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Winner time

The IT world is not going away; it's the biggest way to leverage your talent and succeed. Whoever wins in IT tends to win."

These aren't the words of a Tech Unicorn founder or a VC investor. It is a statement by Sir Clive Woodward (coach of the England team that won the 2003 Rugby World Cup). I was reminded of these words as I read this **Briefing** report. But does the legal industry embrace the same philosophy as sporting champions? A few areas of the report suggest there is still a way to go ...

First, it notes that there is increased recognition of the non-traditional competitive threats in the legal market – and yet there does not appear to be a direct correlation of these threats with the quantum and areas of IT investment in response.

Second, cloud technology is generally seen as the inevitable pathway for adoption of newer digital technologies (with Gartner predicting that cloud software will grow at 22% this year – compared with 6% growth for other forms of software – and IDC suggesting this growth for the professional services sector will be faster than for

others). However, Legal IT landscapes 2019 suggests that within legal there remains a disproportionate hesitation in cloud adoption, underpinned primarily by concerns about security risks – contrary to all the evidence and the billions of dollars invested every year by firms like Microsoft in cybersecurity.

It's heartening to see that smart working is being viewed more positively. While cost saving remains one of the key drivers for this trend, law firms are beginning to acknowledge its value in helping to attract and retain talent and in ensuring employee wellbeing. However, as people-based industries, it is surprising that more law firms don't deploy enterprise-wide technologies to facilitate HR management, and thus translate employee talent management into a competitive advantage.

Lastly, it remains astounding that law firms continue to invest more energy and resources on speculative vanity projects rather than on core business applications and in developing the culture and transformation capabilities to ensure adoption and value realisation.

The findings of this report signal that firms are taking strides in the right direction – but the approach to technology is still tactical rather than viewing it as a core enabler. When will law firms realise 'whoever wins in IT tends to win?' ▴

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Andy Sparkes
General manager
LexisNexis Enterprise Solutions



Respondents say they believe that a third of people in the firm regularly work from home, and if they're right they would like to be able to almost double that number (62%).

DLA Piper doesn't do the hotdesk thing either, says Becca Johansson, head of operations – real estate. "Agile working is very much the norm here, but mandatory working from home is almost the opposite of flexible. I think we acknowledge different people have different wants and needs. It's not one model of working for everyone."

Her colleague Blount adds: "In the last six

months we've also implemented new hardware so everyone can work from anywhere more efficiently."

Productive 'smart' working depends on several things is the consensus – but one of them is certainly the right tools for the right jobs. The 'any device, anywhere, anytime' mantra of productive working and work-life balance is familiar from many a software supplier – but what's the reality on the law firm ground?

Another barometer question we like to ask every year in Legal IT Landscapes is whether