

Assessing Legal Tech Tools: Litigation Management Considerations for Small Law

These days, it seems a new legal tech company emerges every week, with new entrants coming on the market in droves, all claiming to offer the “best” solutions for lawyers. Small law firms are in a strong position to [innovate and adopt technologies](#) aimed at improving the bottom line, but, as in any crowded market, it's up to the buyer to evaluate and separate the best from the rest.

Among the most daunting of challenges in accomplishing this is working through the confusing nomenclature that accompanies legal tech firms that offer similar products yet classify themselves differently. For example, “litigation management” is sometimes used interchangeably with “matter management.” Both terms describe types of software that help law firms manage complex cases involving anything from mass torts to multiple jurisdictions.

For small law firms, there are a number of factors to consider before signing on the dotted line. Whether evaluating offerings from well-known entities like LexisNexis® or the plethora of smaller players, here are some key areas to consider.

TECHNOLOGY

Key features to look for in a litigation management system include document automation, time tracking, budgeting and calendaring. Document automation allows you to generate documents from templates that pull case-specific information, while time tracking and budgeting features allow you to capture all billable time and earnings specific to matter budgets to ensure cases are profitable. Calendaring options help you manage tasks based on jurisdiction and court deadlines. “Nice to have” but not a “must have” is an online payment system that enables your firm to accept credit card payments, which usually results in being paid faster.

SECURITY

Data security is critical to the success of your law firm, which means any third-party vendor you engage with must be up to code when it comes to keeping data safe. Third parties have access to confidential information your clients trust you to *keep* confidential. Establishing internal and external guidelines for your law firm and your vendors will help maintain a secure environment. Also, look for software companies that tout their security features and certifications, which exemplify high standards of data security.

COST

This part can be a little trickier. The lack of economic transparency within the legal tech segment is rampant. Very few companies are open about their pricing structures or can provide demonstrable examples of ROI. Ask a potential software provider for references, speak with industry peers and ask the vendor to provide evidence of economic gain—whether direct or indirect—before investing in a technology. A little due diligence goes a long way in securing a pricing plan that works to the economic benefit of your firm.

In summary, clients are demanding faster litigation cycles and data-driven analysis, which means law firms need to be in a position to create efficiencies while increasing profits in order to thrive. [Adopting legal technology tools](#) such as credible litigation management software can help your firm achieve better outcomes for clients while improving the bottom line.

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