Legal Digital Transformation: Changing in-house legal from a ‘cost centre’ into a ‘value centre’

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The traditional legal department has always been seen as functioning reactively. Like firefighters called in to deal with an emergency, in-house lawyers are summoned when the business has a dispute in need of resolution. As such, businesses regularly classify them as ‘cost centres’ - a source of expense that’s one of the first for the chopping block when budgets need cutting.

Part of this classification stems from the lack of value that legal departments present. If lawyers are brought in on an as-needed basis, the benefits they can demonstrate are often intangible when they are not called upon. So how can in-house legal change the view of themselves from a back-end function to a critical asset of the business?

In order to achieve this, two key performance indicators (KPIs) must be considered; ‘time’ and ‘money’. Savings in each of these categories can easily demonstrate the value of the legal department; if necessary legal work can be done cheaper and faster, GCs show that they can deliver more for less. Fortunately for legal teams, there is no better time to present their value to the business than the present, through the process of legal digital transformation.

The modern lawyer doesn’t work harder, but smarter, by employing technology to streamline their workload and automate basic processes. This allows them to focus on higher value matters. SaaS technologies like Matters+ include time saving features such as ‘quick closing’, allowing lawyers to open and resolve basic matters in seconds. Additionally, clients can be kept in the loop through automatically generated notifications sent to their inbox, enabling legal teams to maintain strong relationships with clients.

Digital transformation can also save your legal team money in the long term. Matters+ allows you to effectively manage your legal budget, tracking how much is spent by each lawyer and on which external law firm. Furthermore, Matters+ provides lawyers with tools to rate each law firm and external advisor based on commerciality, value and responsiveness, giving you a real time overview of who can give you the most for your budget in the least amount of time.

Finally, long-term value can be presented to your internal stakeholders through the rich data analytics presented by Matters+. Whilst GCs are expected to know the law when it comes to specific types of matters, Matters+ can identify trends that affect the business as a whole, such as what category of matters the team deal with most and which months are busiest for the legal department. This not only allows GCs to build more detailed reports, but the data analysis can exhibit an increased perceived value from the in-house team in general.

To conclude, legal digital transformation is the clear next step for in-house teams that want to align themselves with the overall performance of the business. The time and money that can be saved through integration with solutions such as Matters+ is worth investing in alone, not to mention the vast array of knowledge and trends that can be extracted from the software. Not only can legal teams allocate their time into higher value work, but GCs can make better informed decisions for the benefit of the business as a whole – transforming perceptions of the legal department from a ‘cost centre’ into a ‘value centre’.

If you would like to learn more about Matters+ and how it can revolutionise your in-house legal team, contact James Maddern on LinkedIn, or at james.maddern@mattersplus.com.