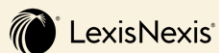


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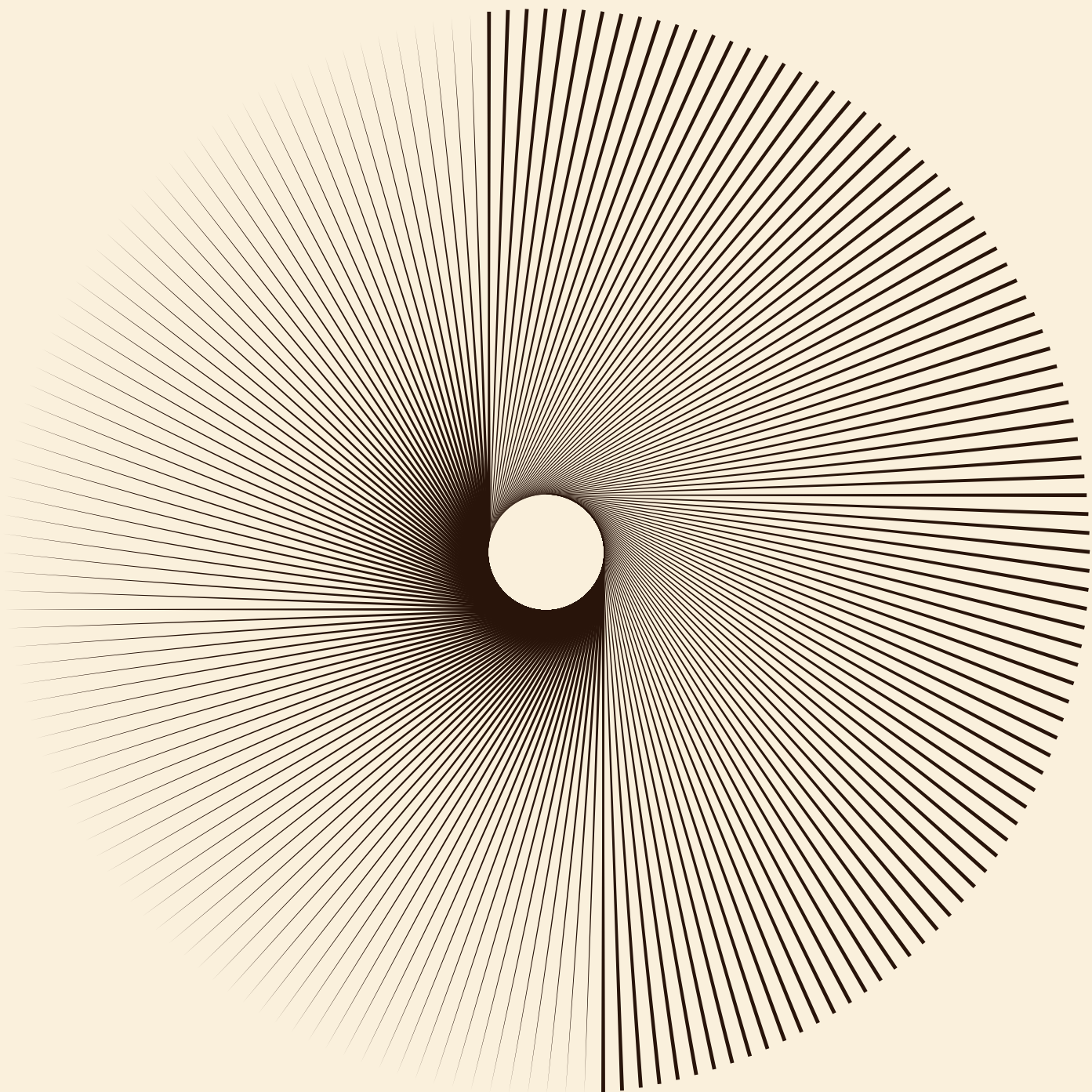
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RISK SUPPLEMENT: APRIL 2021

LPM

LEGAL PRACTICE MANAGEMENT



CLEAR COSTS

How are SME law firms handling the new pressures on finance that have arisen during the pandemic?

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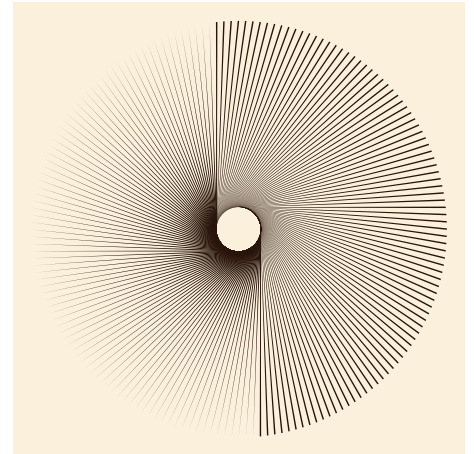
Who could have forecasted the financial rollercoaster that would occur in 2020, and the challenges and questions that continue in the wake of the pandemic? If there was ever an opportune moment to take a look at how your firm operates, it's certainly now.

In this LPM finance supplement, we talk to law firm leaders in finance and management about how their firms reacted to the new pressures on finance brought out by the pandemic. We've got a range of firm types, sizes, specialisms and regions, so take a gander at the war stories and success found throughout the Covid-19 crisis.

For Seema Jones, finance director at Town Legal, the firm implemented emergency budgets and planned for various scenarios, but Jones says the main focus was on cash management. "Our immediate priority was to reassess our balance sheet items, debtors, creditors and anything else that would yield a positive outcome in terms of preserving cashflow. We saw it as an opportunity to 'sharpen the saw'."

Read up on her thoughts and those of others, starting on p5. Plus, hear from experts at LexisNexis about how the pandemic has changed the legal sector for the better on p9. And read up on why Hunters Law chose Extech Cloud as its partner for IT infrastructure and future change, according to Hunters' chief finance and operations officer Arif Kamal (p13).

Kayli Olson, editor
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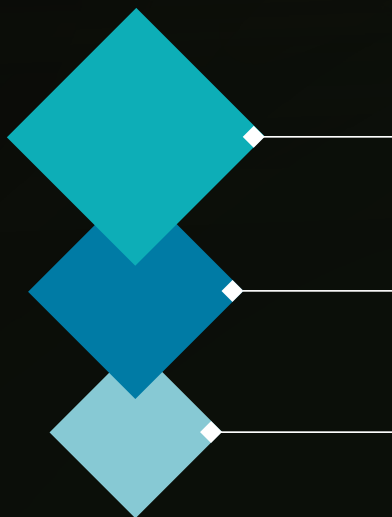


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73%

of legal firms see COVID-19 as an opportunity for innovation

65%

of lawyers are planning to work from home permanently in the future

52%

of legal firms are prioritising improving use of technology currently

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Find out more: lexisnexis.co.uk/year-of-change



Forecast for recovery

Over a year on from the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, SME law firms have re-grouped and rallied around new financial processes, structures and investments. Josh Adcock hears how finance functions and priorities have survived and thrived

It's hard to predict how the business, or the market, will react to events like this, says Seema Jones, finance director at Town Legal, about the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on her firm when the effects were first felt in March 2020. The health crisis has had a huge impact on SME law firms' business models and their financial positions – and finance leaders and their teams have often been key to navigating the situation.

There was much uncertainty initially around what course to take, Jones says, as this was a new experience for everyone. “We put in all the groundwork around financial planning in case we needed to execute major decisions quickly, but we were basically planning in the dark.”

The firm implemented emergency budgets and planned for various scenarios, but Jones says the main focus was on cash management. “Our immediate priority was to reassess our balance sheet items, debtors, creditors and anything else that would yield a positive outcome in terms of preserving cashflow. We saw it as an opportunity to ‘sharpen the saw’.”

Similarly, finance director Julia Warrilow at

Thursfields says the first lockdown had a significant effect on her firm, including a sudden reduction in its ability to get work processed and, therefore, on revenue. “It was a completely differently business overnight. We had to become more agile in our thinking as we were unable to meet with clients and many of our operational processes changed to reflect remote working. The number of new instructions reduced, and we faced uncertainty over revenue levels – April to July was a bit of a blur,” she says.

The crisis highlighted the importance of financial hygiene at Thursfields, but Warrilow says clients' own slowing cashflows were a major challenge – making it more difficult to collect on debts. “We had a number of clients whose revenues were just switched off overnight – in areas like the events industry – so we had to work with them on managing extended credit terms.”

Since the first wave, Warrilow adds that there's been a transition within the firm towards a more systemic way of collecting fees, now frequently done digitally: “There's been a definite shift towards embracing technology, including digitally

LPM FIRM FACTS
CFG Law
Revenue: £4.5m
Corporate status: Ltd
47 fee earners, 71 total staff
Offices: Manchester, Cheadle, Sunderland, Cambridge, Bury St Edmunds, Oxford

LPM FIRM FACTS
Higgs & Sons
Revenue: £16.6m
Corporate status: Partnership
120 fee earners, 195 total staff
Offices: Dudley

LPM FIRM FACTS
Town Legal
Revenue: £6.3m
Corporate status: LLP
23 fee earners, 38 total staff
Offices: London

LPM FIRM FACTS
Thursfields
Revenue: £9.5m
Corporate status: Ltd
67 fee earners, 137 total staff
Offices: Birmingham, Worcester, Solihull, Halesowen, Kidderminster

onboarding clients as a routine process rather than an optional one.”

At Higgs & Sons, partner and head of finance Glyn Morris says his firm’s immediate financial response also included cost reduction measures, such as reining in spend on entertaining, non-essential marketing and office-based costs. “We went through things line-by-line, looking at whether we could remove or reduce any item of expenditure, however small,” he says.

Morris adds that the cash management process also led to an accelerated shift in its information reporting focus to include monitoring client and matter inception, lockup and production monitoring – which meant creating new dashboards and further developing effective cash balance monitoring and scenario planning. “Although we would have done those things in order to keep a watchful eye on our financial performance, they all took on a new urgency and significance as a result of the pandemic.”

CRITICAL RESPONSE

Of course, there were financial support options available to businesses, including government-backed schemes such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, commonly referred to as furlough. Warrilow says Thursfields did use the scheme, both for business support staff and lawyers, though the firm’s position improved relatively quickly. Once financial data came in to support the decision, most business services and fee earners were brought back onboard in May and June, with just two staff still on flexible furlough as of the time of writing, due to the reduced workload for those specific roles, she explains.

In order to address underutilisation of staff and prevent further redundancies beyond the half-a-dozen made in support teams, she adds, the firm centralised its PA support team into ‘the hub’. This required a re-skilling programme, which also played into the firm’s payment collection measures, she says: “We’ve created a broader role called ‘team assistant’, which includes supporting the wider team on getting bills and chasing debts rather than focusing on



We went through things line-by-line, looking at whether we could remove or reduce any item of expenditure, however small

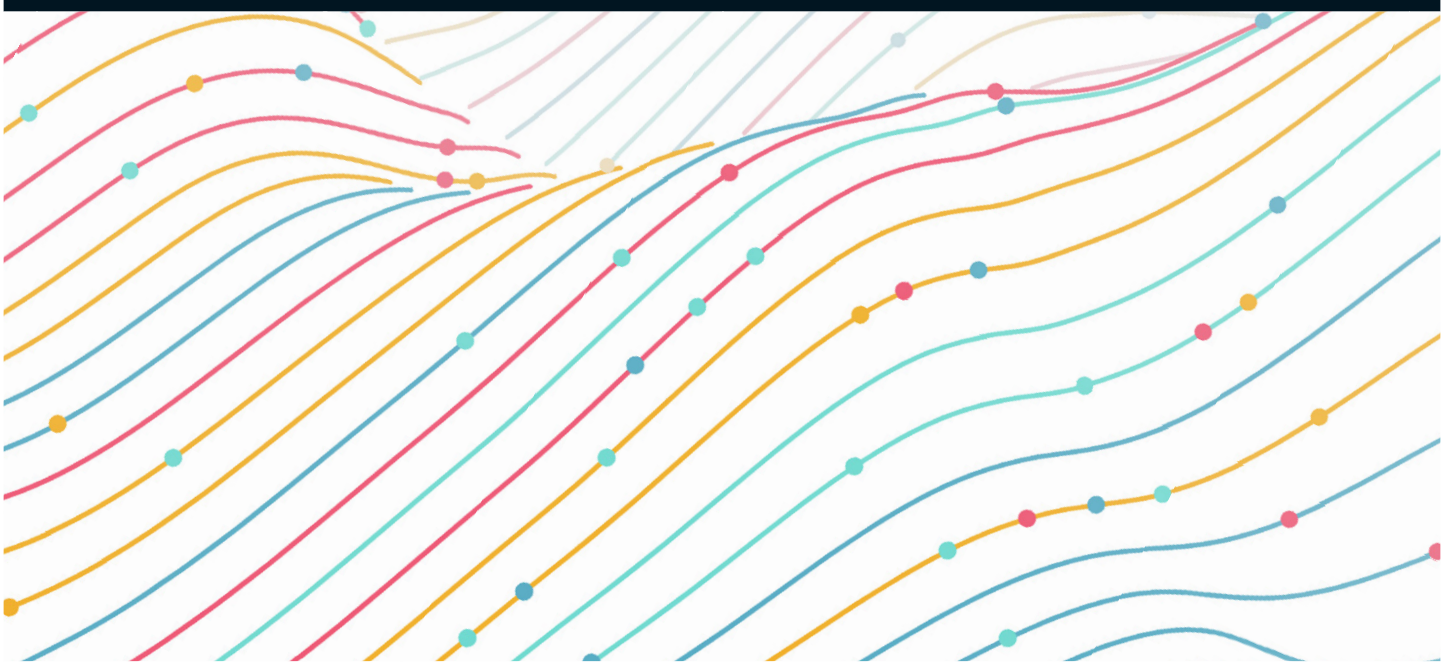
Glyn Morris, partner and head of finance, Higgs & Sons

administrative tasks supporting fee earners on an individual basis.”

However, furloughing has been a contentious issue, with many firms seeking to avoid the step where revenues were relatively unaffected by the crisis. Jones says Town Legal took advantage of government schemes to defer tax liabilities but kept staff working throughout. “Singling people out for furlough was quite divisive, and it didn’t feel morally right to accept government money. It wasn’t necessary to the firm’s survival and other businesses were in more dire need,” she explains.

NEW INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

At CFG Law, CEO Richard Clark says his firm’s focus on serious and catastrophic injury clients largely protected it from significant dips in revenue, as this practice area has a long tail attached to case progression and billing. Clark says CFG didn’t need to furlough staff, nor reduce salaries or make redundancies and that being able to avoid such measures, where other firms did not, has played into the firm’s recent geographical expansion into East Anglia, where it’s opened offices in Bury St Edmunds and Cambridge. “Many regional and London-based firms’ financial decisions have created insecurity for their staff – which has had an impact on their propensity to move. We’ve hired a number of people in East Anglia from firms that took those decisions – so, from a strategic point of view, we



We successfully forecast the second and third lockdown, so, at the end of the summer, we were in a positive position financially

Richard Clark, CEO, CFG Law

benefited from the decisions of other firms,” he explains.

He adds that CFG was also able to undertake its normal pay review in December 2020, resulting in an average pay rise of 2.7% across the firm, and has continued to invest in its wellbeing programmes, adding online events, games, gifts and meals into the mix. “Our people have always been our biggest investment – this has basically been a big ‘thank you’ to everyone for their work throughout the Covid-19 crisis,” he says.

Even firms that did see a significant impact on revenue have been able – and needed – to make new investments. Warrilow says the rapid pivot to homeworking meant an equally rapid investment in new hardware. “Although we had already budgeted for the cost of around 60 extra laptops, we planned to do that over the course of the financial year; but we essentially had to do it in a few weeks.”

She adds that the firm’s investment strategy for the long-term has shifted towards tech, with recruitment needs now tied to team KPIs. “We used to recruit for a team if they were at a given utilisation level. Now, we’ve shifted to giving people graded fee targets. If everyone in a team is delivering to that level, we will authorise recruitment,” she explains.

Jones at Town Legal also foresees a continued shift to tech that enables agile working. Many digital technologies, like MS Teams, seemed out of reach or less important before but, with

remote working having made them a necessity, their additional benefits have been unearthed. “Electronic signatures and other digital processes have become a necessity, and they’ve also helped with efficiency around internal processes,” she says.

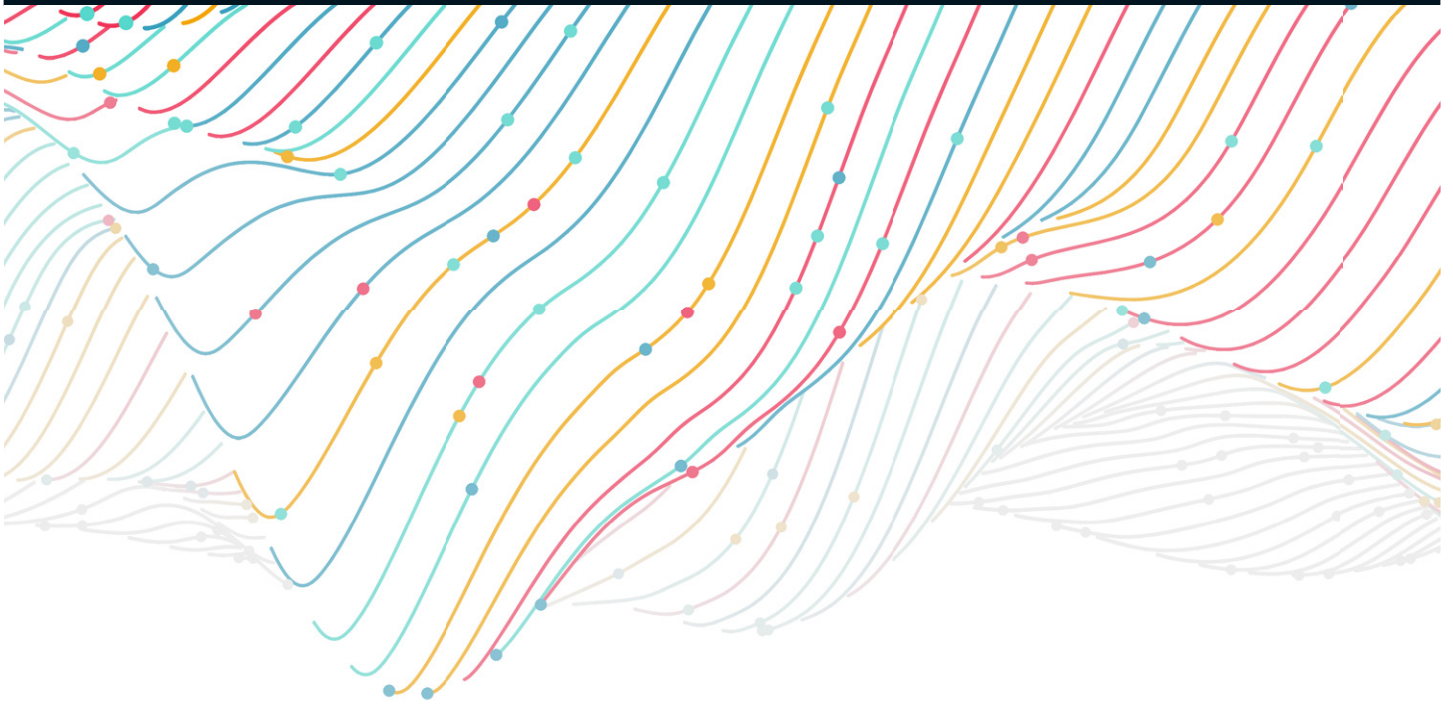
KEEPING AHEAD OF THE CURVE

At Higgs & Sons, Morris says his firm had already invested in a new, more flexible working-friendly practice management system, going live with Aderant in December 2019, as the firm had foreseen the need for greater mobility in the future. Although this put the firm in a good place with paperless billing, mobile time-recording, and expenses, during the pandemic it became apparent that its payment processes were far too manual. The firm has since invested in further, custom development of Aderant to cater for an end-to-end electronic process, Morris says.

“The pandemic forced us to look at our transactional financial processes, simply because payment processes had one of the largest direct impacts on our lawyers and central teams,” he explains. However, this all-in-one solution hasn’t just eluded Higgs & Sons, as he adds that peers in other firms have made the same comments. “It’s surprising to hear nearly everyone is struggling to create a full, end-to-end electronic payment solution; we’re pleased to have made such significant progress.”

At CFG Law, Clark also points to a pre-pandemic investment that helped during the crisis, namely the adoption of business intelligence platform Katchr, selected in January 2020 and brought online in June, which was intended to enable better forecasting and analytics. Alongside its existing planning platforms, he says it has helped the firm ride the waves of the pandemic, as well as aided in planning where to grow the business geographically.

“We successfully forecast the second and third lockdown, so, at the end of the summer, we were in a positive position financially. We were able to start looking at where to invest, which led to us



As we now give fee earners graded targets, it's tempting to offer discounts to any potential client who asks for a relatively common piece of work – but we need our people to be more cautious about pricing behaviour

Julia Warrilow, finance director, Thursfields

considering where in the country we could better serve more people affected by injury – which ultimately led to the opening of our Cambridge consulting office and our new Bury St Edmunds office.”

Being able to leverage management information capabilities through the software, he adds, has helped the firm better understand the performance of individuals and teams while also giving everyone the same perspective on that data. “We’ve moved away from Excel spreadsheets, which were the bane of everyone’s lives, because we each saw things differently. Now, everyone has access to this financial data and it has improved their commercial awareness,” he says.

At Thursfields, Warrilow says that having continuously reforecasted and scrapped the firm’s growth targets as a result of the first lockdown, the second and third lockdowns had relatively little negative effect on the firm’s revised targets. “We’re actually up on last year’s figures,” she says, but echoes Clark’s opinion that Excel isn’t up to scratch when it comes to reporting and is considering investing in Power BI. “When I was reforecasting every day at the start of the pandemic, drilling into financial reports was a huge investment in time – they’re quite static, constantly requiring new reports and importing to excel.”

IS THE PRICE RIGHT?

Pricing has also been an area of change and evolution during the pandemic. Warrilow says this is an area she’s been looking at since before the pandemic and will continue to do so. But technology isn’t a silver bullet: “Getting the messaging to staff and team leaders is the biggest challenge. As we now give fee earners graded targets, it’s tempting to offer discounts to any potential client who asks for a relatively common piece of work, like a will – but we need our people to be more cautious about pricing behaviour.”

Reform in this area has also been on the radar for some years at Higgs & Sons, says Morris, though the start of the pandemic prompted an extra focus on maintaining a healthy balance between price, client value and service. This took the form of a paper he wrote at the very start of the pandemic, while ill with Covid-19 himself, intended to strengthen client relationships during the pandemic and prevent barriers around pricing conversations.

“Delivery of our strategy depends on developing long-term relationships with clients, which means having a value proposition that our clients appreciate. At the start of the pandemic, we wanted to orient the firm towards picking up the phone and asking clients how we could help. We then turned our focus to pricing and implementing actions like having other people internally checking over quotes before sending to clients,” he says.

Although he adds the firm has built a pricing tool intended to help its lawyers improve its pricing, Morris agrees that technology is only part of the bigger puzzle. “Pricing tech initiatives have historically failed miserably in law firms. Even if you give lawyers the most advanced pricing management tool, adoption is typically low. We’re keen to shift the conversation to become an exchange between our clients and lawyers that delivers the correct value proposition for both of them,” he says. **LPM**



MANAGING CHANGE

Adam Crowhurst, director of account management, and Ashton Dixon-Pemberton, senior marketing manager, at LexisNexis discuss how SME law firms are evolving their practices, technology investment and people management to be more profitable during the pandemic, and after

The pandemic has, no doubt, had a big impact on how people and businesses think about finances. LexisNexis' most recent [Bellwether report](#) found that eight out of 10 lawyers are making use of government support or are taking some kind of rescue initiative to help with money matters.

Adam Crowhurst, director of account management at LexisNexis, says the importance of technology has suddenly intensified. "Over the last several years we know technology has had a place top of mind for SME legal leaders, but Covid-19 has been the final push to make those visions a reality. The challenge for many firms was about trying to understand the level of return on investment that they would be up against among the new pressures of work."

Ashton Dixon-Pemberton, senior marketing manager, agrees the pandemic has accelerated transformation in the legal sector like we've never seen before. "Firms have realised that they need to invest in collaborative and revolutionary tech to enable them to operate and perform as

expected - both in the eyes of their clients, but also their people."

INVEST IN SUCCESS

A large proportion of the SME market - particularly those on the smaller end - lacked the software and hardware necessary to get their people working from home quickly, Dixon-Pemberton explains. Now that the mad race to move to cloud and fit out staff with remote-working devices has largely subsided, we can clearly analyse the paradigm shift that has occurred in the way law firms work and the expectations around client experience, he says.

"Where many SME law firms would have had a high street presence, clients now realise that they don't have to go to the high street to find a good level of service. And, now that everything can be done digitally, that's exactly what clients are going to continue to expect.

"I think we're going to see competition ramp up immensely - and technology investment will be the deciding factor between firms that sink or



Those who took stock of this early were in a better position than their competitors to adapt quickly and take advantage of the opportunities Covid-19 has created

Adam Crowhurst, director of account management,
LexisNexis

swim, especially when it comes to collaboration.”

He adds that collaboration is important between client and firm but also internally: “Teams need to be able to stay on top of their work. And junior lawyers, especially, need to be able to access the right people in the organisation in order to be able to play their part.

“Portals are going to be paramount alongside case management, and other operational tech solutions, that enable people to do their jobs efficiently while continuing to minimise the potential for risk.”

With firms struggling in the current professional indemnity insurance market, risk and compliance need to be carefully considered, Dixon-Pemberton says. “Firms need to make sure they’re adopting technology that reduces that risk while promoting efficiency.

“The increase in risk should be front-of-mind for SME legal leaders. They should use this new working situation as an opportunity to take stock – if they haven’t already – of all of their legal practice areas in terms of profitability, paper usage, efficiency and security.”

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THE AMAZON EFFECT

There is an opportunity for firms to differentiate and really step up their service and brand, Crowhurst says. Technology is very much going to help firms streamline their processes, he says – this can be done throughout the whole matter journey, ensuring consistency, that the right people are assigned to the right parts of the case, and that you’re not wasting fee earners’ time on menial or high-volume tasks.

Dixon-Pemberton adds: “The Amazon effect isn’t new – clients want their services

on-demand, transparency on cost and to receive notifications on updates in their cases.

Traditionally, there’s been the perception that client service experience has been weaker than that of other professional services industries, but that song is now changing tune.”

Changes in behaviour and expectations don’t end with the clients; law firms will have to find new ways of attracting talent if they want to compete in the new legal market. Crowhurst says: “There’s a big focus now within academic institutions to upskill students around how to operate within a law firms, as opposed to just teaching the law. This, alongside options to explore legaltech and efficiency, have been shifting in importance on law schools’ agendas.

“There’s an expectation that these areas will have shifted focus within law firms as well – and, if they haven’t, then firms will struggle to attract and retain talent.”

Dixon-Pemberton points out that this has been a bigger trend in the large law firms, and it’s something that needs to trickle down more into the SME side of the market. “Big firms have set up innovation hubs and partnerships over the last few years, which have been hugely beneficial for junior lawyers because they’re getting the opportunity to learn digital skills in a supportive environment. And these skills are going to help the business thrive for years to come as a result. Smaller firms are going to have to learn to pick up these kinds of practices; investment shouldn’t be a barrier here – firms can no longer afford to use that excuse.”

Many firms we speak to, Crowhurst adds, have seen the crisis as an opportunity for innovation, moving from paper files to digital working while fully auditing their technology needs and review legal information processes. “Those who took stock of this early were in a better position than their competitors to adapt quickly and take advantage of the opportunities Covid-19 has created.”

Crowhurst says understanding the people change is really key, and SME law firms shouldn’t just watch changes in lawyer behaviour but also that of business support staff if they want to differentiate and succeed. “Often in SMEs, the fee earners take on too much – they work on cases, do marketing and BD, chase fees and so on. This isn’t very sustainable and will not prove profitable long-term.

“The changes we’ve seen in the legal market have been slow compared to other professional service sectors. Those that have started to take notice of where they could improve operating

structures, people management and be more agile in countercyclical, fast-growing areas, are the one that are going to be getting ahead of the competition. To do this accurately, firms need actionable legal intelligence, which is why we created the [Gross Legal Product \(GLP\) report](#) for firms to track legal market growth.”

As such, law firms are going to have to start taking a different approach to recruitment, Dixon-Pemberton says. “We’ll likely see a lot more firms working with consultants – a more flexible approach here means that firms could offer services that they don’t have in-house expertise for, but if they have a bank of consultants, or freelance lawyers, they can broaden the scope of their work as well as take on more or complex work.

“Another thing derived from the pandemic is that firms now realise they can hire further afield. You no longer have to worry about someone travelling a few hours to get into work if you hire someone who lives across the country. You can put those people in your books, leverage their expertise and widen the pool of talent readily available to you and your clients.

“We think about the future legal workforce in terms of ‘fungibility’. It will mean firms can scale up (and down) depending on business needs – meaning they can accept more new mandates if the market expands while still resourcing efficiently.”

Crowhurst adds that organisational agility will be a key factor going forward to encourage new ways of working that promote agility. “Covid-19 has forced that hand a little but to maintain strong morale, keep and attract talent, being open to this will be key for many firms. This is particularly important for the legal industry where stress and mental wellbeing has been a significant issue, as mentioned in our 2019 Bellwether report.”

CULTURALLY SOUND

This new digital world is evolving the whole culture of businesses – it’s really fostering innovation in terms of how firms can gain that edge we’ve been talking about, Crowhurst says. “Firms should really take a look at different business models that might benefit from the change in environment we see ourselves in today.”

This means considering the emergence of the

big four and other accountancies into the legal market, which is a factor driving the workplace culture in legal, Dixon-Pemberton says – “and if it isn’t on your radar yet then it should be.”

But it also means looking at the intersection of culture and tech. He says it’s easy not to think about how people work with technology differently when you train everyone the same way – but you may have seen how differently technology has been used over the course of the pandemic.

“Whichever technologies firms choose to adopt, people have to consider it as a natural extension of systems already in place. It can’t feel like an obstructive or unwanted addition to what can already be a challenging or not-so-efficient tech stack.”

Crowhurst agrees: “To eliminate any non-tech user versus tech user divide, a shift in mindset in decision makers is needed to see how tech can be implemented more efficiently. This can be done by looking at marginal gains and evidence of beneficial outputs from using technology over time or within a team or practice area in order to win over hearts and minds. If you implement tech in one fell swoop, you’re going to be met with resistance.”

The other consideration, he adds, is around the consistency that technology can bring a growing firm. “The bigger or more complex your firm or



We think about the future legal workforce in terms of ‘fungibility’. It will mean firms can scale up (and down) depending on business needs – meaning they can accept more new mandates if the market expands while still resourcing efficiently

Ashton Dixon-Pemberton, senior marketing manager,
LexisNexis

practice areas get, the harder it is for you to maintain a consistent service and one that is error- and risk-free.”

When it comes to the actual daily use of technology in a firm, junior lawyers are the ones who need the most support right now – they’re relying on technology in a way that they haven’t needed to before in order to communicate and learn on the job, Dixon-Pemberton says. “Collaborative tech is a must. Project management software, or at least tech with the ability to leave notes, share or allocate work across teams and individuals, needs to be easily accessible, understood and executed within one tool.

“From there, we can then look at the management aspects of tech, things like ROI reports, KPI and productivity tracking, work allocation and profit data. Firms should be able to harness the power of tech to make data-driven decisions on how to operate going forward. Data visibility and analysis tools will be needed here to lead a successful firm.”

He stresses that having a single environment – especially if you’re a firm that takes the best-of-breed approach to technology investment – is super important for the sustainability and success

of SME law firms from now on.

Crowhurst adds that firms can strip out unnecessary costs by leveraging a cloud environment and outsourcing to managed IT providers – this is an obvious choice for those on the smaller end of the market.

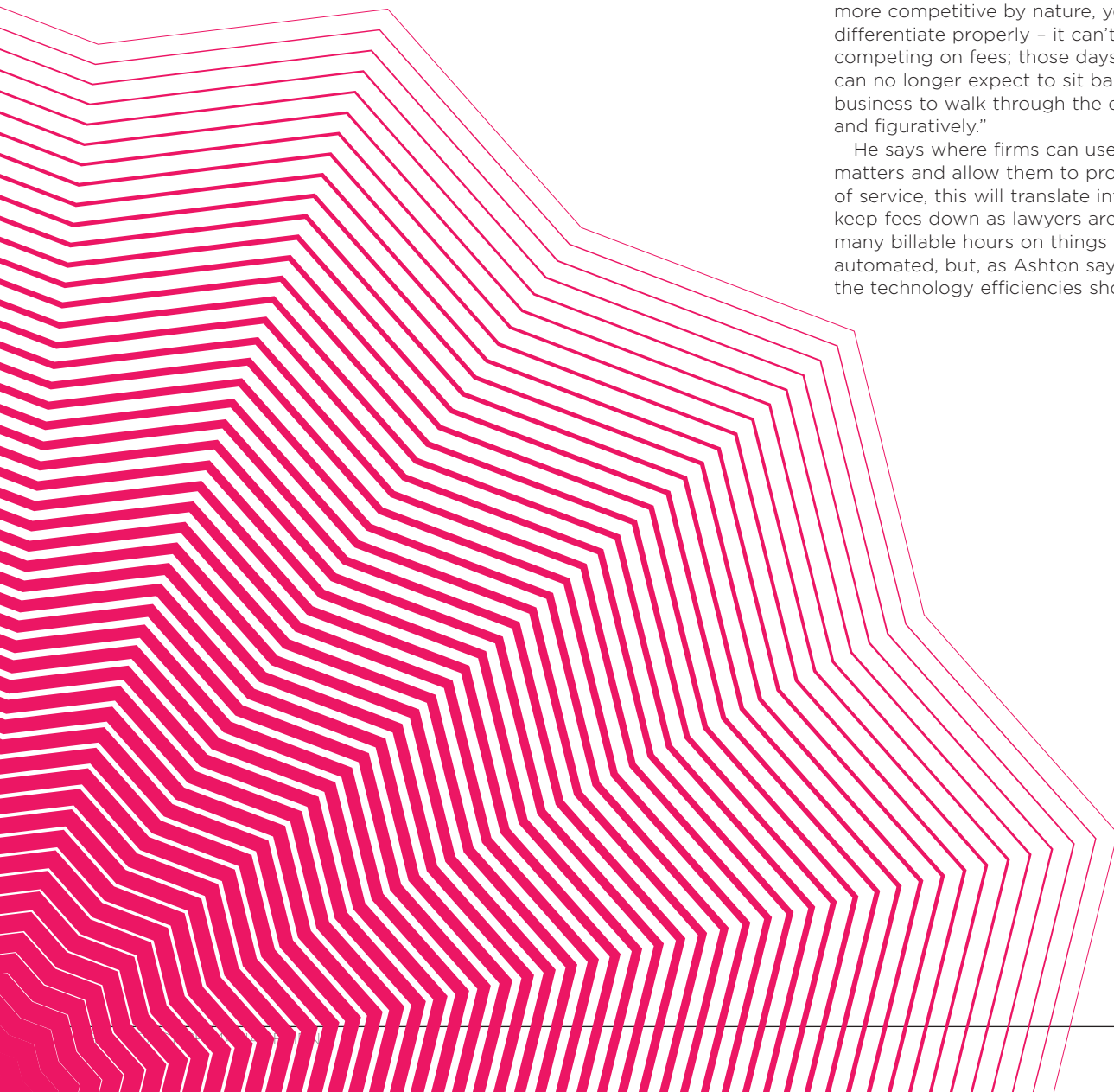
And, Dixon-Pemberton says: “Leveraging cloud tech is great for business continuity – provided you have ample back up servers – and allows your firm to scale up and down as necessary.”

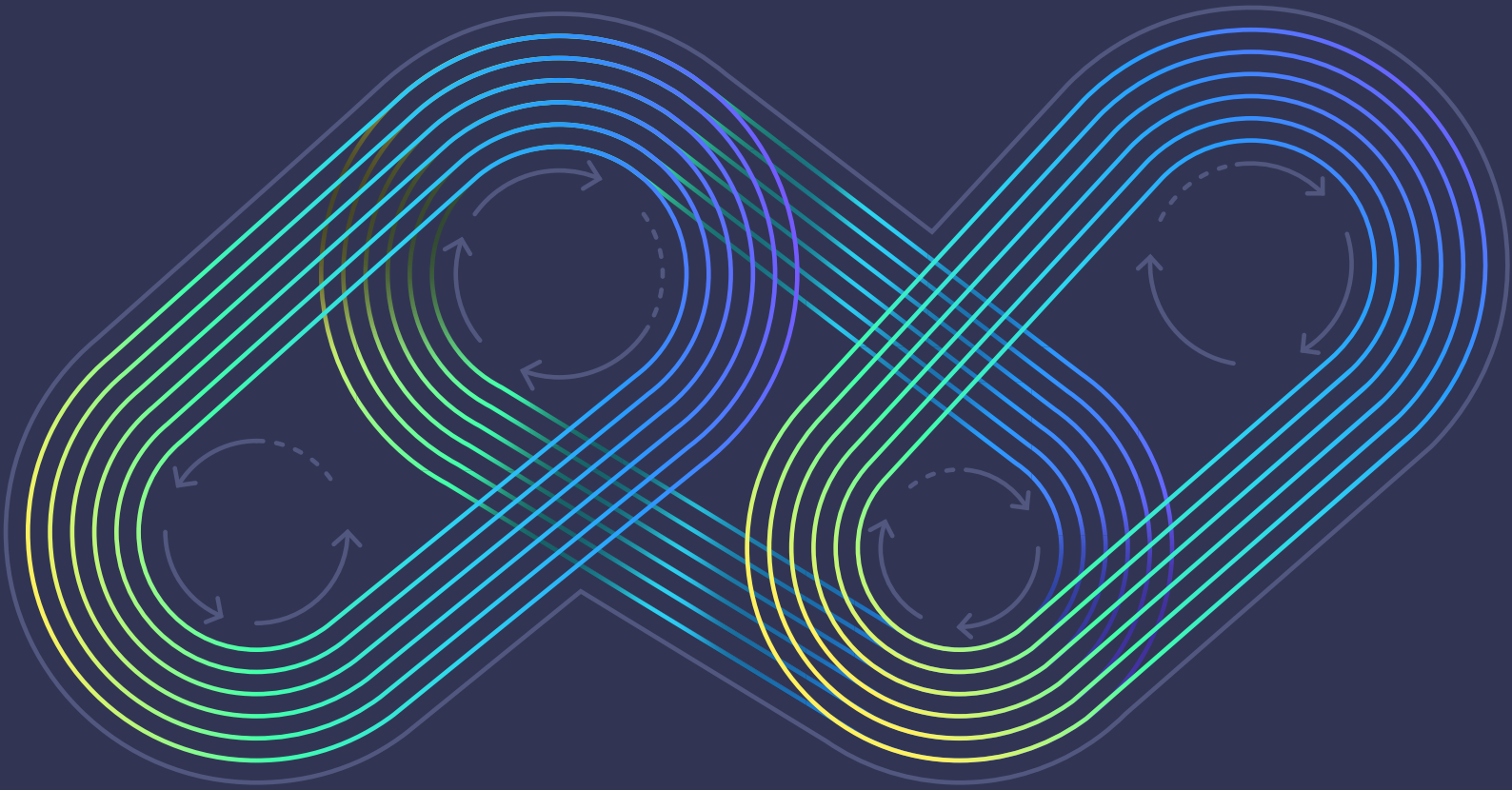
So, what does this all boil down to? Crowhurst says firms should be forecasting cashflow regularly, looking at profit generation and how work can be distributed differently or where they can apply automation and workflow technology to improve efficiencies.

Dixon-Pemberton says firms should invest in digital solutions – this will be the trend moving forward. “There’s no reason why the amount of money firms were spending on partner travel, lunches, office space and so on pre-pandemic has to pick up to the level it was, which means that money can and should be fed back into the development of the firm either operationally or on tech projects.”

Plus, Crowhurst adds: “Where the market is tightening and certain practice areas are becoming more competitive by nature, you have to differentiate properly – it can’t just be down to competing on fees; those days are gone. Law firms can no longer expect to sit back and expect business to walk through the door, both literally and figuratively.”

He says where firms can use tech to speed up matters and allow them to provide a better level of service, this will translate into profitability. “It’ll keep fees down as lawyers aren’t spending as many billable hours on things that can be automated, but, as Ashton says, to be competitive the technology efficiencies should go further.” **LPM**





TRUSTING TECH

Arif Kamal, chief finance and operations officer at Hunters Law, and Paul Estep, managing director at Extech Cloud, talk moving nearly all the firm's 38 servers to the cloud and the cost-saving and future visions that brings

Arif Kamal, chief finance and operations officer, says since he joined Hunters Law in 2018 his remit has been to bring a change programme into the business. "The first thing we did was convert to an LLP and we looked at all our operations and formulated an internal efficiencies committee. This looked into many different issues but the biggest part to consider was our IT infrastructure, so we embarked on that in depth.

"At my previous company, an international shipping law firm, I had seen the performance of Extech Cloud and how well it managed the international operations. At Hunters, we had so many legacy systems, which people were accustomed to using, and they were pretty ancient technologies by today's standards."

He says the firm wasn't as modern as it could have been: "We wanted a supplier that could be trusted to hold our hand through this journey, and Extech Cloud was the obvious choice."

GETTING IT DONE

"In any business relationship, what I look for is whether we can have a trusted partnership and if we can build a relationship that will be sustainable regardless of any ups and downs that we might encounter along the way."

Kamal says he feels comfortable being able to call up Paul or anyone at Extech Cloud and be able to have honest conversations around what's possible, included in the contract and how much something will cost.

"The proactive approach that Extech Cloud takes in the relationship is also what makes it appealing – it wasn't the cheapest option of the four companies we interviewed but it was the trust and gut-feel that I know we can build a great relationship and create success for the firm that won us over."

Hunters made the decision in late 2019 that Extech Cloud was going to be its partner going

LPM FIRM FACTS

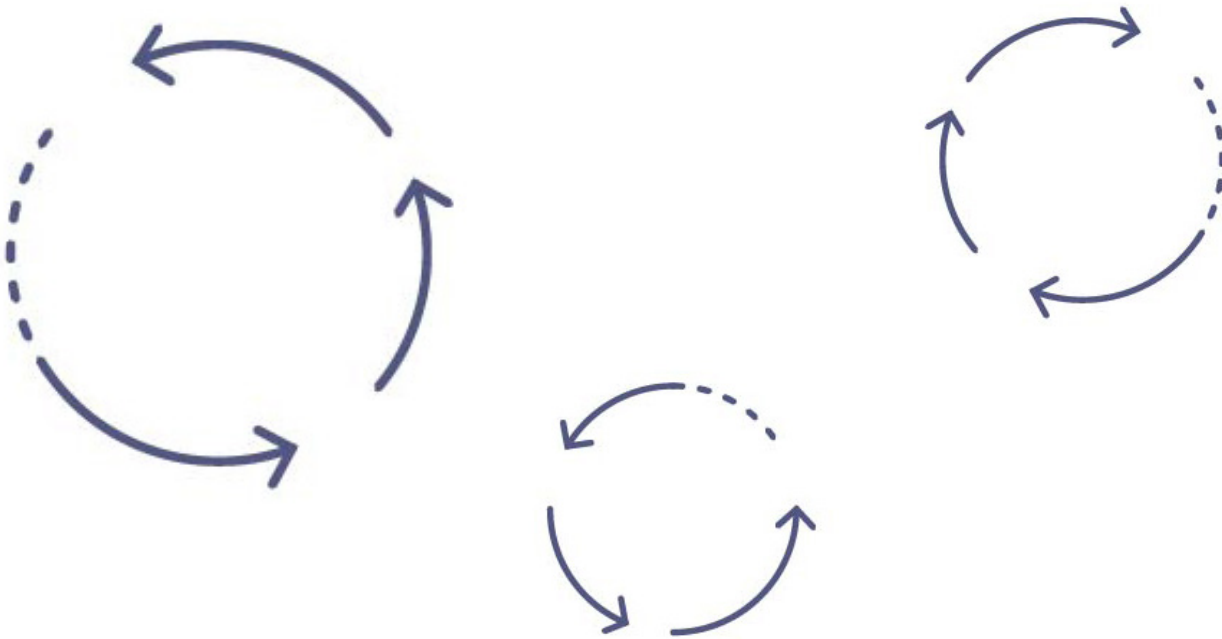
Hunters Law

Revenue: £12.6m

Corporate status: LLP

24 partners, 100+ total staff

Office: Lincoln's Inn, London



forward for the firm's IT support and management of any third-party IT relationships. "We were able to roll out modern workplace devices just in time before the pandemic hit. Not having this modern technology to support remote working would have been really difficult in March 2020."

He says Hunters was able to get the majority of its systems in the cloud in only three months, what would usually take six to eight months to complete. This was all down to the fantastic help and support provided by Extech Cloud.

Plus, Kamal says, a big help to get buy-in internally through all of this was the roadmap that Hunters and Extech Cloud worked on together – which outlines where the firm's future objectives are going, growth strategy in terms of both turnover and profitability, and the benefit to the stakeholders and employees.

"We wanted to provide an environment that will be conducive to higher productivity – and with the kit we had previously, which was all on desktops at the office, it was not going to work. In the modern day, certainly now because of Covid-19, laptops are the norm. Extech Cloud helped us procure those just in time for our whole move to remote working."

SECURED FUTURE

Hunters went from 38 servers on-premises down to six in Azure in a short period of time, and it plans to get rid of all the on-premises servers and become completely cloud-based.

Kamal says being in the cloud gives the firm more resilience, backup and helps with business continuity and disaster recovery plans as well. "We did update our policies in line with our new infrastructure and ability to move away from outdated activities like tape backups.

"As for processes, as you'd expect of a 300-year-old firm, we deal with a lot of generational clients and so a lot of our files are paper-based, but our plan is to go paper-light. For this part of our journey, we've introduced follow me printing and have a DMS in place, but that hasn't been utilised to its full potential so



The proactive approach that Extech Cloud takes in the relationship is also what makes it appealing

Arif Kamal, chief finance and operations officer,
Hunters Law

we're embarking on a programme with Extech Cloud about how we can provide more training and reap the benefits of using our systems."

In terms of security, Extech Cloud has it covered, and Kamal says cybersecurity is absolutely top of the agenda for the firm.

Paul Estep, managing director at Extech Cloud, says: "When it comes to security, you can't rest on your laurels. It's a constant battle to maintain current measures against emerging threats and that shouldn't be something a law firms has to actively worry about.

"Hunters is set up with a VPN and multifactor authentication, but we've also rolled out Windows Defender ATP across the firm, which will give us really detailed, granular analysis of security events and alerts."

He adds that Extech Cloud wants to further consolidate Hunters use of the cloud and optimise costs and utilisation so that the firm can get the most out of this new environment. "So far, we've calculated that there's been about 30-40% saving in cost over three years moving to cloud – and we want to only expand on those savings for the firm."

Kamal says Hunters is really pleased to have Extech Cloud as a partner going forward. "We're looking forward to bringing in more innovation and efficiencies in the coming months and years." **LPM**

ABOUT US

Extech Cloud is about disrupting traditional thinking to deliver cost-efficient businesses through award-winning innovative processes for the legal sector.

www.extechcloud.com

