

Issue 5

Malcontents - Thrust is a Must

2022 NewWorld, NewYear,
NewBiz, NewYou!

TECHNOLOGY IN

LAW LAW LAND

Candid. Controversial. Cathartic.

Meet the Tech Ambassadors



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9 T E C H A M B A S S A D O R S

HARRUMPH!!! And so it begins, 2022 and the final chapter of 2021 with yet another blow to life, business, law and society thanks to the most recent variant of Covid-19 – the dreaded Omicron. We could have seriously done without this wrench in the recovery works for the start of 2022, right?

Watching a leaked video revealing a British F-35 crash into the sea after failing to take off recently, Howard Wheeldon, an aerospace and defence analyst, told the Telegraph: “There is a saying in the military ‘lift is a gift, thrust is a must’, and I’m afraid clearly he had no thrust.”¹

How very apt... We could all be forgiven if our oomph is somewhat flaccid having endured numerous waves of differing Covid strains these past two years causing our hope of a light at the end of this nightmare tunnel to wane. The Omicron variant has shown its ability to rattle morale, business and markets globally which will no doubt continue to react to each new snippet and/or hype of news – good or bad – throughout the ensuing months.

And yet, that hasn’t (always), and probably shouldn’t (going forward), put us off the idea of pushing the pedal to the metal on personal and business growth in 2022. The coming year will inevitably be dominated by the need to adjust to the NewWorld Covid order with its post-pandemic challenging realities. But life, and business, **MUST THRUST ON!**

From a personal standpoint, 2021 has probably been one of the worst and yet best years in my personal and business life; and I can confidently suggest the same for the Tech Ambassadors and perhaps many of you reading this. It’s certainly been a blessing and not a curse though, as I choose to view it.

Life, business, law and society has and will always be a challenging matrix of malcontents – good and bad in the extreme - with its rebels, agitators, mischief-makers, complainers, whingers, grouches and troublemakers. Granted, Covid has no doubt exacerbated many problems but in adversity there certainly thrives opportunity with outstanding break-through solutions. In times of crisis where major disruption, upheaval and/or transition occurs this is when the horrific worst and remarkable best of us, and humankind, takes to the stage and delivers an Oscar performance right on cue. History, near and far, time and again, has taught us this.

What will define us personally (and humankind) in the eyes of our children, grand-children and great-grandchildren etc, and our careers and/or businesses, will be how we continue to brave the present and how we choose to behave toward the future - thrust or bust - particularly in the near future during the NewYear that beckons us to make the right choices as a potentially NewBiz and NewYou emerges and evolves.

Perspective, contradictions and oxymorons will continue to abound if we are to succeed in achieving the balance that our fragile world, economies, pillars of society, businesses and selves require to live and not merely exist on this precious earth during the four thousand weeks we humans are blessed with².

It’s why the world, life, business and our own behaviours in 2022 and beyond will continue to require balance: a delicate equilibrium of tenacity and patience, sacrifice and ambition, hard-headedness and curiosity, empathy and humility, guts and yielding, conviction and gratitude, self-awareness and kindness, stability and growth.

Fortunately, our world is blessed with a treasure trove of malcontents to challenge us to stretch ourselves personally, professionally and as a species. This is why, I believe, no matter what new Covid variants emerge over whatever timeframe, the indomitable human spirit will NOT be broken. Humankind will prevail, and we will learn, and we will continue to grow ...

welcome

So, WELCOME, to this positive, hopeful, joyful and festive feature which is bound to improve your mood and growth spurt. When you're celebrating throughout the festive season and welcoming in the New Year with family, friends and colleagues over adult beverages and need to come up with some interesting topics to chat over and argue about, we've got you covered ...

Let's crack on with the final Technology in Law Land roundtable gathering of 2021 where the ambassadors are in fine festive cheer along with a very squiffy *Naked Lawyer* ... *hiccup* ...

She soooooo enjoys her mulled wine and mince pies but there's only so many she can handle before turning super-bouncy and mischievously annoying like a child in a jungle-gym who has devoured too much sugar-candy. We'd best begin proceedings. We have little control over her sober at the best of times so with 2 glasses and 4 pies down this ... does ... not ... bode ... well.

I dread to think the state she will be in by the end of the meeting. While she can still party like a total legend, she's getting too old to recover like one! ... Lightweight Lightfoot.

Onward ...

In advance of the gathering I'd taken the liberty to peruse a number of fabulous authoritative sources providing reports, articles, trends and views on 2021 and 2022 (worldwide and Law Land specific btw). For example:-

- "Eight ways the world will change in 2022"³ – covering the new world of work, rise of China, accelerating climate change in the context of considering the outlook for 2022 across politics, business, technology and culture.
- "22 emerging technologies to watch in 2022"⁴ – fascinating stuff; I encourage you to read this for yourself as it would be naughty of me to spoil the surprise.
- "Ten trends to watch in the coming year"⁵ – suggesting democracy v autocracy; pandemic to endemic; inflation worries; the future of work; the new techlash; crypto grows up; climate crunch; travel trouble; space races; political footballs.
- "12 Industries that will thrive"⁶ – mentioning 'personal finance' but unfortunately not 'law'; we didn't even make the reserve list btw. I guess with its creaking justice system and chilly court rooms what are we to expect?!
- "2021 Law Firm Business Leaders Report"⁷ – providing insight from law firm business leaders who are optimistic:
 - about their outlook but are increasingly concerned about rising competition for talent including how to acquire, retain, and pay staff to the extent that talent wars are threatening law firm profitability;
 - that growth will occur across most major practice areas such as Family Law, Bankruptcy Law, Real Estate Law, Tax Law, and Estate Planning, in particular; and
 - that investing and adopting technology will help create competitive advantage, as well as support growth.
- "Why 2022 will be the year of the worker"⁸ – hint... albeit workers around the world suffered hardship during the lockdowns of 2020 and 2021 many labour markets across the rich world have outperformed expectations. Consequently, workers now have more bargaining power than they have had for many years and talent wars are about to turn nuclear. Hence...

1. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/11/29/british-f-35-crashed-sea-failing-take-leaked-video-reveals/>

2. A reference to our ridiculously brief time on this planet, which amounts on average to about four thousand weeks – 77 years – in the book by Oliver Burkeman, 2021, *Four Thousand Weeks: Time and How to Use It – Time Management For Mortals*. Penguin Random House, London, UK.

3. https://www.economist.com/the-world-ahead/2021/11/08/what-to-expect-in-year-three-of-the-pandemic?utm_campaign=world-ahead-22-special-edition&utm_medium=newsletter&utm_source=salesforce-marketing-cloud&utm_term=2021-11-21&utm_content=article-link-1&etear=nl_special_1

4. <https://www.economist.com/the-world-ahead/2021/11/08/what-next-22-emerging-technologies-to-watch-in-2022>

5. https://www.economist.com/the-world-ahead/2021/11/08/ten-trends-to-watch-in-the-coming-year?utm_campaign=the-economist-today&utm_medium=newsletter&utm_source=salesforce-marketing-cloud&utm_term=2021-11-08&utm_content=article-link-1&etear=nl_today_1

6. https://www.cbinsights.com/research/report/millennials-industries-thriving/?utm_source=CB+Insights+Newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter_general_thurs_2021_11_25&utm_term=block-1&utm_content=research-public

7. https://www.legalcurrent.com/law-firm-business-leaders-report-talent-wars-are-threatening-law-firm-profitability/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email

8. https://www.economist.com/the-world-ahead/2021/11/08/why-2022-will-be-the-year-of-the-worker?utm_campaign=the-economist-today&utm_medium=newsletter&utm_source=salesforce-marketing-cloud&utm_term=2021-11-19&utm_content=article-link-3&etear=nl_today_3



- “Big Law Firms Offering Jobs Without Interviews”⁹ - due to the unprecedented transactional activity causing law firms to build out teams rapidly by hiring lawyers ‘on the spot’ to avoid losing major mandates.
- “The Great Resignation: A Threat or Opportunity?” – the current phenomenon dubbed as the ‘Great Resignation’ is accelerating quickly; the term has been coined to describe the trend for employees voluntarily leaving their jobs, many primarily for lifestyle reasons. Not surprisingly then (and in contrast) ...
- “Robotics CEO Says Goal Is to “Remove” Human Labor From Economy”¹⁰ – In response to the so called labour shortage, some companies are looking to completely replace workers with machines — and robotics companies couldn’t be happier to oblige – in an effort to reduce labour costs and respond to a “tight labor supply,” as one USA vice president put it.
- “‘No jab, no job’ plans escalate”¹¹ - albeit the UK Government does not have the right to compel people to get vaccinated, some companies that are looking to not only survive but grow in 2022 are planning to dismiss staff who refuse to get jabbed. Kerching for employment, company/corporate, litigation solicitors and barristers I presume?!
- “The office of the future”¹² - Cubicles are out. Bars, neighbourhoods and sensors are in:
 - There will be more shared areas, or “neighbourhoods”, where people in a team can work together flexibly. More hot-desking will also necessitate storage space for personal possessions: lockers may soon be back in your life (remember your school days, never mind those (soon to be resurrected New Year resolutions) gym days?). We can expect more space to be set aside for socialising and events. Bars in offices are apparently going to be a really big thing (“Woo-Hoo”, yells *The Naked Lawyer*).
 - Robin Klehr Avia of Gensler, an architecture firm, says she is seeing lots of requests for places, like large auditoriums, where a company’s clients can have “experiences”¹³ (“Oo-er” grins *The Naked Lawyer*, as she eyes up the boys here at the office. Lordy Lord help us!)
 - 6 years ago (October 2015 ish) I made a bold prediction that law firm offices would be dead and that (along with Antony Slumbers - Real Estate guru) we would witness the rise of the Imaginarium in the early 2020s. I wrote a couple of articles that were published in the Global Legal Post aptly titled: “Law Firm offices Are Dead” and “The Imaginarium of Law”¹⁴ which I implore you to read as they are particularly apt right now in light of this article in the Economist in Dec 2021 and Clio’s 2021 Legal Trends Report¹⁵ revealing that growing law firms are less likely to spend on office space (pp 46-47). Of course, I never envisaged that COVID-19 would be the catalyst. At that time, I simply joined the dots on a number of trends such as technology being an enabler, changing work patterns, demographic shifts, lifestyle preference, behaviour change etc.

Understandably, all of the above helped me focus down on some key things to consider discussing and sharing with the gang. I hope you, the reader, find our candid, open and honest roundtable informative and useful, particularly once the tech ambassadors, myself and *The Naked Lawyer* began sparring; as is customary. The juicy content within the fodder helped me form some initial thoughts, ideas, topics and potent questions for the ambassadors ...

9. https://www.law.com/international-edition/2021/12/03/big-law-firms-offering-jobs-without-interviews-in-response-to-deal-surge/?kw=Big%20Law%20Firms%20Offering%20Jobs%20Without%20Interviews%20In%20Response%20to%20Deal%20Surge&utm_source=email&utm_medium=enl&utm_campaign=ukdailyalert&utm_content=20211203&utm_term=lawint

10. <https://futurism.com/the-byte/robotics-ceo-goal-remove-human-labor>

11. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2021/12/01/anglo-american-plans-dismiss-unvaccinated-workers/?WT.mc_id=e_DM1530597&WT.tsrc=email&etype=Edi_Cit_New_v2&utm_source=email&utm_medium=Edi_Cit_New_v220211202&utm_campaign=DM1530597

12. https://www.economist.com/business/2021/12/04/the-office-of-the-future?utm_campaign=the-economist-today&utm_medium=newsletter&utm_source=salesforce-marketing-cloud&utm_term=2021-12-02&utm_content=article-link-2&etear=nl_today_2

13. *Ibid.*

14. <https://www.globallegalpost.com/blogs/law-firm-offices-are-dead-24719139>; <https://www.globallegalpost.com/blogs/the-end-of-the-law-office-versus-the-beginning-of-imaginarium-87108050>

15. https://info.abovethelaw.com/clio-2021-legal-trends?utm_medium=email&_hsmi=189820307&_hsenc=p2ANqtz_-6WbV5MGgkGH3VaC6yA90xkTNU2Uyp5Zzo1GnTxbtPIRTv-g5I5_S4cF6Urr0wfmBkVN98b0BL1YaocLfh4ryfKW-mGfzHCrayT-3KNtrq_O67zt0&utm_content=189820307&utm_source=ns_email

drivers



**Whizz-bang* *Whoosh* *Zing* ... Incoming ... The Naked Lawyer hurled her first muse bomb into the ring as she wobbled and zig-zagged along on her Segway (driving under the influence, obvs, but in a private and controlled setting I hasten to add) to garner attention in an attempt to rouse us all to settle down for the formal gathering. Jabbed on by her laughable state and comical assault I immediately kicked-off the roundtable gathering and lead with this opening comment and teaser question:*

The recent James Bond movie was aptly titled “No Time To Die”. Many people and businesses have endured a really tough 18-24 months due to Covid and many are still dealing with the fallout let alone hunkering down for more challenges ahead. BUT, many are also looking to rebuild and/or grow. The role of humankind is to live, not to merely exist. Similarly in business, one could argue the role of business is to live and not to merely exist. As human beings grow, so do businesses. As humans we often cite experience as the reason for our personal growth. BUT, what do you think are the key reasons and drivers of business growth?

Without hesitation, first out of the corner and in fit fighting form, Martyn, story-teller and maxim extraordinaire, pipes up with gloves raised poised for battle in his uniquely entertaining and larger than life itself way ...

Martyn: As I keep bleating, “Cogito, Ergo Sum”, which every tattooed philosophy student will inform you is “I think, therefore I am” and it is indeed a beautiful phrase crafted by René Descartes. Mon frère René also contended that the very act of doubting our own existence is proof that we indeed do exist.

And so, we can take this philosophy and sentiment into our business life, and indeed the life of our business to some degree. Whilst I have been preaching robots are not humans, and AI will not ultimately control us, there is some greater argument to say that businesses do have “a life”, or more importantly a personality and a character, and most certainly an identity and a culture.

The reason for this, in my view, is that businesses are initially created with many of the same values as their founders, and hence will have many of the qualities in a sense, and certainly will initially attract like-minded people.

This “culture” will inevitably face the prospect of dilution or change as the business grows and we can look at many examples and reasons for this. My favourite is certainly Apple, which Steve Jobs effectively created, not once, but a second time when he returned to save the business. The strength of his influence is the continued popularity of this business and brand, an incredible 10 years after his sad and untimely death.

Hmmm, methinks I'd like a tattoo, what say you *Naked Lawyer*? Do you think I should get one? Some words with an image perhaps? Something festive maybe? And where do you think I should have it etched? To which she mouthed something, gesticulated, and then pointed to a part of her anatomy, which I cannot possibly repeat or explain. What goes on in the room, stays in the room (or should I say Imaginarium?), in this case guys. It simply will not pass the Modern Law publishing censorship threshold. *The Naked Lawyer* is obviously more than tipsy and being rather naughty. I should have known better. Hey-ho. Moving swiftly on ...

Martyn Best
Document Direct,
Managing Director



Ladies, what's your opinion? Do you share Martyn's philosophical thinking? What do you find interesting about business growth? ...

Becki: I have always had an interest in understanding what factors lead to some companies succeeding where others appear to struggle. From what I have read so far, it really seems to me that businesses grow because of two simple reasons; meeting a real need and producing a solution that can also be scaled through technology.

Becki Cassia –
Transparently, CEO
and Co-Founder



Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, we have all had to go through some form of evolution. Our priorities have at times had to change overnight and many of us have had to fundamentally adapt the way that we conduct our business. In the midst of all of the difficulty however, there was also an opportunity; a chance to take a step back and reassess our business models, operational costs and find alternative (and better) ways of delivering services. We had to become... agile.

I think that businesses grow because of a combination of factors. The most successful understand that by retaining a client-first approach not only gives them a competitive advantage, but also builds loyalty and so too, long term growth.

Over recent years, every aspect of a business has been transformed by technology. Smart use of technology enables leaders to make quicker and much better informed decisions. By using technology to innovate, you encourage creativity and strategic thinking, which only serves to create an even more powerful competitive advantage.

In my experience, rapid growth is more often experienced in those companies who encourage a culture of continuous improvement. Every area of a business needs to operate flexibly and to adapt quickly to change. In doing so, you can exploit opportunities as they appear whilst of course ensuring that you are continually assessing and mitigating risks.

Just one final point if I can... we all know that a company is only ever as good as its staff. This is especially true in service-based sectors such as ours. To grow you not only have to attract and keep a hold of the best talent, you also have to ensure that they buy into your company's values and culture at every stage of growth, not just at this point in time.

Oh-oh at the mention of 'agile' *The Naked Lawyer* stepped off her Segway and partook in a spot of 'flexing her limbs' in what I suppose is a prelude to drunken dancing. Goodness, Lord help us ...

Carry on gang. Ignore her please ...

Alex: I think there is a permanent ambiguity between three things...

First, the fact that - I'm going to take the example of my company - Hyperlex is a moral person, an entity that must live independently from the people. It must stay put as long as possible, survive separately from the people who created it. It's important to do so in case a founder gets sick for example, or worse. In France, we have companies like Seb group; such companies live (from the financial perspective) for centuries - they completely outlive their founders.

Second, the fact that Hyperlex is a social entity. The company makes me - and the rest of the employees - live, in many ways! As a leader, my goal is that my employees can flourish from a professional perspective but also from a personal one: I want them to get married, have a family, enjoy their lives, help each other, build a sort of community, a circle of trust.

reasons

They are not 'just here' to ensure that the company lives on for the long term. I realise it may be a paternalist vision, but I don't care, that's my vision! It's what we can call the parallel life of a company, and it's a growth driver in the short and medium term.

That said, I really don't want to fall into the stereotype of what I would call the 'baby foot syndrome': startup founders that turn into gurus and dive too deep in the personal life of their employees. It's sometimes hard to find the perfect equilibrium between a personal and professional life, and it's a permanent fight for me as a leader to make sure it is the case in my company.

Third, I created my own company because I was a bit bored to be honest. I felt like I needed to feel more useful, to bring something more, even though I really like my co-workers. The company was born from the meeting of my co-founder, Alexis, and me. We have this thirst, this ambition to conquer Europe, and the rest of the world, to solve a major issue for businesses. That's a driver of growth too! I am often asked when the company is going to be rentable. As a startup, a lot of pressure is put on us to be rentable, efficient, and fast.

So yeah, these three forces put together makes for sustainable growth. I believe the ingredients of such a growth are: diversity among the employees; bring sense into what we do; put effort into doing things that we understand - something that COVID really reinforced.

It's interesting that you view your company as a 'moral person' and a 'social entity', Alex ...

Such: Clients – People – Innovation. My belief is that broadly a business will grow if attention is paid to all three of these areas.

When looking at 'clients' this is more than generating new clients. This is about client service and driving a trust-based relationship. By establishing a deep trust with a client-base, repeat custom, rave reviews and referrals will flow naturally.

By 'people' I'm referring to your team of individuals that when combined deliver your service to your clients. The last 18 months or so have put a huge toll on them as much as it has any business. Mental health issues are at their highest and from my experience, people are crying out for a little understanding, a bit more support than usual and a better work-life balance.

'Innovation' doesn't mean technology alone although it is important. It includes creativity. Asking whether there is a better way to deliver legal services or even a new legal service. Thinking outside of the box as we've all had to do is not something we should lose as a new-normal settles. We should embrace innovation, creativity, change to support the growth of our business.

James: For every business, there are different secondary reasons for growth, but the primary ones are largely written and known; increasing shareholder value, creating wealth (jobs, shared wealth), being 'charitable' or changing the world. I've never met an entrepreneur yet who was motivated by paying tax. Not that there's anything wrong with it, of course! Business growth is motivated by ambition, a very human trait and successful businesses have ambition, linked to strategic planning and product development, supported by commerciality and financial control.

My ambition for growth in Kulahub and Think Methodology (two Directorships) is, naturally, adding shareholder value, but more significantly, job creation, something I'm very proud of in my career. By creating the right environment for commercial growth, job creation follows, which of course means more tax back to Her Majesty's Government, a virtuous circle. No matter how or why technology supports strategic growth or what the motivation for growth is, it's still all about people. One we can never get away from, and nor should we.

Sucheet Amin
(aka Such)
inCase, CEO
and Founder



money

Tax in a virtuous circle? Now that's an interesting topic we must explore in another roundtable session methinks guys, particularly as more machines / robots / AI will continue to replace and/or support human labour moreso in the near future across various industries and jurisdictions. But let's not digress and stay focused and on point.

Dror, Sam, Vinnie, what's your opinion on the key reasons and drivers of business growth?

Dror: For growth, business leaders may want to consider focusing on meeting customer needs and delivering a 10 times better experience than any other alternative. Then, growth is a matter of scaling customer acquisition, combined with optimal service and experience. Understanding customer needs, how to deliver these needs effectively and listening to feedback should be the top priorities for any business.

Sam: The key reason and driver for business growth? Easy - Money, money, money. Show me a law firm that wasn't set up to make lots of money for the partners/directors and I'll show you a thousand that were.

I'm not saying that's a problem - we need people who have the drive and vision to develop businesses that employ lots of people (in a capitalist system) and I didn't set my business up as a non-profit organisation. Although the best part about making money for me is finding great causes to give it away to... is that true altruism or not, because I feel a sense of satisfaction from it? Anyway, I'm digressing.

Speaking of a capitalist system, Vinnie, I'm confident you and/or Salesforce have a view on this ...

Vinnie & Phil: We believe the new kind of capitalism that is going to emerge is not the Milton Friedman capitalism - which is just about making money. Business is now the greatest platform for positive change, with technology having the potential in creating a more open, diverse, trusted and inclusive society.

The world is changing and businesses must lead with their values. There are questions they must ask themselves: Are you leading with Trust as your value? Are you using your business as a platform to improve the state of the world? Lots of businesses talk about their values in the most turbulent time; however, when they matter most, many executives forget to operationalise them, as values are often seen as luxuries. This must change.

A major factor is Millennials will comprise 75% of the global workforce by 2025. They expect their business leaders to publicly represent the values of their organisation. If your orientation is purely about making money, you will struggle to hire the best employees or build trust with your customers.

Whether it's social and/or climate issues, businesses must lead by the front. Doing well and Doing Good is no longer just a competitive advantage - it is now a business imperative.

Indeed, as Marc Benioff famously stated: The "business of business is to change the world." But you can't achieve that overnight. There has to be a short to mid to long term sustainable growth plan, surely?



Dror Levy
LegalDrop, CEO
and Co-Founder

Jo: Companies obsessed with short term growth can do more harm than good. Businesses should instead seek to achieve sustainable, long-term growth. Achieving this type of growth requires a well-defined strategy, tied together with foresight.

A year ago, Wipro laid out its strategy in terms of ambition and vision of what we wanted to be— true transformation partner for our clients. We have defined the markets where we want to go, we defined our growth strategy and articulated our obsession for growth. Our focus is on our key customers and our intention is to invest in areas like digital, cloud, engineering services, security, as well as talent and diversity. A year later, our immediate goal is obviously to maintain the growth trend. We are targeting growth upwards of 25% for the fiscal year. Our objective is to continue to work with our customers and help them in their transformation strategy. We must continue to focus on developing our talent and reskilling them.

An integral component of Wipro's Growth Strategy was to emulate Five Habits for their leaders to drive Growth. Business Growth is intrinsically linked to Personal Growth: These Five Habits are Wipro's culture transformation initiative:

- Building Trust
- Always Communicating
- Demonstrating Stewardship
- Being Responsive
- Being Respectful

The good news is sustainable growth can have an almost immediate impact on the growth of the company. Some of the elements that will ensure sustainable business growth that start working almost immediately include a renewed focus on Customer Centricity, Knowledge of Client Needs, Customer Satisfaction, Clear Articulation of Goals with TEAM (there is it is again!) buy in.

Can sustainable business growth be achieved in the context of the green agenda - Can Business Growth be truly sustainable?

At COP26, more than half of the UK's largest businesses have pledged to stop their contributions to climate change by 2050. This move means that net zero pledges from UK businesses have more than quadrupled in the last year. The government has made clear that these climate pledges are not at the expense of economic growth, as between 1990 and 2019 the country's economy grew by 78%, while carbon emissions fell by 44% – which is the fastest reduction in the G7.

Wipro is a founding member, alongside Microsoft, Unilever, and others, of the Transform to Net Zero Coalition, which aims to accelerate the transition to a net-zero emissions global economy by 2050. The climate crisis is real, it is urgent, it is complex. But what we see also is that if 86% of the top 500 companies in the world are committing this target of carbon neutrality by 2050, 30% feel they are on track, the reality is that most of the companies are behind and that's why we really need to accelerate the pace and the awareness.

Just five years ago, Boards and investors paid little attention to environmental topics. Today, climate impact and carbon neutrality are a priority. This means shareholders must not simply assume performance will continue, but be willing to make accommodations for net-zero targets. We must all create the environment for a virtuous and consistent combination of driving transformation and performance. The next generation of talent will never want to work for a company that does not take its environmental responsibility seriously.



Jo Liston
Wipro, Senior Commercial
Manager

sustainable

But every industry is having to make different choices that reflect the balance of what investments are needed. Technology can be part of the solution. By leveraging data, the cloud, we are creating an environment of flexibility for only consuming what we need. Artificial intelligence is also a driver to help reduce consumption. All these aspects are positive, but with lack of understanding and awareness, you may only see the negative aspects of technology.

Business Growth is essential and is underpinned by personal growth, customer obsession, employee engagement and investment - including technology. We need to ensure that Business Growth is sustainable – in both meanings of the word.

Well said Jo. I'm with you wholeheartedly on the environmental issue. I don't believe it's a coincidence that the Nobel Prize in Physics recently went to three scientists for "contributions to our understanding of complex physical systems", including climate study!¹⁶

Many great points and issues raised here, Jo. I'd like to pick up on one in particular:

Is business growth linked to personal growth and vice versa?

Martyn: Speaking of Steve Jobs, who you can well deduce is a major hero of mine, the origins of the iPhone stem from – and this is so weird – his personal dislike of a Microsoft employee. Not Bill Gates, as he actually had a sense of kindred spirit with Bill, but from a very low ranking engineer who irritated Jobs many times, but especially when he declared that Microsoft had "solved computing" with the creation of the stylus-run Tablet.

Jobs hated this attitude and even more hated the stylus – "We've been born with ten styluses" he evocatively screamed – and lo, Jobs delivered the touch screen iPhone and iPad and changed our lives forever.

So, a huge moral of this fairly trivial encounter is how much it drove Jobs to fundamentally change the world, change Apple and change our lives. This whole sector was driven by the personal drive and ambition of Steve Jobs.

James: Until businesses are run by robots (AI), (at which point we may all as well go home and sit in our gardens watching the sun go down!), then I think many business leaders are still motivated by personal growth ambitions. I think it's difficult to separate personal growth from business growth. If personal growth is motivated by 'the new' or 'the more' then this can often be delivered through business growth. New experiences can be delivered through new product and new business developments, new wealth can be delivered through new profitability, new personal goals can be delivered through new working methods.

There is an intrinsic link between work and life (hence the balance debate). My personal growth has always been linked to 'building things' like new business ideas, product development, tech development, job creation and, as trite as it may sound, seeing people grow and become more rounded, wealthy people. Not a revelation really.

Vinnie: Technology has the potential to create a more open, diverse, trusted, inclusive society. CEOs have to realise that Millennials are coming into the organisation and expecting the CEO to publicly represent the values of that organisation. The world is changing and the essential nature of what a business is and how it should operate needs to evolve: structural and permanent.

James Moore -
Kulahub, Director



¹⁶ <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/05/science/nobel-prize-physics-manabe-klaus-parisi.html>

interlinked

Trust is key. We are approaching the fifth industrial revolution: one in which trust is earned by those companies; those who lead can no longer afford to separate business objectives from social issues surrounding them. Doing Well and Doing Good is no longer just a competitive advantage - it's becoming a business imperative.

Such: Personally, I'm a fan of personal development and growth. In my businesses, when we recruit, we look for a specific trait relating to personal development. Someone who wants to be better tomorrow, than they were today, is going to help drive your business forward. But I strongly believe that must come from the top. The leaders in a business must recognise and accept that they don't know it all.

I regularly turn to others in my network or absorb books, online content and the like to develop my personal growth. If I and my colleagues leading the business invest time and energy into our personal growth, we will filter that down to our people. And personal development shouldn't be just about 'career-related' topics. Personal development can include anything from food, experiences, travel, fitness, leisure, sport...anything 'new' or different is part of personal development but I recognise we are looking at business growth in particular.

I'm not convinced that you can grow a business without personal growth. If you keep doing what you always did, you will get what you always got! Personal growth encourages us to do something different and guess what, you'll get a different result. As a business grows, you as an individual will have to develop to keep up with the pace of growth. It is a self-perpetuating circle that continues to feed the concept.

Dror: Yes. Growth is linked to adding value and communicating your services to a very clearly defined audience. Refining your value proposition requires humbleness, which in my experience is a never-ending journey as our egos play tricks on us. The better we want to serve end-users, the deeper we travel on our own personal journey. I once heard a Rabbi say *"I used to be arrogant but now I am humble and therefore perfect"*.

**Guffaw* *Raucous laughter* *Chuckles* belly laughs bellowed around the ring and room from all. Many of us took this 'natural break' to replenish our wine glasses and nibble a few more mince pies, including The Naked Lawyer ... but who's counting?*

Okay gang, let's reconvene and pick up where we left off ...

Similarly, is business growth linked to product growth and vice versa?

Martyn: Of course, business growth is linked to product or service growth – and a key element here is spotting the winners. We all have a plan – and we all have a passion to make that plan work. Hence one will be very emotionally connected to your first product or service cherubs, and they can initially do no wrong. However – the market will decide.

The key as a business owner is to listen to what the market says. Let the winners ride and remove the losing services. That famous phrase "Fail Fast" is so important here.

It doesn't of course literally mean that – doh – but learn quicker and react. Take on board that mostly American philosophy that failure is merely a lesson. It's the juice that gives you experience, to help you and your business become better.

Alex: One of the characteristics of a startup (whether part of the legal industry or not) is that in the beginning, the product is always very simple. And yet, this doesn't prevent them from recruiting customers and therefore from growing. Hyperlex is a perfect example. What our customers bought into at the beginning

Alex Grux
Hyperlex, CEO
and Co-Founder



(and they told us so) is the vision, the mindset and above all, the team. The product is not only valid at that moment, what is bought is a real bet on the future. So, the product is the least static thing. I agree on the business/product dynamic, but I still want to add the team to the equation, because it is the team that carries the vision.

Dror: Yes. Product is the outcome of automating added value to the end-user. If the perceived value of the output in the eyes of the end-user isn't improving, then what we call product development is just noise. Steve Jobs references the invention of the bicycle as a symbol of man's ability to build value-adding machines. If the product doesn't add value, don't create it. Assessing whether or not a product adds value requires a lot of research and a deep stare in the mirror and therefore personal growth.

I guess what we are all saying is that personal growth, product growth and business growth are all interlinked? Not unlike the magic brand trio I wrote about a decade ago – the personal brand, product brand and company brand working together for ultimate success? Very interesting ...



**Whizz-bang* *Whoosh* *Ping* *Ping* *Ping*
SPLAT!!! #?!... Incoming ... A spray of muse
bombs festoon and light up the room as The
Naked Lawyer topples from her Segway...*

Oh dear... Obviously she's been taking full advantage of the office bar aka "neighbourhood experience in the Imaginarium" we have provided ...

Just ignore her guys, she's agile enough to sort herself out ...

Carrying on, all thoroughly energised with a plethora of musings as a direct result of The Naked Lawyer's accidental onslaught I encourage the conversation and input to flow naturally by kicking off again and posing the question:

What are your views on how technology drives and/or supports business growth?

Alex: I really like this question. The link between tech and business growth? First of all, tech can bring new capabilities that we didn't have before. Let me explain: if we take Hyperlex, for example, it would be to help the customer to do what he already does, but better. Today, our clients can do what they were doing before: manage all the steps of the contractual cycle, and their contractual relationships, but faster, from home, and better. The value is created this way. Tech is a business enabler: it gives access to a new layer of value.

James: Tech supports growth in a number of ways, making life easier – think automation (especially in our CRM platform), increasing efficiency (ditto), enabling sharing and building presence and increasing revenue. If tech doesn't do any of those things, then why have it?

Such: Technology will typically help a business scale at a faster pace that it would otherwise be able to achieve organically. Let's take something as simple as the letter. Traditionally (and maybe still common?!) a lawyer would speak into a Dictaphone and record a letter on tape. That tape would be sent up to the secretary office where it would sit in a pile and come back with the letter nicely presented within a day or two. If there were no mistakes or changes, it would be signed off and posted out (if there were mistakes/changes, you'd add another half a day to get it back ready to go). The letter would take a day or two to the

recipient. The recipient would read the letter and respond when convenient. Depending on who is the recipient, that timeframe for a response could be 3-4 days or 3-4 weeks.

Now consider technology delivering that letter digitally. The lawyer can talk into a digital dictation software that will transcribe the letter in real time. It can be delivered electronically within a fraction of a second. The recipient can respond in kind within a matter of hours. The net result is that a matter has moved on a stage within a far shorter space of time than before. Stack all those stages on top of each other and you have reduced the overall transaction time of a matter, you've unlocked working capital faster which can then be reinvested faster.

The maths here is really important to prove the point. Let's say you would have to invest £5 to make a £10 return on a single letter. Using the old traditional letter approach, it would take you at least a week to see any return (in reality probably at least 2 weeks). In a month, you could invest your first £5, make £5 at the end of week one and reinvest the original £5 to make a further £5 in week two and so on. Over 4 weeks, in total you'd make £20 from your £5 investment. Now introduce technology and assume it takes 2 days to see a return because you can get the information out and back faster. The equivalent return using technology in say a 20-working day month is now £100...5 times as much. This is of course a very simple and basic concept but it does prove a point – technology doesn't just support business growth it drives it forward by yielding more profit for future investment.

A fantastic example, Such. Most appealing *wink* ...

Vinnie: We live in a very special time, where the world is more connected than ever before. We call it 'The Fourth Industrial Revolution', where technology continues to transform how we live and interact with others. There has never really been a convergence of technologies, at one time, at such a pace, like this in our history - with the emergence of Cloud, Social, Data Science, IoT and Artificial Intelligence.

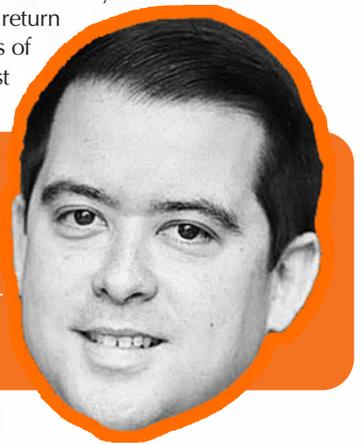
This perfect storm of technologies is allowing companies to reinvent themselves and their business models. It's truly 'disrupt or be disrupted' - and it's only been accelerated through the pandemic, with every aspect of our lives turning digital.

In 2020, if you didn't have a digital business, you didn't have a business! The pandemic has accelerated the digital economy by a decade. The conversations we are having with business leaders are now centred around 'growth'. The opportunity for growth has never been greater for forward-leaning companies. However, it isn't solely about technology. It's around changing business models, changing the way you work and reimagining your business in the 'new normal'.

I always refer back to how Amazon transformed the market and changed business models 15-years ago. Think about the Retail industry: if you're in Retail today, and you don't have a strategy around digital transformation, engaging with your customers and differentiating, it's going to be pretty tough sledding. What the difference this time is, is that it's not just one industry. When you talk with CEOs across the world, in every industry, in every market, in every segment and geography, they MUST be able to embrace these technologies and change and move on. Those that do, will have a bright future.

Investing in technology can drive growth. For law firms, technology can give them the ability to truly digitally transform. There will be more automated, self-help and AI which will in turn help to deliver a greater level of client satisfaction, along with the delivery of legal services.

Vincent Perrin
(aka Vinnie)
Salesforce UK,
Regional Vice President -
Professional Services



networking

Martyn: Technology should be writ loud and bold within every organisation. It helps drive growth because it adds amongst many elements, consistency and repetition, and time savings. We need to remove waste, and technology used correctly will help us do this.

A key element of every business has to be process. Yes, of course design, integrity, adaptability are hugely important, and they are the stars and the strikers and the leading actors within your drama – but process is the defence, the solid ever-reliable platform which protects us every day – and this is powered by whatever technology you choose to use.

Nick: Before I dive into why we need to embrace technology as a key growth driver for any business, there is one big caveat that we need to cover up front. Technology, no matter how good, clever, or well designed, will only help if you are willing to invest time in it. Show it some (or a lot) of love and it will reward you and your business. Drop it in and hope for the best? No chance!

Consider the following: what outcomes are you looking for? Who is going to use it and what do they need? Where does it sit in the context of the rest of your business? How will it play or interact with other systems or processes? What is the change journey you need to take your team on?

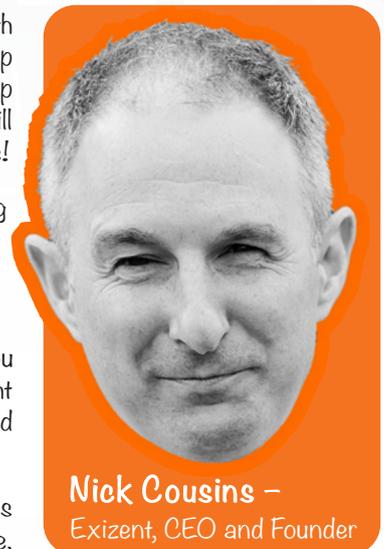
Answer these questions ahead of time and the technology will pay you back. What does that pay back look like? The right technology for the right situation can drive your business growth in a myriad of ways, but I would highlight three main areas – capacity, service, and opportunity.

Firstly, to grow your business you need capacity. If everyone in your firm is flat out, head down, just trying to get through what business you do have, then growth is impossible. You need to create capacity. Shoving more through the same pipe will just cheese people off (colleagues and clients) and end in tears. So, find and embrace technology that improves processes (through automation or streamlining) and removes sources of “friction”. It doesn’t have to be glamorous, but if you’re able to remove non-value adding effort from your business or your interaction with clients, you create capacity. Save time, do more business – what’s not to love!

The second win – service. Ultimately the legal world (on the whole) is a people business, and we are all here to deliver the best possible services to our clients at a time when they probably need help the most. In a competitive market your reputation can set you apart. If you can be excellent legally, and easy to deal with personally, then you can stand out from the crowd. Technology (caveat bell – ding ding!) can drastically improve the service you give to clients. It can help you to communicate, share data and documents, increase transparency, and provide channel choice. One of the biggest frustrations we hear at Exizent from clients of law firms is “I have no idea what is happening, and I have to use “snail mail” to get things done”. It’s the 21st century. There are better ways!

Finally, let’s talk about opportunity. Technology can and should open new doors to business growth through two key routes – insight and collaboration. Insight comes from the data that your business generates. Technology can store, manage, and derive more data than ever before and can provide the analytical capability to offer doors into your clients, your business and your market that you did not have before. Cloud computing and the wide availability of software built using APIs (application programming interfaces) mean that it is easier than ever to collaborate with other businesses to generate new connected propositions that meet customer needs. Think about the potential for connecting data between legal firms, advisory firms, accountancy firms (or pre-death planning and post-death execution in Exizent’s case), and what that could mean for your clients, their families, and their futures.

So, in short love your technology and it will surely love you back!



Nick Cousins –
Exizent, CEO and Founder

Speaking of loving technology, you're all aware I'm a 'heart on the sleeve' kind of girl who just love love loves using social media and social networking platforms for personal and professional reasons; fabulous technologies indeed that have endless uses and provides many opportunities to grow personally and professionally. So, as you can expect, I'm keen to hear your views on this:

Should lawyers spend more time networking and socialising (online and/or offline) to help grow their business (and themselves)?

Vinnie: Yes, some have already figured this out as a great way to drive relationships and nurture opportunities; with the best also utilising social media, predominantly LinkedIn, as a great networking tool, by adding content and discussions which is both insightful and meaningful.

Dror: If lawyers want to get more work, they should absolutely be spending more time networking where their desired customer base is.

Key tips for lawyers: demonstrating competence, legitimacy and experience by showing you understand what the customer needs. This must not be confused with giving free legal advice. You can demonstrate and show who you are without giving away your crown jewels.

However, some lawyers spend far too much time on social media. We had a few enquiries from customers who felt that the lawyer cares more about being active on social media than responding to their emails or returning their calls, and that is a problem. Customer experience first, everything else second.

James: Everyone, not just lawyers. Self-promotion is one of those marmite things. Some can and do, and enjoy. Most can but don't and won't.

Today's world has changed beyond recognition compared to even 10 years ago and 'socialising' is now more important than ever. We all use smartphones – my last usage report for weekly screen time was nearly 20 hours (mail, LinkedIn, Whatsapp, Calendar, messages among the most used). Surely that tells us something. We're using our tech to 'talk'. We communicate in different ways more so now than ever and I'm not sure the 'olden ways' of socialising will ever return in full. So, accept it, embrace it and be social. Just make sure you record your business socialising correctly!

Alex: I don't think they see this kind of action fitting their profile. Let me explain. For me, a lawyer is someone who has a background training, he is an expert in his discipline, and he has a training that creates value by providing a service. This is also the case for positions like Legal Ops. So, anything that doesn't relate to their service/business is often seen as a waste of time. So, socialising, finding best practices, learning and discovering new tools is important, and I think they should do it (like everyone else). But I don't think they see it as part of their business.

Martyn: Absolutely lawyers should socialise – they should be first to the bar and last to leave. They should be the bon viveurs of every gathering and they should let their personalities shine through.

How else can they distinguish themselves? The law is the law – black and white isn't it. The only difference is an opinion – and that is what lawyers need to broadcast by their socialising – that they have the brightest, smartest, most persuasive opinions – and these are best given over a glass of red.

diversify



**Whizz-bang* *Whoosh* *Ping* *Ping* *Ping*
SPLAT!!! #!?!... Incoming ... "I couldn't agree
more", slurred The Naked Lawyer as she
waved a half-full Malbec precariously in the
air. "Or a bottle of Chablis, perhaps?" *hic*
hic ... Typical, she has expensive taste ...*

Tsk Tsk madame. Since you are now unburdened of muse bombs may I suggest you gather yourself together and sit quietly on your Segway. We're all good, thank you. All 'mused out' in fact. Here, have another mince pie to mop up the fluid. *Bless* ...

Turning to the troops I enquire:

Even social networks / social media / specialised platforms can drive/support business growth in this Digital Age BUT should we be careful about relying on them? Recall the recent Facebook outage and its effect on businesses?

Sam: I don't suspect the Facebook outage affected law firms all that much. But, even though we spend most of our time working on SEO and PPC, we don't ever recommend that law firms rely on Google as their only source of work. The same would be said for any of the social platforms.

They're all a part of the digital marketing jigsaw, and from an SEO perspective good social media can support your rankings as Google loves brands - the better your social media platforms, the more likely you are to have people talk about you, search for you, and for Google to consider you a 'brand'.

Remember, 'social media' doesn't mean any one specific thing. You should pick your platforms, messages, and approach, depending on your target audience and how different media is consumed on each platform. No point setting up a tiktok account if you can't regularly create video content and if your target demographic doesn't live on tiktok!

Alex: Yes, what is disturbing is the share of growth related to digital and social networks. And the fact that even we as buyers need to be reassured by the guarantee of our peers on the networks. In fact, social networks have amplified the effects that already existed, before, it was the network that counted, and we trusted it, but today? Well, it's LinkedIn, the community, and 3 or 4 opinions of entrepreneurs that will count! But we are very dependent on it. If we take away the contribution of inbound to the growth of Hyperlex, we lose a lot!

Dror: Diversification is the one-word answer for many risk management questions. Putting all your eggs in one basket is never a good idea when the stakes are high, whether it is your customer pipeline, a financial investment, or otherwise.

Facebook's outage came as a shock, but no platform is completely outage proof. This doesn't mean we should try to make it without social media. Instead, we should map out where our target audience spends their time and position ourselves to be found by them in several different touchpoint areas to reduce the negative impacts of potential outages.



Sam Borrett
Legmark, CEO
and Founder

cause and effect

Digital is not the only way. Local communities, local newspapers and networking groups are a great way to invest in business development, in addition to platforms like www.legaldrop.com (similarly how tradesmen don't rely exclusively on ratedpeople.com but rather network and advertise offline as well).

Vinnie & Phil: When you look at typical downtimes for social networks these are very low, but is it wise to put all your eggs in one basket? Outages do happen and at times these can be unannounced and cause a major disruption. Ask yourself this; is the social media platform free to use, if so, have you set your expectations accordingly?

Martyn: Don't blame the platform. There is nothing wrong with social media – it is just the users or mis-users. In this case, you should shoot some of the messengers – but let me remind you, Facebook is a robot, an algorithm – albeit stupidly clever.

All good points gang. In light of the 2021 UK Small and Medium-Sized Law Firm Market survey and report¹⁷ and the 2021 State of the U.S. Small Law Firms report¹⁸ (both released in Q4 2021 by Thomson Reuters), we can say with some certainty that lawyers engaging in networking online using technology can only be a positive move provided they don't rely solely on one platform, yes?

nods *smiles* *murmurings* ... Let's change the focus now shall we? ...

There have been a great many articles in the legal and mainstream press about the "Wellbeing crisis" amongst the working population i.e. many workers/lawyers suffering from burnout and/or addictions as a way of handling stress / overwork / sleep problems / menopause etc etc etc ...

How do you think any/all of these (or other examples) affect business growth?

Dror: Stress, burnout, depression, anxiety, drinking too much, sleeping too little, even eating badly over long periods — these all disrupt concentration and focus and can exacerbate feelings of low self-worth and other harmful emotions. Some stress is useful at work, but too much can trigger the autonomic nervous system which can lead to serious depression.

As a founder, I too have experienced first-hand burnout and stress etc. The fact that in legal we are only now giving it the attention it deserves is not great, but better late than never. Business growth comes from clarity, creativity and drive. Burnout, exhaustion, derailment etc annihilates creativity. Freeing up headspace is of imperative importance for business growth because, without it, we are not thinking creatively. Under stress, and responding to our fight or flight mode by working harder, longer hours, weekends etc, may give the illusion that we are being productive but our headaches tell us differently. If this is you, you are not alone, but it's still your responsibility to take care of yourself.

Could AI (or another form of technology) come to the rescue? i.e. save human workers from burnout/illness, improve wellbeing at work/work/home, overcome disability etc to assist with improved productivity which may lead to increased business growth?

Dror: Directly, not yet. However, websites like welldoing.org use AI to find the best-suited match between an individual and a therapist, psychologist or coach.

17. <https://legalsolutions.thomsonreuters.co.uk/en/trends-insights/reports/small-and-medium-sized-law-firm-market-2021/form.html>

18. <https://www.lawyermarketing.com/white-papers/state-of-small-law-firms-report/>

19. https://www.fastcompany.com/90621978/stop-working-too-much-and-letting-your-team-overwork-too?partner=rss&utm_source=linkedin.com&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=rss+fastcompany&utm_content=rss

How can managers and employees work on solutions together to improve wellbeing whilst working toward business growth?¹⁹

Sam: It took well over a hundred years after the start of the industrial revolution for the working day to be reduced to 8 hours for workers. Factory owners wanted to maximise the benefits of the developments in technology for their own gain.

In the early 20th Century, when the Ford Motor Company doubled pay and reduced shifts to 8 hours, the productivity of staff actually increased.

The issue for most law firms is the billable hour. If you charge by the hour, how can you maintain revenue and profit while cutting hours for staff? If technology means a 4-hour job is done in 3-hours, do you actually want that technology? It would mean you'd need to bring in additional work to compensate for the lost hours. A movement towards fixed fee work will force law firms to embrace technology more than ever, and it might finally mean that staff get to improve their work-life balance!

Dror: In terms of the managers and teams: talk about it. Share. No one is free of mental stress. As managers, showing your vulnerabilities will hopefully invite your employees to do the same.

“Real men don't cry” is a thing of the past, and helping your team see that you too are human will only give you brownie points. There are some quick wins that can help. For example, www.welldoing.org has a useful tool - a mood survey that assesses where someone's mental health and wellbeing is at. It is anonymised and fed back to managers so they can assess how well their team is doing and suggest where improvements can be made.

I like the sound of this, Dror. Thanks for sharing. I'll definitely be checking this out, if only for *The Naked Lawyer's* sake! ... We all turn in the direction of the Zzzzzzzzzzzzssss to see her ladyship curled up across her Segway. *Ahhhh* ... so cute ... this is what peace looks like. We'd best not disturb her ...

Right, let's wrap this up gang and escape before she wakes! I have one final question for you to tackle together please:

Where do you see the biggest opportunity to grow a business in this AI Age right now and in the near future?

Vinnie & Phil: All in all, AI can turn troves of data on behaviours and uncover patterns the human brain cannot detect. That may be tailoring communications with precision; or automating what was once manual tasks and subsequently improving productivity

For businesses, AI can help them create more trusted relationships with their clients through improving the overall Client Experience. We are seeing ChatBots become more and more popular, decreasing wait times through self-service capabilities. Additionally, employees are happier with once mundane tasks now automated and the ability to focus on more creative ideas.

The opportunity for organisations is leveraging AI to create more personalised experiences for their client-base. AI will continually learn from data to provide more relevant client interactions, ultimately leading to growth through increasing loyalty and conversion rates.

opportunity

I love the fact you place great focus on using AI for the Client Experience. It is at the heart, soul even, of an entity imho.

James: AI isn't going away. It's not a fad or Betamax (showing my Alge there, sorry!). We use it, every day, in online shopping, search (Google), banking, at home ('Alexa play Harry Potter on Audible' is a phrase I hear shouted across bedrooms every night by my children!).

If businesses and practices don't acknowledge the direction of tech travel, now, then they will become increasingly less relevant to future generations. Not just prospects or customers, but acquiring new talent that expects their new employer to be relevant to them, and their futures in those firms.

We are now building CRM with AI in mind, voice activation and dictation: 'Hey CRM, send a marketing campaign to data set XX, using template YY'; 'Hey CRM add this information to customer record XXX and schedule my next contact'. It's so powerful that firms need to apply what they do to technology, not the other way around. The time to think about this is now. Or you may be too late for the future!

Oh WOW. It's awesome what you're developing here, James. Very impressive.

Dror: Our AI engine is being trained to help predict prices for legal advice for UK SMEs. This use of AI will solve a compelling need, as SMEs are reluctant to engage and hire advisers without knowing upfront how much the service might cost. Every legal matter is unique, and pricing it is difficult, this, I believe, is a good use of AI.

The world does not need another AI product. What it needs are better ways to solve problems. Start with solving a problem, and then use technology to make it better, faster, cheaper. AI can add a huge amount of value, particularly where it comes to prediction and regression, but if not channelled correctly, it leads to another hyped-up product with a trendy tagline.

Indeed. Spot-on, Dror!

Sam: Much of the focus is on utilising tech and AI to improve profitability through increased productivity. Not as much focus is on how to invest in human beings in order that their productivity (and well-being) can be developed.

We've done a number of staff reviews with clients to gauge the 'temperature' and culture of the business. There's an emphasis on reviews from clients to make us look good, but how often are firms getting 'reviews' from their most important asset - the staff?

These anonymous reviews have thrown up some vital insights for the clients involved in how to adapt policy, address certain issues, and improve the work environment such that they have a happier staff - and we all know, a happier staff is a more productive one...

That's a really super point, Sam. I clocked that Atom Bank employees have opted for a 4 day week recently, with a marginally longer day as a direct result of employee feedback. It is what they chose having been given the option from the company.

Sonia: One of the new emerging lands of opportunity may well lie with the decentralised internet (Web 3.0): from NFT in arts and beyond to blockchain applications, smart contracts, crypto, gaming, security issues- it is a fast growing space for lawyers to contribute to. It will become increasingly important for corporate clients to embrace Web 3.0 at the next stage of digital transformation but also to navigate and help the policy makers and regulators (tax and compliance framework for example).

I am soooooo chuffed you brought this up, Sonia. Because I believe the additional trends to look out for in 2022 include the rise and importance of JusticeTech and the Metaverse.



Sonia Hadjadj -
Legal Counsel and
Legal Ops Consultant

chriSSie's frank finale

JusticeTech

We already have LegalTech and LawTech but the JusticeTech newcomer appears to be a niche of LawTech and will be one to watch, buy into (even invest in) and encourage growth in 2022 and beyond. JusticeTech pioneers and advocates (such as TikalTech in Brazil – a tech company founded by a lawyer) are in the business of Access to Justice, sometimes through the use of lawyers but also mainly entrepreneurs and non-lawyers proposing the decentralisation of legal services giving more power to the layperson / customer / client, particularly to the poorest in society.

If lawyers are truly looking to achieve respect in society and attain true justice, a strategy embracing the creation, adoption, implementation and roll-out of JusticeTech will earn the currently elusive respect of the legal profession by laypersons in societies across the world and bring about an overdue equilibrium to a current and historical imbalance in the scales of justice between the 'haves' and the 'have nots'; those with the money, education, influence and peer power in contrast to those who have none (or little) of these and are helpless and thwarted.

The world could do with a redress right about now. Remember that button in the first edition of Technology in Law Law Land I talked about? "Press here to reset the world"? Hmmm ... I wish ... I wonder ...

The Metaverse

The metaverse (Web 3.0) is envisioned as a version of the internet with three-dimensional virtual environments. Augmented by virtual reality headsets, the metaverse may support entertainment, shopping, education, communication and work environments in one seamless space.¹

It has begun, but is yet to take-off in full swing.

It currently spans the physical and virtual worlds and aims to contain a fully-fledged economy in the near future with unparalleled interoperability where users will be able to take their avatars and goods from one place in the metaverse to another, no matter who runs that particular part of it. No one company will run the metaverse. It will be an "embodied internet," as Marc Zuckerberg said, operated by many different players in a decentralised way.²

1. <https://news-yahoo-com.cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/news.yahoo.com/amphtml/why-meta-jurisdiction-metaverse-203007373.html>

2. <https://www.theverge.com/22588022/mark-zuckerberg-facebook-ceo-metaverse-interview>

3. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbestechcouncil/2020/01/06/what-is-web-3-0/>

4. <https://www.cryptelites.com/2021/12/02/virtual-law-nj-firm-launches-metaverse-office-for-client-services/>

5. <https://news-yahoo-com.cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/news.yahoo.com/amphtml/why-meta-jurisdiction-metaverse-203007373.html>

key considerations

I'm still getting my head around all this and wondering whether now is the time to buy a plot of land with crypto-currency in the metaverse before all the prime real estate has gone?! Is this like monopoly, Captain Kirk style? If you're curious to learn more about Web 3.0 then I recommend you read this article in Forbes from last year.³ It's a great starter for ten; a 101 on Web 3.0.

In case you'd not heard (or guessed), Meta is the artist formerly known as Facebook. Beyond capturing media interest the calculated move reflects the social media giant's shifting focus toward building the metaverse. Facebook (now Meta) has been going on an investment, acquisition, and partnership spree to back it up. It has done 5 acquisitions this year; all of which have been metaverse-related.

Why is this important? Why am I raising and sharing this here?

Metaverses aren't just for tech companies or geeks. Law firms are now also plotting a digital home in the expansive virtual environment.⁴ A New Jersey USA-headquartered personal injury firm has only just announced (Dec 2021) it's launching a metaverse office. Grungo Colarulo's metaverse office is located in Decentraland, a 3D virtual reality platform, which the firm said "makes it the first personal injury firm to create an office in the metaverse".

The firm's founding partner Richard Grungo Jr. said "the impetus behind the move to a virtual space came from clients' evolving preferences." Now THAT, if anything, should set your Spidey senses tingling.

Naturally, it would be wise to begin exploring what this Metaverse hype is all about. Whilst you're at it, I guess as lawyers we should be attempting to figure out ahead of time the rules to be applied inside these virtual worlds, because, as James Cooper, professor of law and director of international legal studies at California Western School of Law in San Diego (and a fellow at Singapore University of Social Sciences) observes: "too often, technology companies innovate first and then figure out the ethical conundrums, regulatory challenges and governance fixes, when it can be too late. Terms of service from Big Tech do not often protect basic human rights".⁵

And, as there would be no national boundaries in the metaverse Professor Cooper poses some rather poignant questions, such as: "Whose rules would apply? What laws concerning privacy, consumer product safety, labour standards and contracting would reign? How would gambling, for example, be proscribed? Where would commercial disputes and criminal prosecutions for illegal behaviour be adjudicated?"

He suggests that by insisting that the founding tenets of the metaverse be centred around basic human rights, sustainable environmental protection and equitable labour standards, we can build a decentralised virtual world that brings out the best of humanity. Perhaps this is where JusticeTech may well find a welcome home where it will thrive and grow?

Personally, if this new decentralised virtual world requires some new rules of law, I'm all for bringing back the Ancient Roman practice of making men swear on their testicles when making a statement in court (IRL or in the metaverse). You did know where the word "testify" came from, I presume, ambassadors?

2022

At which point all the guys shuffled and covered their man bits with their hands (crossed - as you gentlemen do) like a footballer when standing and singing a national anthem...

chuckles *grins* *smiles* then belly laughs ensued ... Sssshhhhh you'll wake *The Naked Lawyer*!!! ... Too late ... Up she sprang like a gazelle alert to a predator ...

The guys, noting *The Naked Lawyer* had spied the huge bunch of mistletoe earlier and constantly glanced at each of them throughout the session (obviously biding her time to pounce when the chance presented itself), were like whippets out of the traps. Observing she was a little unstable on her feet having woken suddenly from her 'free bar' alcohol induced nap they darted for the exit before she realised their great escape was in play.

Ah-ha... Well played ... The ladies not the gents, that is ...

Outstanding tactics and acting performance by *The Naked Lawyer*!!! *Applause* all round as *The Naked Lawyer* soberly steered her Segway to join the ladies as we gathered and settled around the Christmas table to mine-sweep the remaining mulled wine and mince pies as we jibber-jabbered and gossiped (as we ladies do) ...

munch *slurp* *yumyum* *mmmmmm* *slurp* *sluuuuurrrrrpppppp* *chuckle*...

For sure, in 2022 we will all be stepping into a NewWorld, and a NewYear, with many a malcontent. Some of us will potentially experience growth in either (or both) the personal and business sense; a NewBiz and NewYou, if you like.

So, good luck to y'all with all that. I hope that what we've shared with you here can support you a wee bit on your journey. With my heartfelt best wishes to you, your family and friends, colleagues and 'work family' throughout the holidays and into 2022 I will leave you with this jolly thought:

Returning to Howard Wheeldon's comment on the British F-35 that crashed into the sea "lift is a gift, thrust is a must", and I'm afraid clearly he had no thrust," perhaps there is another version in relation to personal and business growth? ...

"Life is a gift, in growth we trust." And for those with little faith? Well, I'm afraid clearly (s)he had no trust.

Virtual kisses and hugs to you all ... xxx

By Chrissie Lightfoot Chief Tech Advisor and Writer to Modern Law (Chair of the 'Technology in Law Law Land' roundtable).

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