FUTURE OF LAW

Developments

Non-traditional competitors increasingly prominent

US legal management consultants Altman Weil have released the results of their 2018 Law Firms in Transition Survey. The March/April 2018 survey of managing partners and chairs at law firms with 50 or more lawyers received responses from 398 firms (49.7% of those polled).

One of the key findings was that, apart from traditional law firm competitors, 70% of firms were losing business to corporate law departments in-sourcing legal work. It is also revealed that 26% of firms had lost business to clients' use of technology tools reducing their need for law firm services, and 16% were losing out to alternative legal service providers. The survey found that 9% of firms were losing work to the Big Four accounting firms. Among firms with over 1,000 lawyers, 27% were losing work to those accounting firms.

Altman Weil's survey has now been conducted for 10 years. It says in that time it has seen law firms recover from the Global Financial Crisis only to find themselves in a more volatile marketplace characterised by client demands for greater value at lower prices, non-traditional competitors taking market share and new technologies disrupting the status quo.

"Unlike the recession and its aftermath, the threat to law firms in 2018 is broader and more nuanced. It's not just an economic threat. Now there are clear, systemic disrupters in play that pose a threat to the sustainability of the traditional law firm business model," says Altman Weil survey co-author Tom Clay.

More details: The survey is available to download at *www.altmanweil.com/LFiT2018*

Law-Whiz: matching barristers with solicitors

By Craig Stephen

Law-Whiz, which has just launched in New Zealand, is a custom-designed platform that aims to connect barristers and solicitors.

The people behind the platform say it enables barristers to increase their revenue without marketing, and solicitors to readily find available barristers with the right level of expertise.

Law-Whiz was created by April Arslan who has practised in commercial litigation in Australia for 20 years.

She says she had a vision to "make a difference" in the way lawyers conduct business across common law-based legal systems.

Ms Arslan says Law-Whiz is designed to streamline the process for barristers and solicitors to check availability and brief the right barrister.

She gives the example of "James" an experienced barrister who is marketing himself for work opportunities in the usual places without much luck.

Meanwhile, "Samantha" is a solicitor looking for a barrister with qualifications and experience that James possesses. However, her requests to clerks comes to nothing.

"Law-Whiz bridges the gap," says Ms Arslan, "saving them both time and money."

On Law-Whiz everyone creates a profile then solicitors post available matters and Law-Whiz notifies barristers in their specialty. They then either apply for the brief or wait for invitations.

"Law-Whiz manages the rest and everyone benefits."

Ms Arslan says under the platform there are no more marketing concerns to increase revenue for barristers, nor time management concerns or stress for solicitors.

Law-Whiz has a dedicated team of operators from application, development, production and marketing.

More details: Law-Whiz can be found at *www.law-whiz.com*

I, robot...

We have created computers and robots as useful tools, but we have continued to develop them as far more – as devices that far outstrip our own capacities to decipher the mysteries of the Universe, says Louisiana State

driving evolution," he says. "What's remarkable, to my mind, is how pervasive this openness and willingness to pull together is. It manifests in how legal ops professionals share and teach via CLOC, yes, but also in the way platform providers work closely with customers, how legal ops teams and their own stakeholders unite around technologies like workflow automation to invent new, better ways of conducting business."

Data and analytics: "Data-driven decision-making and a reliance on metrics may be standard operating procedure in many areas of a company," Mr Hirner says, "but we're still in the 'revelatory' stage when it comes to their potential for many corporate legal departments. Those that have mastered legal process analytics are finding new economies and enhancements for in-house operations and how they utilise and manage outside counsel."

Cybersecurity: This is an increasing concern with major cybersecurity problems throughout the legal industry. Integration of cybersecurity best practices and protocols into legal technology platforms, such as workflow automation, will help in this, says Paul Hirner. CLOC leaders hope to generate a new industry standard for legal ops cybersecurity that can be embraced by all, he notes.

Technology as a tool for maturity: Every enterprise should ask 'What does a strong legal ops function really look like?' Mr Hirner says that question is part of a trend toward self-examination of what constitutes "maturity" and what technologies contribute to that growth.

Explosive expansion: "More and more resource providers were on deck at CLOC 2018, growing in number and variety as legal operations itself grows in acceptance and scope. The range of options available for legal ops teams, including technology options, is expanding so rapidly that it becomes more crucial to properly vet competing solutions and the vendors supplying them," he says.

More Details: Paul Hirner, *5 legal technology trends we saw at CLOC 2018, https://thinksmart. com/5-legal-technology-trends-cloc-2018/*

Future Firm Forum speakers announced

Legal business adviser Simon Tupman's annual Future Firm Forum will be held at Millbrook Resort in Arrowtown on 19-20 October. Now in its 11th year, the law firm leadership and management conference has attracted a range of international speakers on

University Associate Professor of Law Christine Corcos.

If we deliberately endow them with characteristics that mimic our own, if they develop those independently, or develop others by analogy allowing them to function in ways that mirror human activities, she says, can we continue to insist that we should treat them as property and that they should do our bidding?

In a paper for the *Savannah Law Review*, Associate Professor Corcos says novelists, film-makers and other popular culture artists have already considered this question for decades, if not centuries. She looks at some of the insights they have had into the issue which could possibly help in the developing subject of robot law.

More details: Corcos, Christine A, *'I am the master': Some popular culture images of AI in humanity's courtroom* (7 May 2018). *Savannah Law Review*. Available at SSRN: *https://ssrn.com/abstract=3174825*

Five legal technology trends at CLOC

The annual CLOC Institute conference is now seen as the ultimate showcase for developments in legal technology. The Corporate Legal Operations Consortium (CLOC) is a networking organisation which brings together members of the burgeoning legal operations industry with a focus on optimising the delivery of legal services to businesses. To learn more about legal operations, check out Sian Wingate's article on page 70. This year's CLOC Institute in Las Vegas from 22 to 25 April was said to be the largest gathering of corporate legal professionals in the world.

Blogger Paul Hirner's post on the Thinksmart blog captures many of the themes which struck other commentators, particularly the collaborative spirit which now permeates an intensely competitive industry. A brief summary of the five trends he identified:

Collaboration: "Collaboration is

issues around law firm development. David Sharrock, Principal of Melbourne firm Sharrock Pitman will discuss leadership and client service. Simon McCrum, of UK management consultancy McCrum and Co, will talk on the subject Foundation for your Future. Katherine Thomas, of Perth-based legal solutions provider Vario will talk on contract lawyers. A session on the need to change will be run by Jarrod Coburn and Erin Ebborn from Christchurch firm Ebborn Law. Te Radar will deliver the closing keynote address.

More Details: *www.futurefirmforum.com/*

Singapore law school wins AI research grant

The Singapore Management University School of Law has been awarded a National Research Foundation grant of S$4.5 million for a five-year research programme on the Government of Artificial Intelligence and Data Use. The School of Law will set up a new research centre to manage the project. There are three research streams: AI and Society, AI and Industry, and AI and Commercialisation, and the intention is to develop government- and industry-relevant strategies for the governance of AI and data use.

More Details: *www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2018-06/smu-sso060518.php*

About those robots who are going to replace lawyers...

"I think that a lawyer replaced by a robot is less probable than a lawyer replaced by another lawyer with better technology. That is what we all should focus on," says legal publisher and law firm strategy expert Holger Zscheyge. In an interview on the *lawless.tech* website, Mr Zscheyge referred to a report *The Future of Employment: How susceptible are jobs to computerisation?* published in 2013 by Carl Benedikt Frey and Michael A Osborne of Oxford University. He noted that they tried to predict the probability with which humans will be replaced by robots in various professions.

"The probability for paralegals is indeed very high, 94%. That's because paralegals are handed predominantly repetitive, relatively easy tasks. Jobs, that can and will be taken over by technology," he says. "The probability of lawyers being replaced entirely by algorithms is only 3.5%, very low indeed. The probability for judges is somewhere inbetween – 40%."

However, Mr Zscheyge says a machine without empathy cannot make a fair decision in a complex legal dispute, or where law collides with common sense. "A human judge would not hand a sentence to somebody for violating traffic regulations because a sick child had to be delivered to the hospital as quickly as possible. What algorithms can do is unbiasedly decide high volume matters where the decision is only a technical issue. This would greatly decrease the pressure courts are under

all over the world and expedite the delivery of justice."

More Details: *https://lawless.tech/moscow-legal-techs-holger-zscheyge-a-lawyer-replaced-by-robot-is-less-probable-than-a-lawyer-replaced-by-another-lawyer-with-better-technology/*

The future for legal talent

Peerpoint, Allen & Overy's business for consultant lawyers, has released a report from a survey of over 1,000 lawyers and law students entitled *The Future for Legal Talent.* Participants – mainly from the United Kingdom and Asia Pacific – were asked how they view their careers in the rapidly changing legal marketplace. Among the findings are:

The draw of partnership within private practice is less of a driver than might be expected, with 81% of current lawyers believing that many young lawyers entering the profession will feel that undertaking the path to partnership is not worth it.

Some 83% of respondents believed a lawyer starting out today will have a very different career experience to one who started 5-10 years ago. Key drivers of legal market change are seen as new technologies (70% of respondents), changing approaches to legal resourcing (56%), new business models (45%), and expectations for more control and flexibility (41%). Overall, 61% of respondents believed that new technologies will augment their careers, and 81% of students believed technology will free them up to focus on the more creative aspects of their roles.

Greater technology skills were seen by 61% of respondents as what they will need as a lawyer in the future, followed by a stronger personal brand and network (42%), further non-legal subject matter expertise (39%) and greater commercial awareness (39%).

Peerpoint says the survey also showed that lawyers are not happy with what the industry is offering them by way of career progression. Lawyers are looking for alternatives to the traditional working structures of the profession. Of the respondents, 57% would encourage their colleague to pursue a career as a legal consultant, and 38% had considered it as an option for themselves. This, of course, is Peerpoint's business, and the survey asks a number of consultancy-related questions.

More Details: The full report can be downloaded from *www.peerpoint.com*. ∎

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