

# GO BEYOND THE STATUS QUO

WITH TECHNOLOGY-DRIVEN TRANSFORMATION:  
A GUIDE FOR LAW FIRM INNOVATORS & STRATEGISTS



Transform & Thrive

DISCO

“

If I had asked the public what they wanted, they would have said a faster horse.

”

Henry Ford,  
Ford Motor Company

“

## BIG THINKING, BIG OUTCOMES WITH DISCO

We needed an AI tool that could learn the regulatory framework we were facing. We tried it with other providers, and we were unsuccessful. With DISCO, we not only found an AI solution that worked for us, but true partners who worked as an extension of our team.

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**Meredith Williams-Range,**

Chief Knowledge & Client Value Officer, Shearman & Sterling LLP

SHEARMAN & STERLING  
LLP CASE STUDY

**READ NOW**

## FIRMS THAT WANT TO THRIVE IN A DIGITAL WORLD

— that want to stand out, attract more business, and retain top talent — must embrace technologies that can augment and improve their processes. This is why so many firms are creating roles dedicated to innovation to identify new strategies and business opportunities that put technologies at the heart of their services.

It's important that innovators understand where technology can deliver the most effective results for their firms — how to buy it, and how to get people using it. With so many variables, this can be a daunting task.

Until recently, legal technology had a tendency to create a Frankenstein-like heap of applications and hardware that were far from intuitive to use, frustration-inducing, and value damaging. This all-too-common tangle of technology has inhibited firms' ability to innovate, be proactive, attract clients and talent, or retain clients and talent over time in the face of the evolving use of technology across the legal industry.

Addressing this complex problem can be difficult and unwillingness to do so is understandable. After all, who has the time, energy, or desire when we can just “make it work” and continue to focus on solving our clients’ problems today?

However, in the current era of legal technology there are purpose-built solutions that support innovation as firms overhaul legacy processes, open up new business opportunities or cost models, and increase the value per dollar each client spends with your firm.

Of course, innovation and being innovative isn't just about implementing new technology. It's a combination of culture, technology, and people that, together, represent the fundamental components of implementing effective change, increasing the firm's competitive edge, increasing profitability, and future-proofing the firm as client and employee expectations continue to change.

Well-designed technologies that transform the way firms conduct essential activities, such as discovery, can have major positive impacts on client outcomes, the firm and its lawyers professional reputations and credibility in the market, as well as the firm's profitability.

Because of this, we wanted to share the collective experience of our customers and DISCO's experts to help you make the best possible planning and buying decisions for legal technology in your firm.

# MAKE TRANSFORMATION A SUCCESS

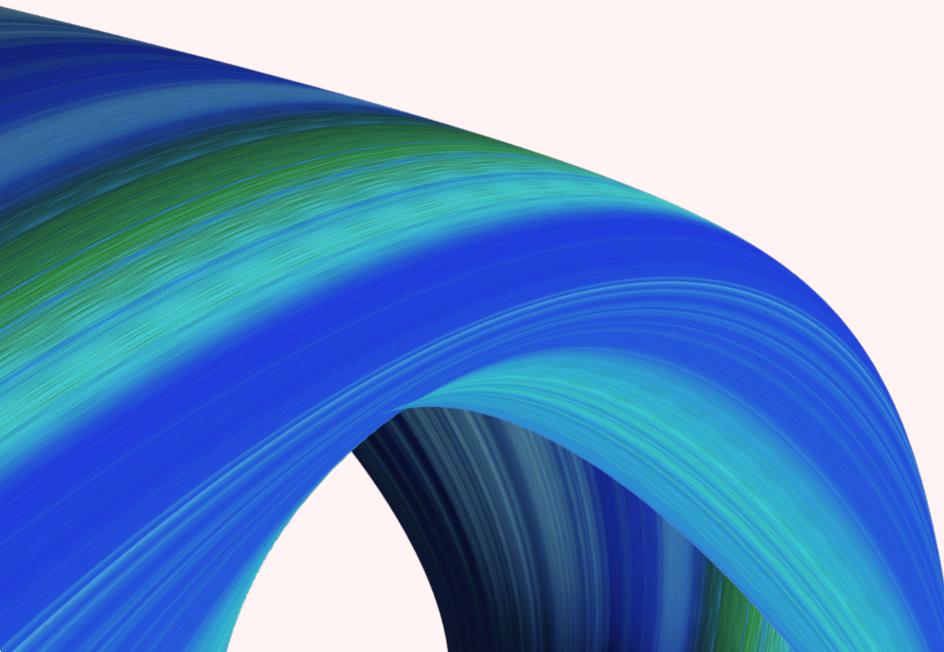
To be competitive — to stand out and attract business — law firms must reject the status quo. Not in the sense of throwing everything they've ever done out the window, but by evaluating whether their long-established practices are furthering their current priorities. After all, lawyers no longer work by candlelight, or use typewriters to draft documents.

The practice of law is not static. Lawyers are experts in tackling novel issues and facts with sometimes centuries-old precedents. Law firms should apply the same logic to the business of practicing law. No one questions the utility of the lightbulb or the computer once they are shown how to switch it on. Why, then, are law firms wrestling to improve the old ways of undertaking core activities when there are proven approaches available that use advanced technologies to achieve the same outcomes?

Innovation is more than time tracking, document management systems, and knowledge transfer. Embracing tools powered by artificial intelligence (AI) that encourage collaboration and information sharing allow your firm to better serve internal teams, transform project efficiency, provide enhanced decision making, and set your firm up for agile success.

At DISCO, we provide discovery and managed review solutions. Our AI isn't a general purpose overlay, a "nice-to-have;" it's deliberately designed to augment and enhance the work of legal teams, a must-have for firms that want to innovate in the field of discovery and document reviews. Moreover, we don't stop at providing technology. In partnering with DISCO, you also get the help of our world-class experts to assist with implementation, training, day-to-day support, best practices, and even getting DISCO certifications that reward and uplevel your teams. If you want the benefits of great AI-powered technology with a price and delivery guarantee, DISCO Review allows you to access our DISCO AI specialists to help run your discovery matters. DISCO could be the light bulb for your firm — switch it on and tell us if things aren't brighter!

However, simply implementing technology isn't enough. How can you ensure your investment is a firm-wide success in the drive toward innovation? We recommend asking some critical questions before making decisions as to what processes to attack with new technology or which vendor you want to partner with.



# CONSIDER

## 1 WHAT ARE YOUR FIRM'S CORE BUSINESS OBJECTIVES?

Transformation can't start without a complete picture of what your firm needs and where it could improve. Push back on demands for technology until you've had a chance to work with key stakeholders, map out core objectives, and start a dialogue with staff and partners that helps reinforce a culture of innovation and makes them a part of its eventual success. Once you've fully mapped the core objectives the firm wants to address, you can start the process of figuring out which problems can or should be solved with the implementation of new technology.

## 2 WHAT IS DRIVING THE NEED FOR TRANSFORMATION WITHIN YOUR FIRM?

Is this truly client - and market-driven? If it is, bring your clients into the transformation process in order to understand how you can use technology to better meet or exceed their expectations and help shape your service around what they need.

## 3 WHAT OUTCOMES DO YOU WANT TO DELIVER?

Is there a problem with the profitability of certain types of cases or practice groups? Is the firm suffering from an unusually high level of employee churn? Are your clients unsatisfied with the transparency of your costs and pricing? Are there proposals you're missing out on for lack of a culture of innovation? Is the firm's reputation at risk due to the way it approaches projects or its ability to offer alternative fee arrangements? Having a clear picture of the problem and the desired outcome from the proposed change will help to guide the decision making process around how to achieve the desired outcome, as well as measuring the success of your endeavors.

## 4 WHAT AREAS OF THE FIRM DO YOU WANT TO TRANSFORM AND WHY?

Consider what combinations of skills, processes, profitability, or service delivery require change. For instance, is your technology stack prone to taking an inordinate amount of time to render search results or display documents? Once you understand what is driving the need for change at a macro level (as outlined in point one), taking a user-driven approach to technology selection and deployment will help you ensure that your investments are adopted and that they deliver the right transformational outcomes and a healthy return on investment (ROI) quickly.

## 5 HOW WILL YOU BUDGET FOR THE COST OF TECHNOLOGY-LED TRANSFORMATION?

Scrutinize the licensing plans of technology vendors. Watch out for all the hidden extras that can hit you or your clients. Don't put your potential efficiency gains at risk by investing in technology that ends up costing the firm more money than its worth. A more beneficial approach is to review the total cost of ownership of any new legal technology and compare that to the business value it will deliver.

## 6 HOW WILL YOU DRIVE ADOPTION?

Consider the relative merits of buying lawyer-intuitive technology versus technology that has not been designed by lawyers. Technology designed with lawyers in mind means less of a learning curve and shows staff that the firm's attempts at innovation are actually intended to help not hinder. For each successful tool or process you're able to get the staff to embrace, the greater the appetite for change will be in the future. How can you convince users to embrace new technology – look for vendors who will support you with training and accreditation programs.

# WHAT NEXT?

These considerations will help you to reject the technological status quo and get on the path to the kind of transformation that really supports a thriving practice.

What are the next steps? Use our Business Case Guide to help you make a comprehensive argument for transformation and to recommend the best possible legal technology for your firm's strategic objectives.