LegalTech Knowledge: Will Law Schools React on Time?

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The most recent reports on the future of the legal industry show law firms are in a dire need of fresh talent, and new skills. Future lawyers will have to demonstrate knowledge in project management and legal technology. Such skills will be crucial for firms and attorneys who want to stay in the market.

However, the big question is:

Are law schools preparing students for the future of law, and the changes already taking place? Let's see the latest insights!

Prognosis on future jobs and legal skills

Several independent and credible sources agree on future jobs and skills. According to Deloitte's report, project managers, sales executives, dealmakers, data and technology experts will playa significant role in future law firms . The authors suggest that even firms that opt for the status quo will require a review of their talent strategy.

The skill set for the new roles in law firms will require fewer general support staff, junior attorneys, and generalists, the BCG & Bucerius Law School report notes. Lawyers and especially young, inexperienced legal professionals will have to focus on developing specialist expertise in a niche area.

> *"Indeed, tech skills in the areas of digital communication and collaboration, computer and data science, and statistics will become the coin of the realm in this profession. In some law firms, new roles including legal process managers and general legal technicians will emerge." ~ BCG & Bucerius Law School*

BCG, Bucerius Law School and experts from the World Economic Forum (see **'The Future of Jobs'**) suggest that law schools should provide courses on legal tech and case management processes. Rethinking educational systems, in their opinion, is one of the key areas which have long-term resilience. They note that within four years (!), 5 million jobs will be lost! from 'stable' professions including:

- Legal profession
- Manufacturing
- Production
- Architecture
- Administration
- Engineering

The need for change in educating law students is inevitable, according to **'Disrupting Law School'**. The authors believe that a JD degree doesn't hold the same value as it once did. They see that changes in the legal market affect both law students and the jobs they strive for.

> *"The net result of these pressures is a growing storm for law schools that will not recede in the years ahead." ~ The Clayton Christensen Institute for Disruptive Innovation*

So the key point is courses like legal tech are destined to increase the employability of graduates.

Why LegalTech should be studied in law schools

We believe some of the biggest benefits of using legal tech are that it helps firms:

- put their processes in place,

- eliminate waste,
- discover the true added-value their law firm creates and
- enable the firm to quote prices accordingly

Having a clear structure of work, predictable cost, and delivery time, are vital to earning and keeping the respect (and business) from clients. Learning legal tech will help students streamline firms' processes such as matter management, fees tracking, invoicing et al. For those aiming for management, legal tech knowledge is even more beneficial. Training in legal IT will give young attorneys the ability to track key metrics and insights of their business.

Being tech-savvy is helpful for law school students with an interest in non-lawyer roles too. Law librarians, legal headhunters, paralegals, management consultants, and law firm administrators also need to be prepared with skills the market demands.

Good examples: What are forward-thinking law schools doing

Bucerius Law School – a bridge to the world

Hamburg-based, Bucerius Law School (BLS) is one of the most forward-thinking law schools in Germany. The school provides the most recent management and legal tech trends with its dedicated Center on the Legal Profession (CLP).

The CLP helps students become successful modern lawyers, leveraging technology, new business models, and entrepreneurship. In the image below, you'll see the framework of the CLP. Students gain knowledge about all key aspects of the modern legal profession.

To have timely insights from the industry, BLS created the Open Innovation Lab. It's an R&D collaborative platform that gathers professionals from commercial firms, legal departments, and alternative providers.

> *"The Lab seeks to collect data and develop knowledge and insight about the future of the legal service market and on ways to design and steer the collaboration between participants such that it is future-*

LawWithoutWalls – overcoming the walls of law

Innovating the future of legal education is "LawWithoutWalls's" mission. LWOW is an organization under the umbrella of Miami Law School. The initiative assembles international students, mentors, academics and entrepreneurs to develop educational projects that help prepare students for the future of law.

According to LWOW, successful lawyers and schools of tomorrow must be problem-solvers with a business mindset that can use technology, social media, and soft skills.

> *"Law school students of today view technology as a way to create new solutions to old and new problems. In LawWIthoutWalls, teams of law and business school students combined with multi-disciplinary mentors do just that – they use technology to solve law's problems", says Michele DeStefano, founder of LWOW.*

The students involved in LWOW work on practical projects that can really make a difference. FeedForward is a good example of such a project. It is a customizable performance management software designed to be a channel of inner communication for law firms. One of the historical complaints of junior associates is the failure to receive timely feedback on their work: FeedForward solves this problem.

LegalRnD – doing the R&D that has been lacking in the legal industry

Another forward-thinking law school is Michigan State University. Its LegalRnD Center is dedicated to improving the way legal services are delivered. For this purpose they train their students with modern business methods, such as 'Lean thinking'.

Legal technology and innovation are an important part of the research and development process of the student center. But, LegalRnD believes that prior to

implementing technology, student and future lawyers have to define precisely the processes of their law firms.

> *"Historically, attempting to increase access to legal services has meant pouring resources into existing systems. But that approach has not worked. More recently, the focus has shifted to technology. We also leverage technology, but recognize that poorly defined processes, standards, and metrics lead to ineffective implementation."*

Along with traditional legal knowledge, law schools should consider offering students technology-oriented programs. Legal technology has been seen as an obstacle by lawyers for too long. But all predictions for the future of law show that technology will be an indispensable part of it. It's time for change, not only in the legal profession but in educational systems too.

Learn the benefits of legal technology in our Free E-book!

DOWNLOAD YOUR COPY!

Resources

Boston Consulting Group & Bucerius Law Schools / How Legal Technology Will Change the Business of Law

Clayton Christensen Institute for Disruptive Innovation / Disrupting Law School

Deloitte / Developing Legal Talent. Stepping into the future law firm

LawWithoutWalls

Michigan State University – LegalRnD

The World Economic Forum / The Future of Jobs

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