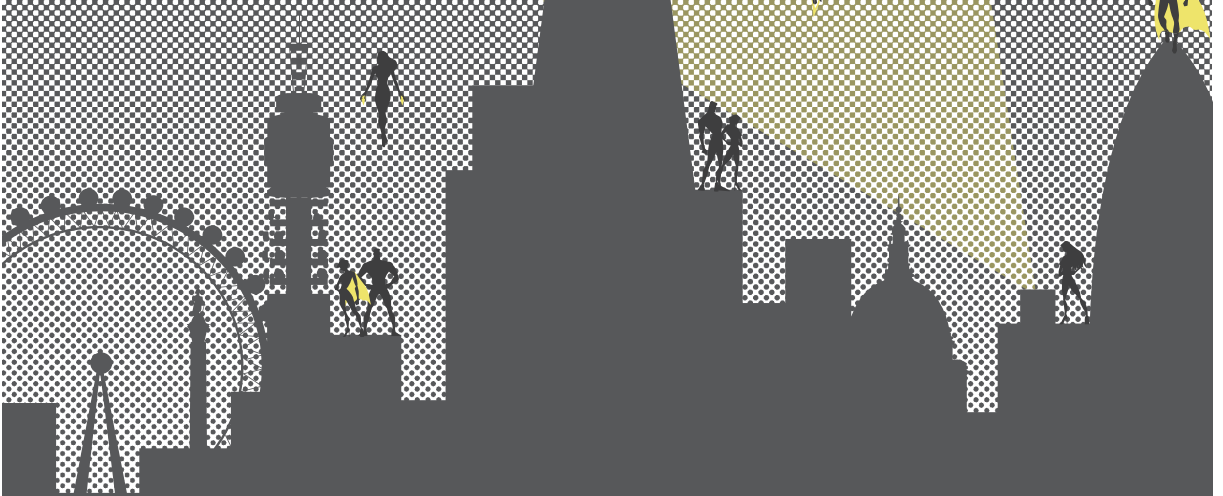
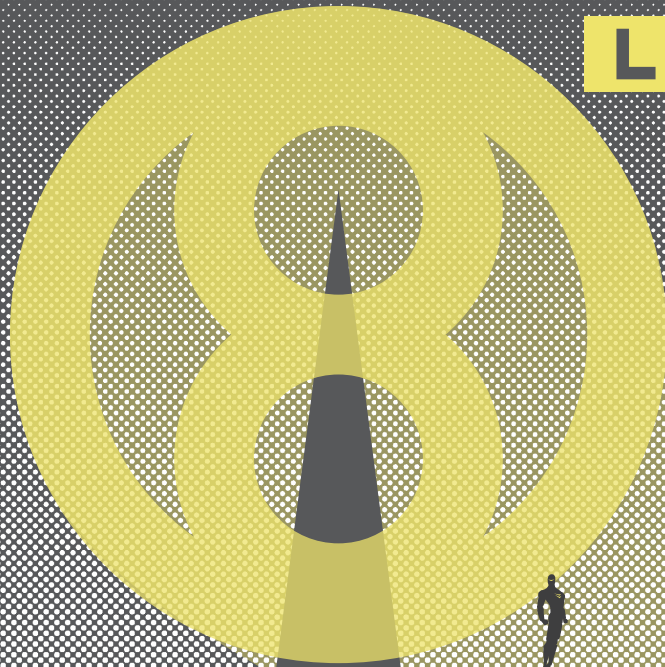


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HOW TO BE A LEGAL MARVEL

8 SUPER SKILLS FOR THE MODERN LAWYER

BY JORDAN FURLONG

JORDAN FURLONG

*Jordan Furlong is a lawyer, consultant, and legal industry analyst who forecasts the impact of the changing legal market on lawyers, clients, and legal organisations. He has addressed dozens of law firms, law societies, bar executives, law schools, judges, and many others throughout the United States and Canada on the evolution of the legal services market. A principal with global consulting firm Edge International and a Fellow of the College of Law Practice Management, Jordan is the author of 'Evolutionary Road: A Strategic Guide to Your Law Firm's Future', and serves as Legal Strategist in Residence at Suffolk University Law School in Boston. He lives in Ottawa, Canada, and writes at Law21. Previous reports by Jordan for **LOD** can be downloaded at www.LODlaw.com/reports.*

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FOREWORD

Gerard Way

“ALL THE BEST HEROES
ARE ORDINARY PEOPLE
WHO MAKE THEMSELVES
EXTRAORDINARY.”

I've always been a bit suspicious of superheroes. Even as a ten year old they all left me cold - Superman, Wonder Woman, Spider-Man, Batman. Their unlikely outfits and even less likely skills-of-the-future. I liked stuff that was a bit more grounded in my world - comic book heroes with more useful day-to-day skills like Dennis the Menace and The Bash Street Kids.

It would be easy to blame my lack of imagination, a pedantry about what is possible ('Maybe this boy should become a lawyer when he grows up'). In retrospect I'd like to cling on to the hope that I was a bit more enlightened than that - realising that the most useful things were those just a few steps on from what was already real. Like those new trainers that make you feel like you can run faster and bounce higher.

And so what's this got to do with our latest report from Jordan Furlong? Well, as ever, Jordan has given us a little glimpse of a future that we are already half into. There are no magic skills required here - no need to fly, to scale tall buildings or to wear red underpants and calf-high boots over your suit. Instead, what we present here is grounded in the reality of the legal profession today.

For those who have sat through sessions on 'the future of law' the list may even initially seem rather mundane. However, with his usual wit and style, Jordan has managed to encapsulate a 21st century set of skills - what we look for in our **LOD** lawyers and what we feel are increasingly the skills expected of all us. For some it will come naturally and, for a new generation of lawyers, it will perhaps be baked-in from the start. For me, just being aware of the list makes me think differently and pushes me to make opportunities to learn and practise this stuff.

Even if there's just one thing in this report that strikes a chord with you or your team, we'll take that as a success. Unless it involves getting changed in a phone booth.

Happy reading.

Simon Harper
Co-Founder
LOD

INTRODUCTION

SUPER SKILLS FOR SUPER LAWYERS...

Pardon our interruption. But we couldn't help asking: you're a lawyer, aren't you?

We thought as much. Your cool intelligence, analytical temperament and critical abilities stood out for us immediately. Allow us to guess further. You also have a strong academic background; you have a knack for persuading others to your point of view; you enjoy solving problems through logical reasoning; and your attention to detail sometimes borders on the fastidious. Are we close to the mark?

If so, congratulations! These intellectual and rhetorical skills have long enabled lawyers to conceive practical solutions and plot courses of action to achieve their clients' goals. You should feel proud and confident, for you possess all the hallmarks of a fine legal mind. We wish you every success for a lengthy and productive legal career.

In 1986.

Yes, we're afraid so. If that's the extent of the skill set that you're bringing to the party, then you run the real risk that there won't be any good seats left at the table when you arrive.

Analytical ability, issue identification, logical reasoning, and these other traditional indices of legal success simply aren't enough anymore. In a less demanding and competitive era, they were the calling cards of an outstanding lawyer. Now they signal the arrival of a merely ordinary one. Today's in-house lawyers are expected to be leaders, innovators, and strategists; their outside counsel counterparts are expected to be managers, systems analysts, and business advisors. Everyone's sleeves are rolled up now. Nobody gets to just 'do the work' or stay 'outside the business.'

Twenty-first century lawyers are playing a much more challenging game than your predecessors did, so you need to bring a very particular set of skills to this table. You need a wide range of proficiencies and capabilities, acquired and developed through exposure to best practices in several industries and professions outside the law. You require a diverse array of extraordinary skills in order to provide legal services competently and effectively in the coming years.

Fortunately, we can also tell that you've arrived here not only with intelligence, but also with diligence, fortitude, tenacity, and empathy: the timeless qualities of premier lawyers. They will help you develop the new tools of the trade, the new skills required of this century's most successful and formidable lawyers.

It's 2016. It's time for a new breed of lawyer, a modern legal entrepreneur more reminiscent of Elon Musk, Tory Burch, Megan Trimble, or James Dyson than of Lord Denning.

We've collected eight critical skills in this report, skills that will help set you apart as the superior lawyer of tomorrow. We encourage you to acquire these skills at your earliest opportunity, and we offer some tips regarding how you can do just that. Master these proficiencies today, and you'll be ready for anything that the new legal market can throw your way tomorrow.



“IT'S TIME FOR A NEW BREED OF LAWYER,
A MODERN LEGAL ENTREPRENEUR.”

1. COLLABORATION SKILLS

WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER...

Collaboration is more than just 'cooperation' or 'getting along.' It's the ability to thrive within a complex work environment in which processes are more fully mapped out and responsibilities are more widely distributed than in the past. As dispersed and agile workplaces become more common in the law, lawyers will be obliged to collaborate effectively with people in different offices, cities, and time zones. They'll need to align their own talents (and restrain their own egos) in ways that complement what others bring to the table, in order to obtain the best results. Collaborative workers trust the wisdom of the group; lone wolves and micromanagers are counter-productive.

HOW TO GET THERE...

You become better at collaborating when you prioritise the ultimate goal and the process of reaching it above any one individual's contribution, and when you cede the desire for personal control in favour of collective responsibility for the result. Practise this in small groups (face-to-face or virtually) by agreeing a plan of action on a minor matter, assigning responsibilities according to each participant's strengths, and communicating frequently to monitor progress. Raise expectations among all collaborators (including you) of the value of the outcome, respect for the process, and the importance of fulfilling responsibilities. Encourage others to perform, congratulate them on progress, and reward the group's achievements. Remember that the outcome is bigger than any single participant.

"COLLABORATIVE WORKERS TRUST THE WISDOM OF THE GROUP; LONE WOLVES AND MICROMANAGERS ARE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE."


2. CUSTOMER SERVICE

THINK LIKE A BARISTA...

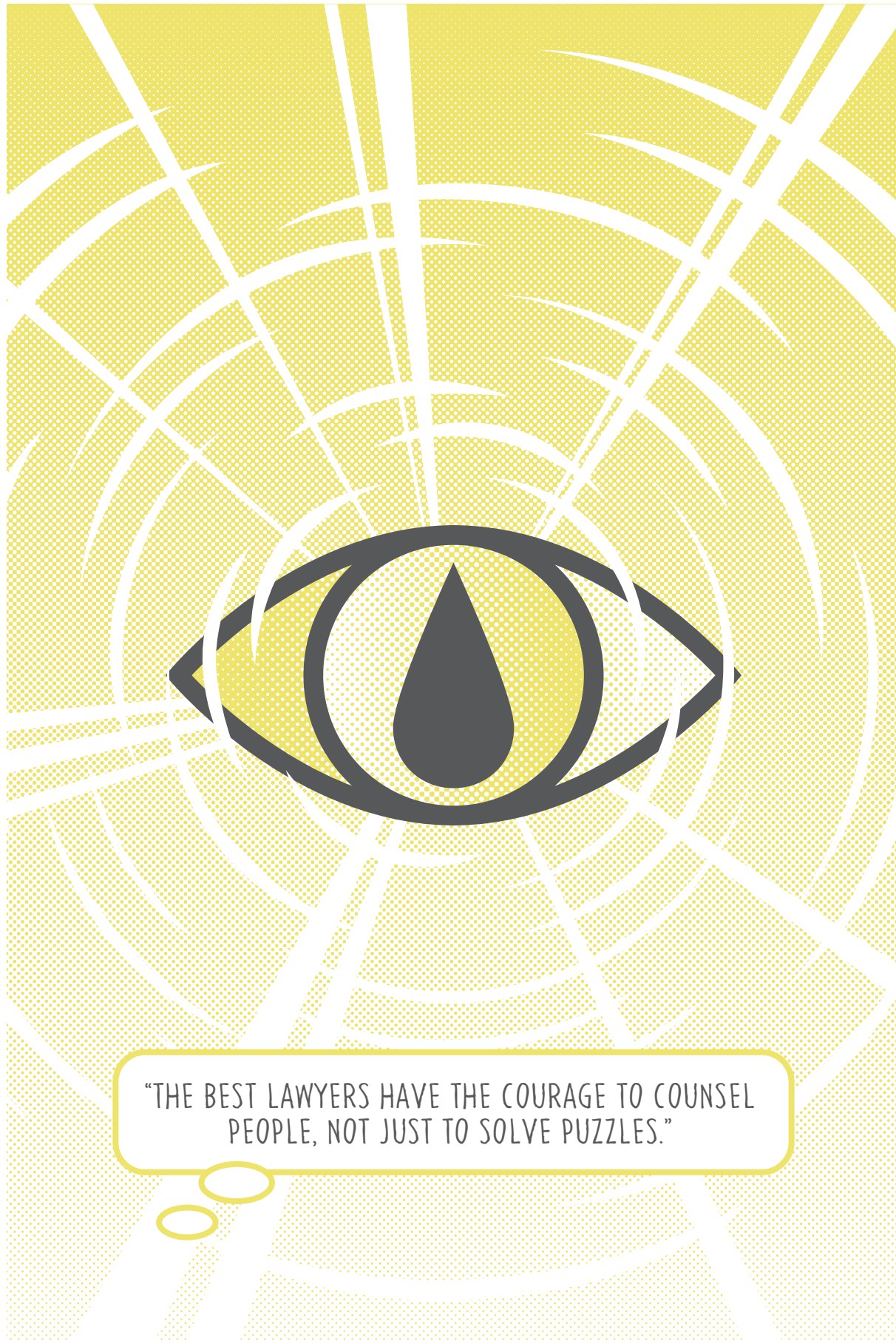
Some older lawyers react poorly to the word 'customer' when applied to legal service buyers, claiming that it somehow demeans the dignity of the legal profession. But 'customer' reminds us that these are real individuals paying us real wages, while 'service' reminds us that these people require and deserve our full attention and best efforts. Customer relationships abound in law; outside law firms serve the needs of in-house counsel customers, who in turn serve the needs of customers in other departments or groups. In a highly competitive legal market offering increasingly commoditised goods, customer service - how we treat the buyers of our efforts and expertise - will be the leading indicator of successful legal careers.

HOW TO GET THERE...

Any experience you've had in retail as a sales assistant or barista will have opened your eyes to the importance of customer service; all the lessons you learned there are completely applicable to the professional services sector. Survey your customers, either internal within the business or in-house within the legal function. Ask them about their experience of using your services, and be prepared for negative reviews. In-house lawyers should spend a week on the factory floor to see first-hand the law-related challenges that arise there. Law firm lawyers should seek temporary secondments in-house to get the same experience. Law school teaches us to 'think like a lawyer', but what we also really need to learn is how to 'feel like a customer.' If you can experience this, that alone will make you a superior lawyer.



"LAW SCHOOL TEACHES US TO THINK LIKE A LAWYER, BUT WHAT WE ALSO REALLY NEED TO LEARN IS HOW TO FEEL LIKE A CUSTOMER."



3. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

THE COURAGE TO COUNSEL...

Traditional legal education taught lawyers to keep their distance from clients and bring a cold and clinical detachment to their working lives. Wrong. Our customers need our empathy, perspective and personal connection to feel recognized and satisfied, while our colleagues need our engagement, respect and understanding. Emotional Intelligence encourages a greater degree of sensitivity to the perspectives of others, especially those whose backgrounds and experiences we don't share, in order to make genuine connections and better meet their needs. The best doctors treat the patient, not the symptoms; the best counsellors treat the person, not the problem. The best lawyers have the courage to counsel people, not just to solve puzzles. Meet people where they are, not at a safe distance from them.

HOW TO GET THERE...

Start with a little attitude adjustment by assuming you're not always the smartest person in the room. Learn the art of 'active listening,' paying close attention not just to what others are saying, but how they're saying it and what they're leaving unsaid. Allow yourself to engage with people at an emotional level: lawyers might care most about the legal principles at play, but our customers are often consumed by their personal experiences and their emotional impact. Accept this as a valid difference, and lean into it. Resist the lawyerly urge to move straight to problem-solving without first acknowledging the emotional or occupational position in which an experience has left a person. Ask any good doctor, empathy precedes diagnosis and facilitates treatment.

4. FINANCIAL LITERACY

SHOW YOURSELF THE MONEY!

A failing in this area is hardly restricted to lawyers, as any consumer financial advisor can confirm. However we simply can't afford to be clueless about money. Running a company, balancing a ledger, understanding tax principles, working with statistics, calculating profit margins and understanding the rationale behind fees are essential skills for lawyers (especially in-house). Too many lawyers just shrug and say, 'I was never good with numbers' or 'They never taught me that in law school.' That's not good enough anymore. Most lawyers either work for a business or in one, and most legal matters involve money in some way. You need to know your way around a financial spreadsheet.

HOW TO GET THERE...

Ideally, you entered the profession with entrepreneurial experience or small-business roots, or at least an undergraduate business degree. If not, take an accounting course for small enterprises, in person or online, and retake it until you score perfect marks on the final exam. Find your company's CFO or your law firm's accountant and quiz them about the importance of cash flow, how to calculate profit margins in different sectors, how the company's or firm's physical assets depreciate over time, and other such matters. If accountants can figure this out, so can we. One of the biggest criticisms of lawyers is that we 'don't understand the business', and that's a massive vulnerability for the long-term success of our careers. Don't let this be said about you.



"WE SIMPLY CAN'T AFFORD TO BE CLUELESS ABOUT MONEY."

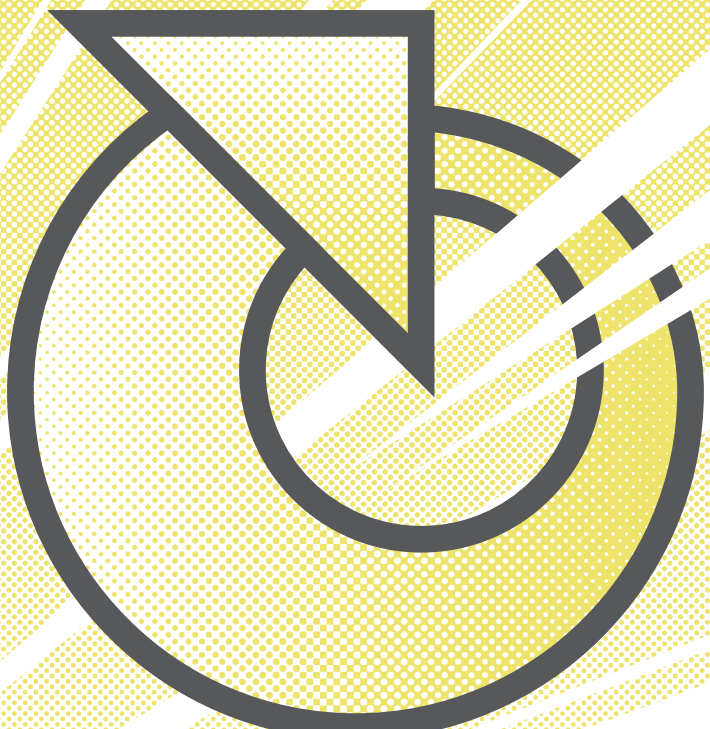
5. PROCESS IMPROVEMENT

JUST DO IT (BETTER)...

Identifying, mapping, and enhancing processes has become one of the most critical elements of competitive industries worldwide. Despite lawyers' lengthy and valiant resistance, law is no longer an exception. Lawyers must do more with less, this is not new news. We must control our costs, improve our systems, source our work effectively, and measure our productivity accurately. In both law departments and law firms, from process mapping to legal project management to right sourcing, lawyers must know how to organise and oversee the application of resources to complete specified objectives. Someday, this will be a core law school subject; for now, you need to acquire this skill on your own.

HOW TO GET THERE...

Several books have now been written on legal process improvement, geared towards the novice lawyer reader with no science or business background. Blog posts and courses on legal process improvement are widespread, meaning you can bring yourself up to speed in this area while at your desk or as part of your normal CPD activity. But the best way to learn process improvement is by doing. Apply its principles to a project or task on your own desk, integrating with internal colleagues and external customers to improve the effectiveness and enhance the quality of both process and outcome. Trial and error will be among your most valuable teachers in this area. There's no magic to process improvement, just the diligent application of techniques to enhance effectiveness.



"TRIAL AND ERROR WILL BE AMONG YOUR MOST VALUABLE TEACHERS IN THIS AREA."

6. RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

STEP AWAY FROM YOUR DESK...

Think this is a generic topic? Think again. Several core lawyering skills are wrapped up inside. You can't do a good job and you can't build a strong career without developing good relationships with the people whose interests you're serving. Want to be a law firm partner? You need to bring in business through your own sales efforts and selling is about relationships. Want to be an executive-level in-house counsel? You need real connections with your counterparts in other departments and in the C-suite. Your ability to build relationships with people, companies, firms, and industries hinges on how well you market, network, and connect. Every substantive business transaction of any consequence in your career will be grounded in a genuine relationship of trust and reliability. Be real, be present, and be personally engaged.

HOW TO GET THERE...

More than any other skill on this list, this one is learned by doing. If it would help you to overcome an inherent shyness or acquire some conversational techniques, take a networking course. However nothing beats hand-on exposure to the process of meeting people in your area (whether colleagues or customers) and engaging them in conversations that could lead to connections. Emotional Intelligence plays a part here because you have to truly connect with people, ask questions and listen attentively to the answers, focusing on the other person's own inherent value. Salespeople learned decades ago that numerous 'touches' are the key to consummating business transactions. Maximise the number and quality of your 'touches' in both law and business.



"BE REAL, BE PRESENT, AND
BE PERSONALLY ENGAGED."

7. TECHNOLOGICAL AFFINITY

RISE WITH THE MACHINES...

Many older lawyers respond to each new advent of technology in the law with either studied indifference or technophobic bravado, 'I'm useless with computers and proud of it!' But openness to, and affinity for, the newest tools of the legal trade are now fundamental to competent lawyering (and in several jurisdictions, an ethical requirement too). Software is daily growing its capacity to perform legal tasks. Whether you buy these tasks or sell them, it's imperative that you know what's available. Law is poised to finally leverage its enormous stores of data, and you'll need to know the analytics involved. There's not a single profession - accountancy, medicine, communications, education, the list goes on - that doesn't routinely use technology. Law will never again be an exception to the rule.

HOW TO GET THERE...

Most lawyers don't need to master this subject, given that fresh legal technologies seem to roll out every week. Instead, focus on learning both the basic and advanced technologies in your legal speciality and industry markets, using the basic tech to keep up with your rivals and studying the advanced tech for competitive edges. Visit legal tech conferences and trade shows. If that's beyond your budget, at least follow the events' hashtags on Twitter. Subscribe to websites like Infolaw.co.uk and LegalFutures.co.uk to stay on top of the legal tech and innovation news. Look for the essential tools that will help you do a better job, faster and more cost-effectively, for your customers.



"LAW WILL NEVER AGAIN BE AN EXCEPTION TO THE RULE."

8. TIME MANAGEMENT

GET YOUR PRIORITIES STRAIGHT...

Virtually every lawyer has said, at some point, 'I'm just so busy. I don't have any time for myself.' No question about it, law is hard, demanding work. But a substantial part of our difficulties in this regard lie with our inability to prioritise our tasks and manage our time. Lawyers struggle to say 'no' to customer requests even when we're swamped, and most of us never developed a knack for delegating work to more efficient providers. In-house counsel must prioritise or sink beneath the waves; flex-time lawyers must own their schedules if they hope to earn a living; law firm lawyers must never use 'billable' to describe anything again. Time is the 21st century's most precious commodity. Deploy it with precision and respect.

HOW TO GET THERE...

As with process improvement, there is now a plethora of publications and courses to help lawyers pull their work lives together and organise their time more effectively. Enlightened legal workplaces that encourage flexible work hours are also part of the solution. But much of this effort starts with your own commitment to prioritisation and delegation. Empower your electronic calendar to remind you of every commitment and deadline. Identify those items on your to-do list that should be done by others and try to move those duties onto those desks. Decline new requests unless you can identify the available time and bandwidth to accommodate them. Carve out time for physical activity and mental recharging. Take full responsibility both for your schedule and for the well-being of the worker who has to implement it.



"TIME IS THE 21ST CENTURY'S
MOST PRECIOUS COMMODITY."

CONCLUSION



“THE FUTURE IS HERE.
DON'T KEEP IT WAITING.”

So there you have it. Eight core skills that lawyers simply must possess if they want to be leading lights in today's legal market. Law schools ought to teach these skills, and law students should choose their academic institutions in part on what they offer in this regard. Lawyers' governing bodies need to test for these skills, and the Solicitors Regulation Authority is in the process of doing that through its initial competence standards. Law firms and law departments need to help their lawyers become expert in these skills, because these will be the currency of effective, humane, adaptable, professional lawyers in the years and decades to come.

Regardless of what anyone else does, you need to personally own the responsibility of developing these proficiencies as part of your complete portfolio of lawyering skills. The lawyer of the future will be equal parts entrepreneur, innovator, architect, and leader; in many ways, he or she will be unrecognisable to the narrow clinical analyst of previous generations. To fill this new role, you will need these new skills in abundance, so that you can deliver value in multiple dimensions.

This is your chance to become the superior breed of lawyer that this new market demands. The future is here. Don't keep it waiting.

NOTES

Franklin Roberts, The Fantastic Four

“THE DOOR IS MORE THAN
IT APPEARS. IT SEPARATES
WHO YOU ARE FROM WHO YOU
CAN BE. YOU DO NOT HAVE
TO WALK THROUGH IT...
YOU CAN RUN.”

NOTES

Peter Parker, Spider-Man

“NOT EVERYONE IS MEANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE. BUT FOR ME, THE CHOICE TO LEAD AN ORDINARY LIFE IS NO LONGER AN OPTION.”



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Pioneering new law since 2007, **LOD** was the first flexible legal service provider in the UK. Since our launch, we have consistently innovated to stay ahead of the curve and lead the market we created.

With our team of over 400 talented lawyers we work with many of the world's leading companies and law firms. We help legal teams to get more done by providing experience and expertise in a more flexible and cost effective way.

LOD has received numerous awards and accolades including Simon Harper, Co-Founder, being named one of the top 50 innovators of the last 50 years by The American Lawyer and 'Innovator of the Year' at the 2015 FT Innovative Lawyers awards.

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