaled up (and down) quickly and easily, while also integrating with the infrastructure, processes and software you already have in place.

Communication in hybrid workspaces almost requires a strategy in and of itself. When do you hold a video call and when will an email suffice? How often should teams meet in person instead of virtually? What expectations are placed on employees in different time zones when it comes to the rest of the team?

These are just some of the questions you may have to answer when choosing communication tools and establishing best practice. We recommend organisations invest in a number of methods to support different types of communication. This could include email, instant message, video calls and to-do list/project management apps.

Step three: Optimise your processes

You have the right infrastructure in place and you've connected your team through the right platforms and services. Now, how With the workflow option, risk is minimised as a document is not attached to an email, printed or scanned, but remains secure in the document management system

do you ensure that your hybrid workforce operates smoothly and efficiently?

In an optimised hybrid workspace, employees use tools such as automated workflows and e-signatures to achieve tasks and streamline processes. The other major benefit is security. With the workflow option, risk is minimised as a document is not attached to an email, printed or scanned, but remains secure in the document management system (DMS), where it can only be accessed with the appropriate credentials. If an audit is required, moreover, the signature is time and date-stamped, and there are system records of each user's activity.

A DMS stores files in a central location, facilitating and streamlining how digital documents are organised, accessed and archived on a firm-wide scale. The benefits of a DMS for a hybrid workspace include:

- A centralised file repository that can be accessed by employees anytime and anywhere.
- Version control, meaning everyone has access to the most up-to-date file, and older versions are easily recoverable.
- Automated workflows, such as assigning documents to the right employee to action once processed.
- Improved compliance due to advanced security measures, and workflows that follow record-keeping protocols.
- Increased data security: access control, version history and system backups.
- Reduced reliance on printing and scanning as employees can share files digitally.

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Business-grade connectivity is essential for any organisation, and network resiliency has become increasingly important for any law firm using a DMS. It's fundamental you have high-speed, and secure and reliable connectivity, to ensure your organisation is efficient and operates without disruption. Organisations are also now looking into SD-WAN, to reduce connectivity costs and gain more control over their networks.

Software features

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When choosing software and services to support your hybrid workforce, remember to prioritise the following features:

- Cloud-based services are the obvious solution for hybrid-working environments for a number of reasons, foremost among them being their accessibility and scalability.
- Artificial intelligence (AI) is revolutionising how we work through intelligent data management and automation. Investing in tools that make use of this technology will not only future-proof your organisation, but also save you time and increase productivity.
- Security is of the utmost importance when choosing and setting up platforms. A good system will have features such as access control, automatic software and security updates, system redundancy, two-factor authentication, data backup, and encryption. If set up correctly, the system will significantly reduce the risk of a cybersecurity incident occurring.

The solutions that served us well yesterday in terms of solutions and data security have been exposed during a period of unprecedented disruption and uncertainty. Understanding where your organisation is today, and getting a clearer view on internal processes and information structure, is key to determining where your current problem areas are, and where you need to invest.

Hybrid workspaces represent both the 'new normal' we're adjusting to, and the future of the workplace, even after the pandemic. For organisations that have rapidly adapted to a decentralised workforce in the time of Covid-19, now is the time to establish your hybrid work environment strategically, for the long term, taking the steps mentioned earlier.

This can all appear very daunting, but Kyocera's specialists have a strong and unique industry partnership with other integrated and tailored software solution providers, and have implemented numerous systems in a range of law firms, which means Kyocera can help to make this a speedy and painless experience. We can also help with project planning management, project management, and crucially - related change management and training. The ability to provide a comprehensive solution designed specifically for law firms means any law firm customer will only have to deal with one organisation, and Kyocera can manage the whole process.

Kyocera takes a holistic approach, considering both the needs of the whole company, across multiple departments, and the way optimisation of the platforms and hardware available can enhance the ways all employees work. We can help to set up the infrastructure and workflows you need to create an efficient and effective hybrid workspace, while also taking some of the load off the IT department. ►

| For more information, visit: www.kyoceradocumentsolutions.co.uk |
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