

blog post | 19 November 2015

Game-changer: Why some firms are prioritising IT

IT Directors are back in demand with technology promising firms the ability to differentiate their services.

In a market that has become synonymous with change, it is no coincidence (to us at least) that, in the past three months, we have been asked to help recruit IT Directors into four successful, innovative law firms. It is, however, striking when you consider there have probably only been four IT Director roles in the market over the past two years.

Law firms are looking for IT leaders who can change the status quo and who see technology as an enabler rather than just a necessity.

So why now?

In a competitive market, where differentiation is hugely challenging, technology is allowing forward-thinking firms to pull away from the pack:

1. Clients are increasingly putting pressure on firms to not only reduce costs but to provide ever-more transparent information. Technology is key to making both of these happen. It was obvious from the recent LSN Operational Leaders in Law conference that clients see this as an absolute priority and that they will choose to work with those firms that take their technology seriously. Their view is that many law firms do not realise the importance technology makes in their decision making.
2. According to the majority of firms, globalisation is again the number one priority. Technology allows a firm far greater operational agility. This means that they can take advantage of new and emerging opportunities.
3. The other factor which is increasingly on the agenda is information security. According to the PwC 2014 Law Firms' Survey report, firms have to keep pace with ever-more sophisticated threats to their own and their clients' data. Worryingly 45% of all law firms have suffered a security incident in the past 12 months. The threat of a 'cyber-attack' is very much a reality.

At the outset, technology can be a huge cost to a firm. But it is clear that those who embrace it appropriately will start to nudge themselves ahead of the competition.

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