

What Are the Current Issues Affecting the Business of Law Firms?

COVID-19 has placed law firms in situations that their leaders have never had to deal with before. Not only are firm leaders facing the usual challenges of running a business, they now have new obstacles brought on by the pandemic.

This post will examine some of the issues currently affecting the business of practicing law. From office disruptions to practice area changes, firms of all sizes are working to stay afloat during these uncertain times.

Transitioning to Virtual Office Environments

With little notice at all, law firms moved from physical office locations to maintaining their practices remotely. This sudden change required an ability to quickly adapt, along with the necessary resources to implement changes.

Standards of Operation are common tools within the general business world, but not within the legal industry. These handbooks outline all of the law firm's operational procedures. They provide guidance under circumstances of business disruptions.

Internal Communications

When physical offices close, law firms need tools to maintain their internal communications among attorneys and staff members. There are a variety

of resources on the market to assist with Intra-office communications. Apps like Office 365 Teams, Slack, and Zoom feature easy-to-use audio and video capabilities. Law firms cannot adequately handle business without proper internal communications.

Document Sharing

Files and documents are voluminous within any legal practice, which makes file sharing a necessity for continuity of business. Law firms can use cloud-based practice management systems with file-sharing capabilities or cloud-based document storage providers like Dropbox or Google Drive to share documents among firm members.

TimeSolv's legal time tracking and billing system includes document management and sharing. With this feature, attorneys can securely store client data and files, while safely sharing them with other firm members.

Consistent Invoicing

Without invoices, there is no profit. Business continuity requires consistent billing and the collection of client payments throughout the pandemic. A comprehensive billing software streamlines this task. With TimeSolv, law firms have the necessary tools to create bills remotely through a secure network and send them to clients electronically.

Through a collaboration with LawPay, TimeSolv also gives law firms the ability to accept payments online in a manner that complies with state ethics and security protocols. Even with some states reopening, some of your clients may still be sheltering at home. Providing them with a way to pay remotely makes it convenient for them and more profitable for your firm.

Client Communications

Client services are vital to the business of practicing law. During these unprecedented times, normal communication methods may not be readily available. Law firms must identify all available methods of communicating with clients and providing quality legal services. For example:

- Law firms can create an email distribution list to send mass email updates about the firm's services during the pandemic.
- Email can also be used to update clients about changes to their case status and remind them of pending deadlines.
- Law firm leaders should consider VoIP telephone services for conducting firm business in order to maintain consistency and protect the privacy of firm members.
- In-person meetings should only be used when absolutely necessary. When they occur, law firms should ensure that they follow CDC guidelines and practice proper social distancing.
- With client portals, clients can log into a personal portal to view bills, firm messages, and receive firm documents. TimeSolv offers a client portal with its legal billing services for the convenience of law firms and their clients.

Sufficient Technologies

Without necessary legal technologies, law firm leaders are left without the resources they need to maintain their businesses. Many attorneys were unprepared for the changes that this pandemic demanded, resulting in closed offices and the inability to adequately provide legal services. With the right legal technologies, firm leaders can handle the obstacles that threaten their bottom line.

Firm leaders should also look for cost-effective technologies. Many legal tech providers offer affordable tools that help firms save money while also providing services and managing their practices in an efficient and effective manner. By embracing useful technologies now, law firms can position themselves to protect their businesses even in a financial crisis.

A National Financial Crisis

The news is full of warnings about a pending financial crisis. Law firm leaders must reinforce their businesses by putting processes and systems in place that address these challenges. Law firms need to take steps such as:

- Reevaluating firm expenditures to identify potential savings and increase firm cashflow. By conserving dollars now, law firm leaders can prepare their businesses for the financial challenges that COVID-19 will bring.
- Attorneys should consider exploring new practice areas. Matters related to domestic or criminal law may see lesser activity during COVID-19, while practice areas related to bankruptcy and business law may see greater traction. A law firm can maintain or even grow its business by turning to practice areas that maintain a high demand during economic slowdowns.
- By proactively crafting a plan of action, law firm leaders can get ready for what's to come. Firm leaders should think about the business challenges of an economic downturn and craft potential solutions.

Law Firms are Currently Facing a Variety of Business Issues

As lawyers seek to maintain their businesses during COVID-19, they must face some difficult challenges. With the right tools and resources, law firms can protect their bottom lines and even grow their business during these trying times.

TimeSolv legal billing software provides law firms with a wide range of valuable features, including time tracking, invoicing, mobility, and project management tools. The company offers its services for an affordable monthly subscription, making it far more cost-effective than most of the legacy legal billing systems on the market.

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.