

Three things we can learn from digital-first law firms about technology and conveyancing

By Bronwyn Townsend, Senior Marketing Manager, InfoTrack

Only 5% of law firms scored above 80% when assessed for their digital maturity in the conveyancing process according to the Digital Conveyancing Maturity Index. These firms are the trailblazers. The pioneers. The leaders.

Early adopters are essential for the evolution of an industry. They are those leading the way on the implementation of new systems and keep the needle moving. This remains true with the conveyancing sector too. Law firms which are adopting digital tools are reaping the rewards, time-savings, productivity, and better risk mitigation.

The solutions these leading firms are adopting span the entire conveyancing process from new business management and client onboarding to post-completion. They're the firms that scored higher than 80% when the industry average is just 43%. These are the firms the rest of the industry will watch and learn from.

What are the key takeaways we can learn from these digital adoption leaders? Based on the Digital Conveyancing Maturity Index, here are the three most important discoveries from the research.

1. Case management system integration is pivotal

To maximise the currently available technology, law firms must integrate their service suppliers with their case management system. Two-way integration, the kind that pushes and pulls data between various digital tools, creates a single source of

truth, saves time, and mitigates many risks associated with the rekeying of data.

2. Automation is key

The pre-completion process is the least mature across the board when it comes to the adoption of digitalisation by conveyancers, with an average score of 30%. It's also the largest and most labour intensive part of the process. Automation of administrative tasks and pre-population can all have a major impact on law firm productivity. Automation is also saving these digitally savvy firms hours on manually updating their clients. By using digital tools to automate the process before clients chase, they're saving hours every week.

3. eSignatures are a quick win

78% of firms are already using eSignatures, though not evenly across the entire process. For the firms already using eSignatures for part of the process, ensure you're using them for Land Registry and mortgage deeds, not just onboarding. If you're not using them at all, eSignatures are one of the quickest ways to incorporate digitalisation into your conveyancing process and you'll see the rewards swiftly.

These firms are showing us all that end-to-end digital conveyancing is a reality and it's available to law firms now. So, why not join them? ■

First non-barrister appointed to the Court of Appeal

The Ministry of Justice has announced that solicitor Lady Justice Falk has been appointed to the Court of Appeal. It is the first time since 2020 that there has been a non-barrister on the Court of Appeal.

This is an outstanding achievement and the Law Society of England and Wales President Lubna Shuja said: "On behalf of the solicitor profession I would like to offer my congratulations to Lady Falk. Solicitors bring particular skills and experience to the judicial process and decision-making. They also come from more diverse backgrounds than the barristers who traditionally populate the bench."

Lady Falk is currently the only solicitor on the Court of Appeal, and will be the twentieth Lady Justice of Appeal ever, which demonstrates there is still much progress to be made before the judiciary reflects wider society. It does, however, show that solicitors with judicial aspirations should not limit their ambitions. ■

Would you like to feature in Legal Women?



To advertise in Legal Women, please call **Catherine McCarthy** our Business Features Editor on **0151 236 4141** or email catherine@benhampublishing.com.



Getting women and their advocates on-board in law

The photographs say it all – this was not the usual afterwork talk and networking event. So full marks for prioritising this important topic and putting the event on at lunchtime. It was a refreshing change to take some time out of the day to meet lawyers and concentrate on issues.

BUCKLESconnect & Serle Court panel of speakers included: Karen Jones, Citywealth, Stephanie Bell BACP, the Canvisho Consultancy, Sarah Rushton, Buckles LLP and Kathryn Purkis, Serle Court. All gave excellent, informed talks and subsequently the attendees were able to discuss issues informally on the round tables and, of course, eat scones!

Karen Jones highlighted that this is a unique time as workplaces grapple with the issue of succession. Most women lawyers are the first or second generation of women who have worked most of their lives; how will that legacy continue; how do workplaces handle the retirement of senior female lawyers and ensure there is a pipeline of women to take their place? The strength of cultural norms means we know there needs to be an active strategy – do not assume it will just happen. We've seen that women simply qualifying in equal numbers for decades has not led to similar numbers of women in senior legal positions.

Unpaid work is a substantial part of most women's lives, even for those of us who work full-time. As well as housework and family responsibilities women also volunteer for the 'non-profit' jobs at work (see Helen Broadbridge's fascinating blog Volunteering@legalwomen.org.uk).

Karen also discussed her experience of men speaking regularly to head-hunters to understand the market and know their worth, even if there is no intention to change jobs. Women are far less inclined to get this insight. Equally, men have no guilt in a long lunch and recognising that socialising is all part of networking and gaining insights. Karen joked how much less fun it is to meet women who often arrive late for lunch and are still prioritising files in their head, while attempting to socialise.

Karen's final tip was to decide on your rhythm and what works for you in terms of attending events. This seminar showed that lunchtime is perfect for some people, so next event you hold, think about varying the time of day or format. It may be different people who will attend which will widen your network. ■

Coral Hill
Founder & Editor-in-Chief