

Some Key Challenges for Buying Legal Tech in 2021 (And How to Overcome Them!)

Key Challenges:

For buyers in the current market, the supply-side dynamic reinforces buying uncertainty: Anyone involved in purchasing technology will be familiar with the following common worries:

- i. Will I invest in a winner or a loser? Covid-19 erodes market confidence just as it erodes sources of capital for suppliers to invest.
- ii. Will my chosen technology interface with other tech solutions already used by my team? A common example is found with new e-billing solutions failing to interface with management reporting and/or accounts payable systems. Pin your chosen supplier down when answering this question!
- iii. Which are the genuine tried & tested solutions? Again, do your due diligence and take up references offered by suppliers. Lawyers are great supporters of their procurement teams, but often not so good at buying on their own account.
- iv. Will my chosen supplier have resources to support me during implementation AND adoption? So many projects are implemented successfully but the project then fails on adoption due to lack of support or poor training.

3Kites' Top Tips:

- v. Avoid "The Tech Geek Influence": There's often at least one "tech geek" in a legal team who has all the answers, but rarely the breadth of vision to do justice to creating, let alone leading, a digital strategy. By all means harness the enthusiasm of the tech geek, but as part of a team effort and within the right decision-making framework.
- vi. Avoid the "magpie effect": That's buying tech because it's new and it's shiny and perhaps because it's very well sold! It's critical first to understand the problem you face and to understand the corporate processes that are involved within that problem before you can determine which solution fits best.
- vii. Get to know and work with your internal IT team: IT implementations are their bread and butter so having them on-board with your legal project can be invaluable. Your IT support might not be very switched on to the specifics of the current legal technology world, but that's no reason not to share your tech strategy with them and involve them in your discussions and planning.
- viii. Team up with other internal service functions in the company wherever you think a shared technology need exists: Problems often overlap between different corporate teams. Sharing a common problem with your Compliance team, or Regulatory, Internal Audit, Co Sec teams can significantly improve your business case to the FD and also allow effective sharing of budget costs and resource.

And when it comes to the critical adoption phase...

- ix. Err on the side of simple, intuitive solutions over complex, unintuitive ones: The "bells & whistles" version often builds in unnecessary user complexity which hinders adoption by your team and/or the business.
- x. Ask your supplier about adoption support: It can make or break the adoption phase of new technology by having an expert available to come in

and 'floor-walk' as a way to reinforce training on new tech and to problem solve.

- xi. Try to align your online interfaces provided to your business clients with the look and feel adopted by other "service functions" in the business: You are starting on the right foot if your business user interface shares the familiar look and feel used by other departments (HR team, Compliance team etc).
- xii. Treat all new tech purchases or upgrades as a project – plan properly and ensure you have the right people and resources: Don't leave implementation of your new global e-billing solution to be run by the one-year qualified lawyer who has just joined the team! (It happens more often that you'd think.)

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