

Legal Marketers Struggling to Get Buy-In for CX Initiatives

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Selling the value of client experience efforts is one of the key issues facing marketing and business development teams within Australian law firms. When customer experience efforts can't be billed directly to the client, how do you get lawyers to focus on CX?

And how do you reward people for client experience efforts when this "billable hours"

mindset is so fixed in the legal profession?

These and other facets of legal innovation were the key topics in the recent [roundtable discussions](#) to uncover the main challenges and pain points facing marketing professionals in the legal sector.

Overcoming the Billable Hours Mindset

How do you reward people for client experience efforts when the "billable hours" mindset is so fixed in the legal profession? This was a key question that was raised during our roundtable discussions. Focusing lawyers' efforts on CX initiatives when they can't be billed directly to the client is a pressing challenge for many marketing and BD professionals today.

Many clients are asking for alternative billable arrangements, moving away from billable hours. Despite this, internal mindsets in many law firms are still focused on billable hours. There is a need to get these two mindsets aligned.

"You can bill all the hours you want, but if they don't see the value beyond legal advice, they won't stick with you. It's a long-term investment into the client relationship" said one Senior Business Development Executive during the roundtable discussions.

"A lawyer's top priority is billable hours – customer experience is not a KPI they are measured on. Until that changes it is difficult to get the rest of the firm to think of client experience as a critical part of their role", said another participant.

Some suggestions from our roundtable participants for ways to overcome to change this way of thinking include:

- Implementing a balanced scorecard model to link CX initiatives with value.
- Tying CX metrics to a business outcome – establishing client focused KPIs can be an effective motivator to get people focused on CX efforts.
- Showing the value of CX through data. Demonstrating success by showing how your client focused activities have helped bring in new business is critical to getting partners on board with you CX efforts.
- Celebrating wins. Communicating success stories of good client experience internally shows the value of non-billable work. Using case studies to show exactly how much

money you have saved for the client is a powerful way to show the value of your CX efforts. Having this come from a senior executive can have an even greater impact on success of your message.

Here's an excerpt from our [Legal Innovation Report 2019](#):

“Clients expect their legal providers to know what drives them. Legal services should be designed with the client at the centre and at a sufficient speed to keep up with business. The value proposition for legal services has changed. The return on investment for clients can be quantified in many more ways than it used to be, with the onus on legal firms to demonstrate value in everything they do. This is leading to an entirely new language of KPIs to demonstrate value and specialty which is transforming the traditional law firm and its structure. But are law firms measuring the right client value factors?”

Empathy a Cornerstone of Client Experience Success

When the client experience ethos is the same at every level of the organisation, we lose many of the objections or scepticism that usually accompanies rapid change. We don't have to spend time explaining the why, as the reason is obvious; “to improve the experience for the client”. When we build genuine empathy with our client it makes the focus on CX much easier to achieve. Most of us understand the importance of CX on the bottom line, but in a modern world we can lose sight of the real client and how they are feeling. Read more in the [Legal Innovation Report 2019](#).

Empathy is undoubtedly the cornerstone of good CX, but building empathy is hard when you're thinking of your client as a “matter”, or a revenue driver. “I'm working on the matter” is a common phrase that sets many marketing professional's teeth on edge.

One way to build empathy for clients is through journey mapping, a process of putting yourself in your clients' shoes to experience their journey with your firm through the many touchpoints they encounter.

Read more about the importance of [building empathy in your client experience program here](#).

Technology Investment to Drive CX Initiatives

Finding marketing technology that is client focused is difficult. And finding technology that is specific for legal firms is even more challenging. Many legal marketing teams are moving away from ad-hoc investment in marketing technology, towards more strategic selection of solutions to solve specific client problems.

“There's a lot of noise in the Legal Tech market but providers need to improve customising their solutions to solve real client problems,” said Anthony Lieu, head of Marketing at Legal Vision during the roundtable discussions.

When choosing digital tools, there is a clear need to think about what is going to improve the client experience, not necessarily the market leading technology.

One strategy that was brought up during the roundtable discussions is to partner with technology vendors to co-design solutions that are going to really benefit clients. While it takes some serious investment in time and budget, it is a sure-fire way to ensure your technology is focused on solving your clients' problems.

Passing on cost of technology is another sticking point for many legal marketing teams. Should the cost of a technology platform be part of the firm's overhead or should it be

passed onto the client? One solution is to separate the cost of business vs value add to the client – does the technology help the business provide better service, or does it add specific value to the client? This clarification can help decide where to bill it.

The Changing Role of the Legal Marketing Professional

The role of the legal marketing professional is changing. Many legal marketing professionals are moving towards an account manager role, triaging client problems and directing them to the most appropriate lawyer. Some firms have created positions solely focused on improving client experience such as a Client Experience Officer. The role of these kinds of professionals may become more important in the coming years as client experience becomes more important within law firms.

Hear more on delivering outstanding client experience at [The Legal Festival](#)

With tailored content from the best of the legal industry, plus featuring world class CX case-studies from other industries, [The Legal Festival](#) will explore innovative ways to apply business strategies in legal practice. Content will focus on the client perspective and how a law firm's reputation, content output and marketing efforts all impact decisions made by clients.