

How tech-ready are you?

2021 REPORT

 belisk



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Knowing the value that investing in technology will bring is the starting point for any business that wishes to use tech to deliver a better service.

Dana Denis-Smith
CEO, Obelisk Support

Table of contents

I. Introduction

Introduction	3
The survey	4
Key takeaways	5

II. Findings

Demographics	7
Big tech leaders	8
Tech-readiness	9
The importance of technology in law	10
Legal technology	11
Waving our magic wand	12

III. Conclusion

Path forward	14
Technology do's	15



Introduction

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Technology has fundamentally changed how we use and deliver legal services on a daily basis, automating routine work, increasing transparency, and reducing costs.

Thanks to the pandemic, this change is here to stay. If nothing else, it has proved that work-from-home is not only possible – it is more productive and inspiring for the majority of us who work in law.

Zoom. Microsoft Teams. DocuSign. And hundreds of other applications are currently being used in the legal industry.

The question we asked 2,000+ legal professionals wasn't whether or not they use technology. The question we asked was:

“How tech-ready are you?”

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37%

Average respondent
tech-readiness score

TECH-IN-TRAINING



The survey

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Our respondents were asked 10 questions about their “tech-readiness”. Their answers were graded against a total possible score of 54 points, and then converted into a % score which we grouped into five categories:

00-19% TECH-NEWBIE

You see technology as something that needs to be used, but you would rather avoid it if you could. When asked to try out something new, your neck tenses up as you jot it down on your notepad for your next dreaded Zoom call.

20-39% TECH-IN-TRAINING

You’ve got some tech know-how, but the road ahead is long. Your understanding of tech tools is good enough so that you can get by, yet you would like to keep technology to a minimum when it comes to doing your work.

40-59% TECH-SMART

You are comfortable using most types of tech and are interested in learning more. You understand that technology is not only necessary but helpful when it comes to legal work, and you are often curious about new tools that become popular.

60-79% TECH-EXPERIENCED

Zoom, G-Suite, Slack and e-Discovery? Child’s play. Those are the bare minimum that you need to do your work. You learned them easily and keep up with training in order to perfect your skills. You’re also supportive of advanced legal tech tools like electronic case filing and AI.

80-100% TECH-MASTER

You’ve got major tech skills. You know that technology has revolutionised legal work and you are part of the revolution. You are an early adopter of many legal tech tools such as AI and e-research tools, and you are often a proponent of creating bespoke software in your workplace.

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Key takeaways

While we learned many interesting things about how people work in law, here are the key takeaways from our survey:

1. TECH-READINESS

Legal professionals consider themselves to be more tech-ready than they truly are. Considering that respondents rated themselves as 49% tech-ready whilst the average tech-readiness score was 37% -- in other words, below average -- some work needs to be done here in order to close the gap.

2. TECH-IMPORTANCE

It was exciting to learn that 89% of legal professionals feel that technology is important-to-extremely-important for legal work. However, 55% of respondents reported that they feel as though they are not using enough technology on a regular basis.

3. TECH-COMMUNICATION

Microsoft Outlook is the dominant tool used for communication reported among 65% of legal professionals, with 71% of respondents claiming that they use mobile and 53% use WhatsApp. Therefore, work-from-home doesn't always mean work-on-laptop.

4. TECH-MEETINGS

Zoom was reported to be used by 81% of respondents. In fact, it was the highest-rated technology tool of any recorded in our survey. The importance of this cannot be understated: not only has it become a verb, Zoom has transformed how we bring people together, and it will shape how we work for years to come.

5. TECH-IN-LAW

When it came to learning about which tools are used for legal work, the most popular were document sharing tools, such as G-Suite and Microsoft OneDrive, and electronic signature software, such as DocuSign and eversign, with 65% and 63%, respectively.



81%

Of legal professionals use Zoom on a regular basis



Findings



* 1. I work as a:

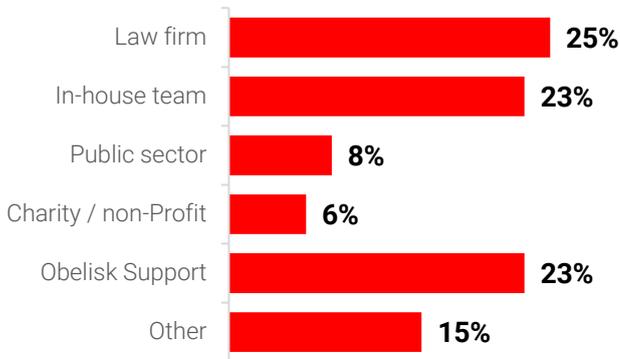
- Legal support executive (administrative support, marketing, sales, human resources, tech support, customer service, general management)
- Paralegal
- Junior Lawyer NQ 3 years
- Lawyer 3-6 years
- Senior Lawyer 6+ years
- Barrister
- General Counsel
- Partner



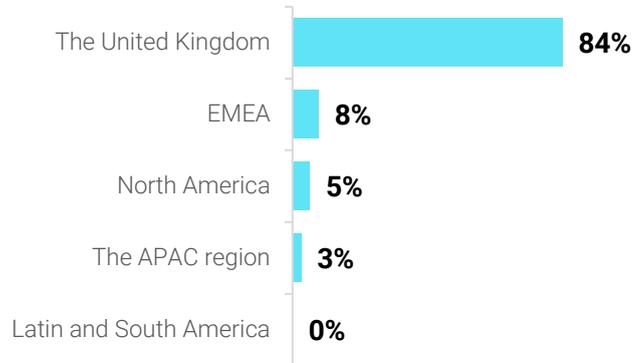
Demographics

Our respondents are a cross-section of legal professionals primarily working in the United Kingdom at law firms, in-house teams or legal consultants, and work at legal organisations ranging from 0 to 5,000+ employees.

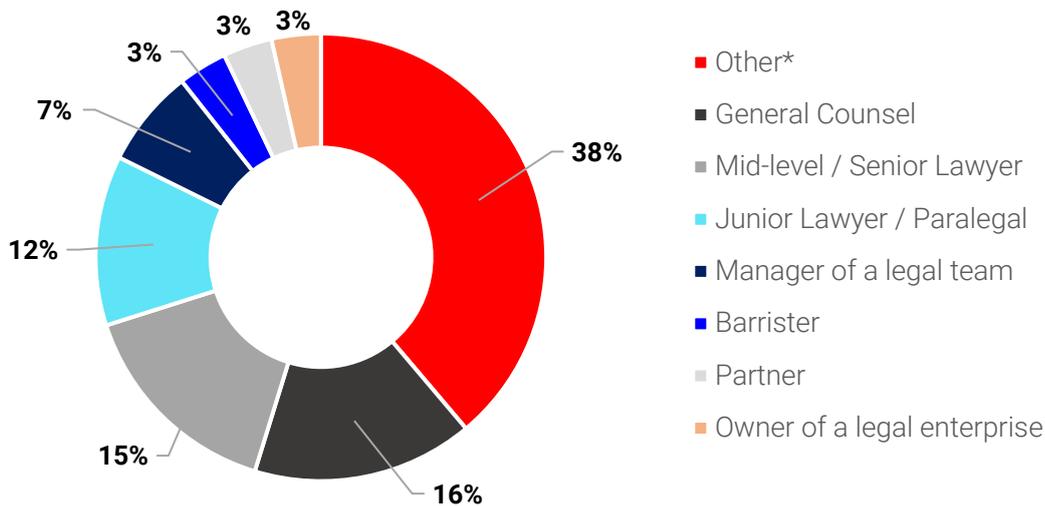
TYPE OF ORGANISATION



LOCATION

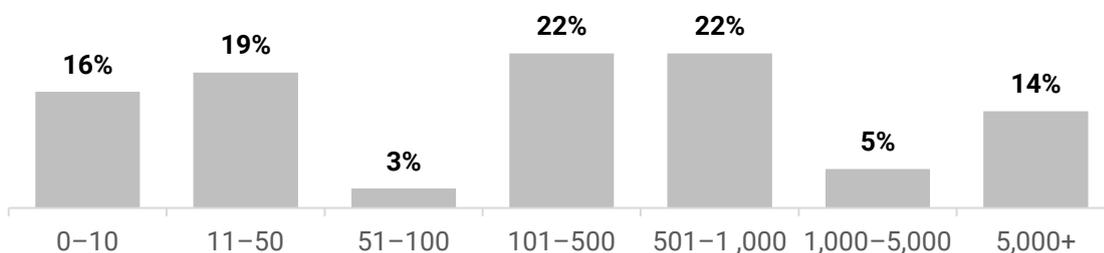


PROFESSION



* Includes legal support executives such as administrative support, marketing, sales, human resources, tech support, customer service, trainees

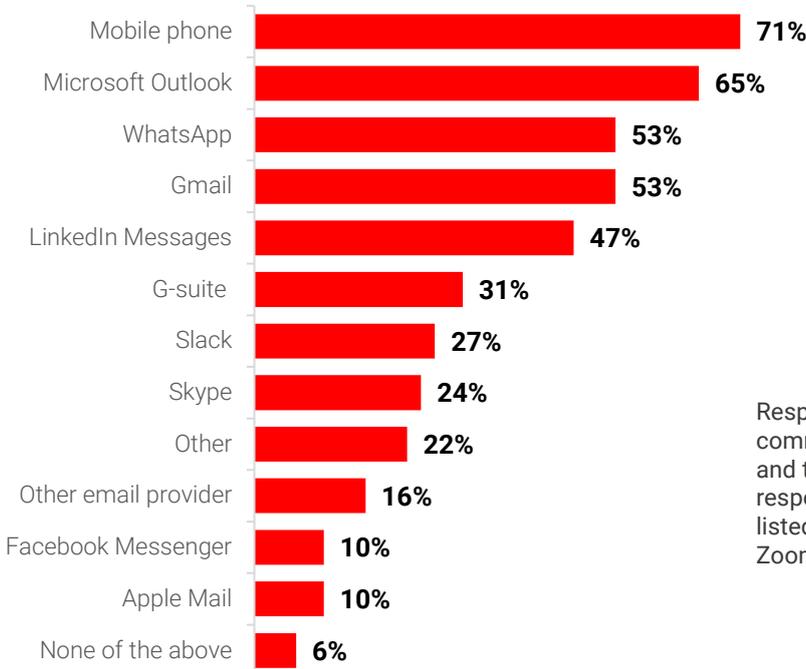
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES



Big tech leaders

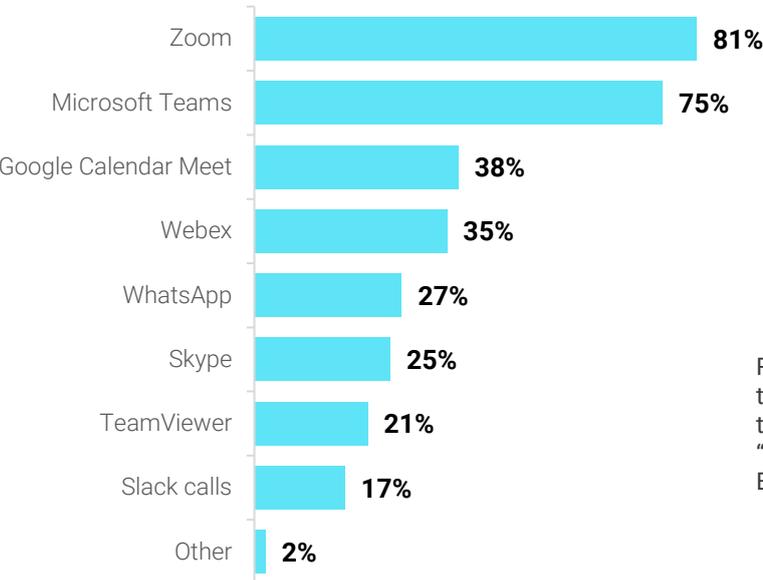
The biggest winner when it comes to online meetings, in legal as it is elsewhere, is **Zoom**, with 81% of respondents naming it as a tool they use for work. The other big name is **Microsoft**, with Teams and Outlook easily out-pacing their Google counterparts.

COMMUNICATION TOOLS



Respondents were asked which communications tools they use for work, and to check all that applied. Of those who responded "Other" the most popular tools listed were Microsoft Teams, Jabber and Zoom.

MEETING TOOLS



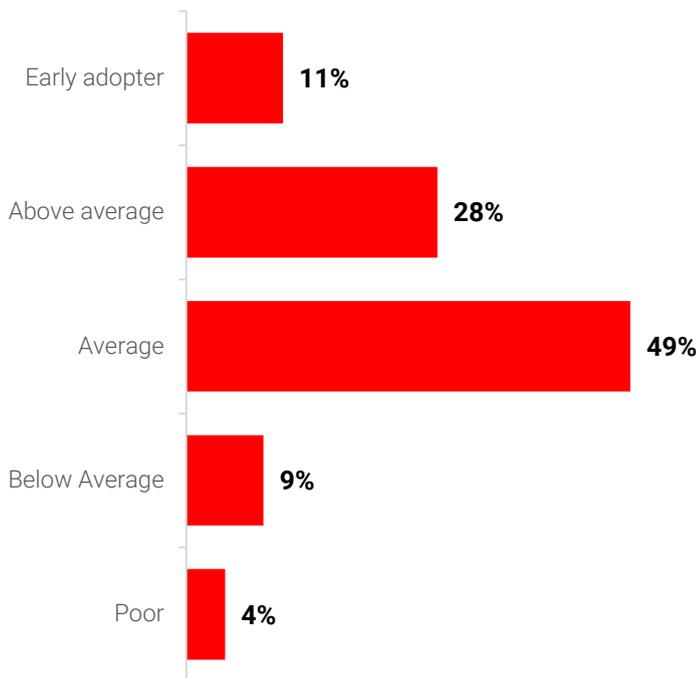
Respondents were asked which meeting tools they use for work, and to check all that applied. Of those who responded "Other" the most popular tools listed were Blue Jeans and Ring Central.



Tech-readiness

The average “tech-readiness” of respondents was 37%, landing them in the upper bracket of the **TECH-IN-TRAINING** (20-39%) category -- our score for Below Average. However, the perception of their own “tech-readiness” was much higher with 87% of respondents rating themselves at Average (40%) or higher. We also found that law firms are more likely to rate themselves as “tech-smart” and above – or Above Average and higher – than in-house teams.

HOW RESPONDENTS RATED THEMSELVES



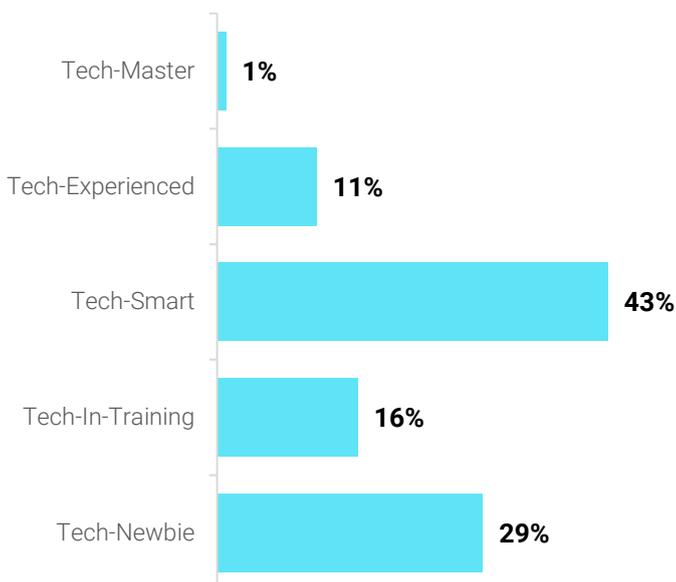
46%

Average respondent tech-readiness self-score
TECH-SMART

15%

Law firms are 15% more likely than In-house teams to rate themselves as “Tech-Smart”

HOW RESPONDENTS SCORED ON THE QUIZ



37%

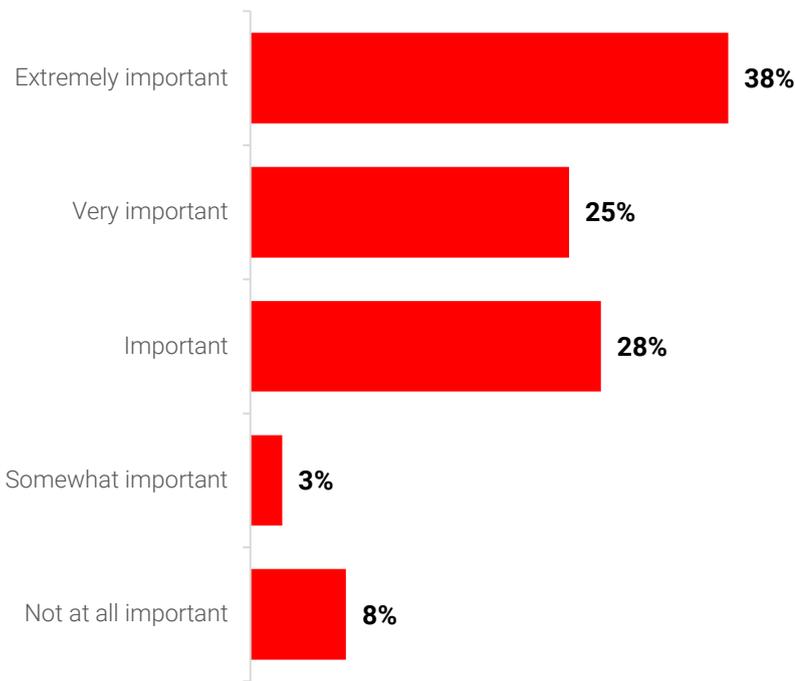
Average respondent tech-readiness quiz score
TECH-IN-TRAINING



The importance of technology in law

The comparison between how important respondents rated the need for technology in legal work compared to the amount of time being invested in technology training was considerable – 89% said they thought technology was important for legal teams, while 51% reported zero training.

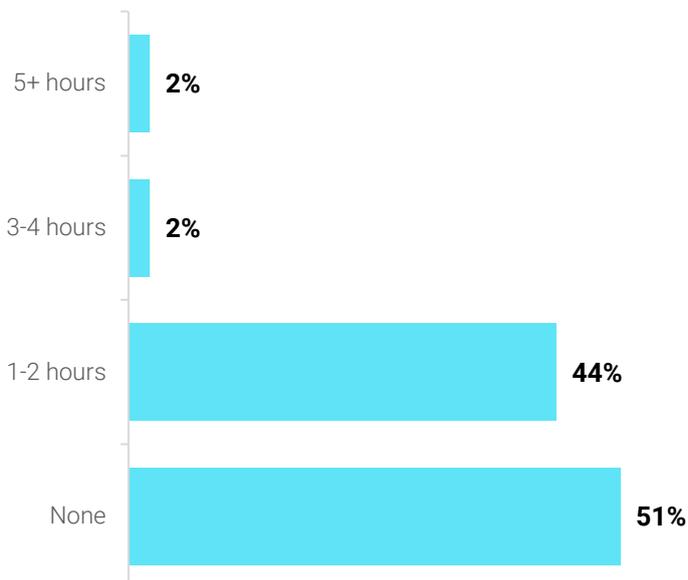
IMPORTANCE FOR LEGAL TEAMS TO USE TECHNOLOGY



55%

Of respondents reported that the amount of technology they currently use is less than the right amount they believe they should use

TIME SPENT EVERY MONTH ON TECHNOLOGY TRAINING



2x

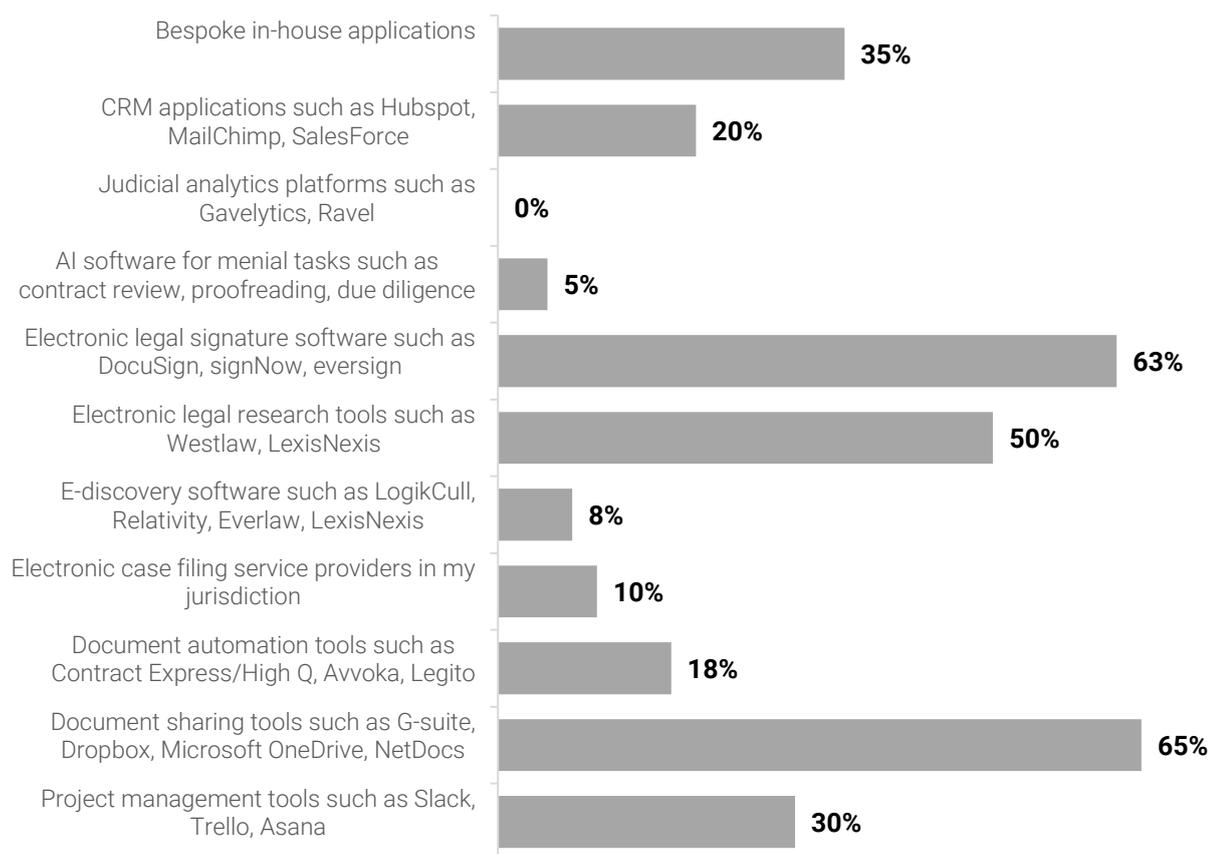
In-house teams are twice as likely to report zero technology training compared to law firms



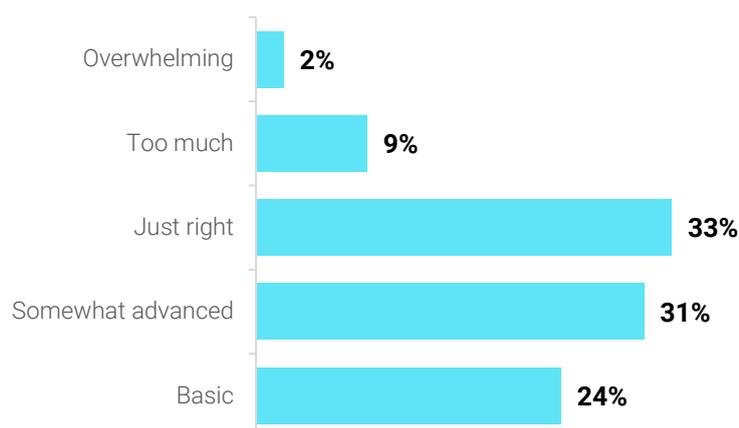
Legal technology

Zoom and Microsoft Teams aside, we wanted to understand what technology was most prevalent for legal work. Overwhelmingly, document-sharing and electronic signature tools were the favourite with nearly 2/3 of respondents. AI and eDiscovery software were the least used. Worryingly, 55% of respondents reported feeling as though they were using less technology than they should.

TECHNOLOGY TOOLS USED FOR LEGAL WORK



PERCEPTION OF THE AMOUNT OF TECHNOLOGY THEY USE



32%

GC's are more likely to report feeling overwhelmed by the amount of technology they use compared to legal support staff



Waving our magic wand

Nearly half of our respondents – 48% – provided an answer to our optional free-hand question, “**If you had a magic wand, what would you change in how technology is used in legal work?**” While there was only one respondent who answered, “remove it”, the resounding majority had some insightful comments on how to improve technology in legal work.

SELECT RESPONSES

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Make it mandatory for all legal firms and chambers to increase tech use. Increase ability to use tech for all lawyers. Reduce overall paper usage for environmental preservation as a matter urgency. Too many barristers and solicitors I have shadowed are not tech savvy.

Make it easier to access from one integrated and streamlined platform, with simple user interfaces to encourage everyone to use the tools.

Single place that can run and hold all program. Similar to a combined messaging app, there can be a lot to be logging in constantly and switching between multiple platforms to use the technology.

In remote working there needs to be some way to collaborate more easily with other people in the team.

Introduce regular training; slow down constant updates to systems before you've got used to last one! Learning technology is not considered part of my job but increases workload so I'm not getting the advantages.

Make it much more visual and dashboard focused so that the info is easy to soak up and less wordy.

More trust in systems & platforms (adoption is sometimes hindered by lack of trust in robustness of data security, protocols, etc).

More more more! I would make tech the norm.

More machine reading and AI.

”





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**Just figure out
what's next.**

-- Steve Jobs

Path forward

THOUGHTS FROM OUR CEO **Dana Denis-Smith**

Technology isn't new, but the role it now occupies in our daily lives has taken on new importance. How many of us used to rely on apps such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams or Slack before the pandemic started?

Probably not enough.

Now, we can't imagine our lives without them.

Businesses in every sector are embracing technology out of necessity. The legal sector is no exception.

With the full force of the shift to remote-work, the legal sector has since grappled to make technology work. For many this has been easier said than done.

We're here to help.

63%

Of legal professionals
report using electronic
signature software



Technology do's

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Since day one, we have incorporated technology into the fibres of the Obelisk DNA. Not only did we develop our own consultant-matching app, **Buzz**, we also championed remote-work using technology every single step of the way.

Here are our technology do's:

> DEAL WITH IT

Technology is no longer a choice. It's here to stay. Accept it. Embrace it. And understand that it will allow you to scale up and save on costs. If done right, of course.

> ADAPT

Inherently, technology adapts. Like people, it is constantly evolving in order to adapt to, well people. And so should your policies around new technology adoption so that it can achieve goals both large and small.

> SAMPLE

Before you make a significant investment, take it for a test drive. Read online reviews. Speak to a trusted advisor. And then select a small group to properly assess its validity and its implementation to your team.

> BE REAL

Rome wasn't built in a day, and neither will be your new tech project empire. Create realistic goals and timelines, and most importantly set ROI's that are aligned with your vision of a positive work experience.

> ASK

Sometimes just asking is a good idea. Do they like where you are at today with your tech environment? What are their pain points? How would they prefer to work? Where do they see themselves in the future?

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**Tech-enabled.
Human first.
Trust Obelisk.**

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