3Kites Consulting

How do smaller law firms choose the right IT solutions ?

If you are a sub-200 seat law firm looking for a practice management system, a secure document repository, a case tool or new PCs, there is a host of suppliers for you to choose from… but where do you start and how do you know if you are choosing the right product or getting a good price ? Should you be buying at all or would it make more sense to enhance the solutions you already use ? For most law firms in this space, understanding of the available options is limited. Some will ask a supplier to suggest the best way forward, which is not unlike going to a car showroom and asking if you should buy one of their cars and, if so, how much should you pay. Whilst there are clearly many good and honest salespeople in this world, they still operate on targets and will therefore tend to do what they can to secure a sale.

A better option is for your firm to start by learning about the needs of the business – is document management more of an issue than billing, does printing hit profitability or is it just a nuisance ? Once you know what the problems are, you need to prioritise these so that you address the most important ones first, eg those that affect client service or which add to the firm's overheads. With this key information secured, you can start to research the market in order to understand what solutions you should be looking at… assuming that the solution is not simply a matter of tweaking what you already have to improve it.

Some of what follows may sound basic but getting it right is important. Tell suppliers your objectives for buying or replacing a system and ask them to demonstrate their product to your firm. Ask those suppliers you shortlist to complete a questionnaire covering the firm's functional requirements and also to provide a firm-specific proposal including costs and timescales so that you have something in writing about the points that will matter most to you. Undertake reference calls/visits with existing customers to understand if suppliers deliver what they promise and if their support is responsive. Review your process to help with your final decision – it is often obvious when looking at the output from each stage.

3Kites has undertaken hundreds of projects involving reviews and product selections. We have built a library of templates to help make our projects run smoothly, predictably and efficiently.

If you'd like to know more about how 3Kites can assist your firm, then please contact Danielle.Leacock@3Kites.com

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