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On-boarding IT in law: Kevin Harris, IT Director, Taylor Wessing

We talk leadership and innovation in the use of technology at Taylor Wessing.

We recently had the pleasure of chatting to Kevin Harris, IT Director at Taylor Wessing ? you can see the full video below. But a particular highlight was his explanation of his role on the firm?s operational board ? a step that?s still relatively rare for technologists in law.

Technology in leadership

On the operations board, as the name implies, Harris is involved in the running of the firm, helping to build its brand and understanding business development practices. The executive board meanwhile is more about growing the firm, says Harris, increasing its margin and attracting new clients.

That the firm?s IT Director should play a key role at Taylor Wessing on its operational board shows just how far technology in law has come ? and how much it can act not only to provide new services to clients but also as an important brand differentiator. It is that acknowledgement of the potential of technology that means that Harris sits in the leadership team, but it also links into some other aspects of his role in what is a rapidly evolving team.

It is no coincidence, for instance, that the IT team has its own innovation fund, which enables them to try new things without stifling innovation from across the rest of the firm. In addition, Harris has direct access to clients, attending pitch meetings and often responding to clients? direct requests to meet with IT to understand what Taylor Wessing can offer. As a technology focused firm, clients expect this, says Harris. It?s also clearly what Taylor Wessing now expects from its forward-thinking IT team.

The rising role of technology also means that Harris has to think hard about future requirements, in particular balancing his team to ensure the right mix of skills for today?s requirements. He describes traditional technologists, for example, as red people, and entrepreneurs as blue. What he needs now is to add into the mix more purple people, those who represent a mix of both and who can combine technology expertise with a commercial edge. An example of his thinking in this respect is that he has recently recruited trained lawyers into the team who can ?identify opportunities?. Being in the right place to see and fill market gaps will clearly be a priority moving forwards.

He knows that success in IT means winning buy in from across the firm for the role technology can play in developing brand, and building confidence in its ability to contribute directly to the firm?s success.

This work is ongoing, but as our chat with Harris proves, technology has already won a powerful place at the top of the firm. Harris is in a strong position to now showcase IT?s full potential.

Click below to view the whole interview with Kevin Harris...



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