

# Law Firm Tips: How Law Firm Staff Can Influence Positive Technological Change

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Do you work in a law firm where new technology is desperately needed? Making matters worse, while you and other staff members are keenly aware of the inadequacies, the firm's decision-makers have no clue... and unfortunately, these are the people with the power to bring new technologies into the firm.

This scenario is a common one within law firms because lawyers are often more focused on the actual delivery of legal service, with little knowledge or insight on the processes and procedures that actually keep the doors open.

Faced with this dilemma, staff members may decide to bite the bullet and communicate their concerns to law firm leaders, but this can be a difficult conversation to have. Aside from not fully understanding the behind-the-scenes mechanics, firm leaders are also focused on profitability and the bottom line, so persuading them to upgrade firm technology is no easy feat.

This post will include some tips for the support-staff person who wants to influence firm leaders in their technology decisions. You will learn how to best position yourself within the firm as an authority on tech and how to have those uncomfortable, but necessary, tech advancing conversations. So, if you are that staff member looking to positively influence technological change within your firm, this is the post for you.

## Know Your Tech

Remember that you are dealing with attorneys, skillfully trained to critique arguments from top to bottom. So, make sure you do your homework about the tech you are suggesting and how it can benefit the firm.

Take the time to understand the technology currently being used within your law firm. When you position yourself as the person with extensive tech knowledge, you earn the trust of firm leaders. They will then trust your opinion and guidance when technical decisions need to be made.

Along the same lines, firm leaders place more trust in their top performers, so your likelihood of success is higher if they count you among those numbers. Within an office environment, the way people perceive your work is also the way they perceive you. By consistently working at an above-average level, you also build trust in your judgment.

## **Know the Numbers**

Budget concerns are often to blame when firm leaders hesitate to make technological enhancements. Know the numbers, so you can demonstrate the financial consequences of not upgrading.

Remember, leaders want hard facts. Provide statistics and numbers related to:

- How the software you want is being used throughout the legal industry.
- How the software switch will affect the firm's finances, productivity, quality, efficiency, and bottom line.
- What the current software is costing the company in terms of time, efficiency, and money.
- Current issues within the firm and how the new software will address them.

With the facts to back up your proposal, firm leaders are more likely to see your perspective and make the proposed change.

## **Know the Firm's Goals**

The most persuasive arguments speak to the wants and needs of the audience. You need to understand the overall goals of firm leaders so you can communicate how the new technology works to meet those needs. Once you understand the goals, frame your argument in the following terms:

- How your team's performance will be improved
- How the new software will help generate more income
- How leaders will benefit from the software
- How the software supports the firm's goals

New ideas often arise from the challenges that arise within the workplace, but don't make the mistake of solely focusing on how the new software will benefit you and your co-workers. Instead, frame the argument to highlight how it will make staff more productive, ultimately resulting in greater profitability for the firm.

## **Know the Risk-Reward**

Your argument should also include a risk-reward analysis. Remember that the most successful ideas demonstrate a high reward with a low risk. The reward includes:

- How helpful will the new software be to the firm?
- Does it help achieve firm goals?
- Does it solve one of the firm's biggest challenges?
- Does it improve the firm's brand or marketability?

When considering risk, think about such aspects as:

- The overall cost of making the switch.
- A comparison of the cost of the current software vs. the new software.
- The likelihood of the software failing to meet expectations.
- The potential consequences of failing.

## The Pitch

First and foremost, respect leaders' time by ensuring that you are completely prepared before presenting your software upgrade proposal. Then, decide the best method of presentation. Is an informal conversation over coffee appropriate? Maybe you should schedule a meeting with other stakeholders as well? You may even consider whether a one-pager is the best way to present your idea. Think about the culture of your firm to determine which tactic will likely work best.

If you decide to go forward with a presentation, be sure to plan your approach. You may even want to prepare visual tools in support of your pitch, such as a PowerPoint presentation or a one-page handout. Keep your presentation concise by eliminating unnecessary fluff. It's tempting to add small talk and banter, but you risk taking away from the core of your presentation. Stick to your principal points for a more direct and effective presentation. This is your moment to persuade firm leaders. Take full advantage of the opportunity.

Once the presentation is complete, firm leaders may request time to consider your arguments and make a decision. Make sure you have a follow-up plan prepared. After enough time has passed, follow up with decision-makers with a short overview of your presentation – just a concise reminder of your key points to serve as a reminder and hopefully encourage a decision.

If your law firm needs tech upgrades, use these tips to present an effective argument that gets results for you, other staff members, and the overall firm.

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### About Erika Winston:

*Erika Winston is a freelance writer with a passion for law. Through her business, Personal Touch Edits, she helps legal professionals deliver effective written messages. Erika is a regular contributor to [TimeSolv](#) and a variety of other publications.*