

A woman with dark hair in a ponytail, wearing a black sleeveless dress and a necklace, is sitting in a black leather office chair at a desk. She is looking at a laptop and typing. On the desk, there is an open spiral notebook with a red pen resting on it. The background shows a window with light-colored curtains. The overall scene is a professional office environment.

8x8

# The Agile Law Firm

Making a case for cloud collaboration tools in legal

## Disruptive forces of change

Legal services grow increasingly complex as traditional law firms and alternative legal service providers compete and collaborate. The result is unprecedented pressures on established firms to offer more value to technology-led clients who insist on increased efficiency, predictability and cost-effectiveness.

This white paper explores how cloud-based collaboration tools can help forward-thinking law firms to modernise working practices, meet new client expectations, enable business model change and differentiate from the competition.

This white paper discusses:

- The crossroads of legal innovation
- The benefits of cloud collaboration in legal firms
- Achieving success with cloud collaboration
- 5 Steps to promote collaboration
- A way forward

## Standing at the crossroads of legal innovation

Changes in the legal world are symptomatic of the disruptions taking place across other industries worldwide. Growing client demands, increasing competition, and rising expectations amongst fee-earners for a healthy work-life balance are just some of the factors driving change. But, it's technology innovations that have the most profound impact on firms.

For savvy legal CIOs, innovation success depends on their ability to interpret the firm's challenges and offer impactful ideas that will help weave technology into the fabric of the firm to address current and future client demands. Firms need to be in a position to efficiently and effectively keep pace with the evolving business landscape.

Innovation isn't defined by an enormous, 'big bang' change; instead, it builds up through a series of modest, continuous enhancements, which over time appears as substantial progression.

Some 99% of innovation involves doing the same thing but in a slightly different or better way.

A majority of law firms put improving the use of technology as their number one priority. Still, the investment is relatively low with the top firms only spending around 5% of revenue on new technology.<sup>1</sup>

But, there is an unequivocal acceptance that change is needed. Managing the client's digital expectations and nurturing client loyalty are putting new pressures on IT departments in legal firms as they thrive to stay competitive in a hybrid work environment.

Investments are needed to rectify this situation, even by firms intent on keeping spend low to increase profit margins.

If the current technology is dampening productivity, firms might have a few hard truths to face as clients consider their options and look elsewhere for more competitive service level agreements.

UK law firms are at the crossroads of innovation. They can either pursue the path of mediocrity and continued reliance on legacy IT tools or follow the route of cloud collaboration tools that offer higher-value client services, enhance productivity and differentiation in today's fast-changing legal climate.

<sup>1</sup>Source: PWC Law Survey Report 2021

## **The benefits of cloud collaboration in legal firms**

Intrinsically, law is collaborative, and excellent collaborative practices are necessary to manage the complexity of today's legal challenges.

Modern cloud collaboration tools are affordable, easy to adopt and deploy, and an indispensable part of any lawyer or paralegal's professional toolbox.

### **Solve complex problems effectively**

For seasoned lawyers, collaboration is a natural way of working. Often, however, even experienced collaborators discover new ways to leverage cloud collaboration tools, that include voice, video and messaging, for maximum gain with strategic, financial and talent-related outcomes.

Law firms recognise the need to integrate collaboration technology into their workflow, as in-house lawyers combine their specialised legal knowledge with inputs from external experts to tackle complicated issues and opportunities that span disciplines and locations.

For example, a client planning to offer e-commerce services across Europe would demand an ongoing, comprehensive, cross-organisational effort. A cloud collaboration service brings together in-house lawyers with their counterparts not only in IT and security functions but also marketing, billing, the e-commerce vendor, payment provider, customer service, and others.

Teams can communicate and collaborate on project workstreams using high-quality voice, high-definition video or team messaging with secure file or content sharing from any device to get work done quickly.

### **Overcome geographic barriers**

As the use of cloud collaboration grows in legal firms, more lawyers are going global with their expertise and skillset. Top legal experts can be tapped for services and support over video by clients in any location, without the need to travel.

While the need to communicate with clients across the country or globally is generally the purview of large law firms, smaller legal firms can also benefit from cloud collaboration technology.

Similarly, small practices can offer an agile response to time-sensitive demands. Cloud collaboration tools enable them to provide expert legal services across the country, unlocking additional revenue that might not have been possible earlier.

### **Improving practice efficiency**

Current economic uncertainties require firms to realign their business models and focus on efficiency gains. Many UK legal firms are reviewing ways to restructure their costs while delivering the same high levels of client service through the use of technology.

Cloud collaboration tools go beyond just lowering the costs for travel, they also increase efficiency and flexibility, enabling fee-earners to fit in more client meetings, liaising with barristers and collaborate on cases in a shorter time from anywhere. That opens up the possibility of offering clients fixed fees for services, as opposed to hourly charges.

**“In the past, I would have spent weeks or even months travelling to various clients, suppliers, even government agencies. Using our communications and collaboration technology means I can advise on matters from my home office, workplace or anywhere for that matter. Technology like this will rapidly accelerate change in the legal sector.”**

**Jamie Snaddon**, 8x8 Senior Director & General Counsel, Europe

# The benefits of video collaboration in legal firms

## Clear communication and non-verbal cues

When clear communication is critical, non-verbal cues from body movements, tone of voice, facial expressions are too crucial to leave out entirely. Using video collaboration tools allows those expressions to be seen during client meetings and are vital for any lawyer's work.

Modern video collaboration technology offers high-quality full-body video. The technology supports smartphones, laptops, and even multiple cameras. These cloud-based tools are significantly cheaper and provide a much faster alternative to long-distance travel, making non-hourly billing more profitable.

Cases with a large number of witnesses consume considerable time and can be condensed using video interviews. Multiple client interviews can quickly take place in a single day.

## Streamlining processes and efficiencies

Legal firms are able to develop mock courtrooms inside their offices. These high-tech collaboration spaces bring the ability to strengthen courtroom skills and refine strategy before trial. Video or audio recordings with full automatic transcriptions provide the capability to assess strengths and weaknesses, gain feedback and view juror deliberations.

That can also function as a teaching tool, allowing younger associates to gain practical experience and hone their skills. Mock courtrooms can also eliminate travel for out-of-area clients and reduce the costs of litigation.

# Wider benefits of cloud collaboration

## Company-wide collaboration

- Tailored experiences for all roles
- Handoff to colleagues with context
- A single directory with real-time presence and collaboration

## Unified administration

- A Single Interface for centralised administration
- Mix and match users across fee earners, contact centre, front and back-office roles
- Single deployment for all users

## Single Integration framework

- Accelerate every employee and customer interaction workflow
- Just one integration with your core applications
- Deep Microsoft Teams integration for UC and Contact Centre users

## Cross-platform AI and analytics

- Intelligent cross-platform insights with speech analytics
- Real-time organisation-wide reporting
- AI-powered insights for better decision making

## Single point of accountability

- 99.999% uptime SLA
- 1 governance, security, data privacy policy
- 35+ global data centres
- 24/7 support

## Achieving success with cloud collaboration

Leveraging the potential of disruptive innovation requires more than just technology—it requires change. But people naturally resist change, so they need to know what's in it for them.

Your firm's employees must recognise the purpose of the change and the benefits of cloud collaboration technology, as well as have the support of senior partners. They have the most significant influence on the firm's culture and can actively communicate the business goals, value and benefits of the technology investment and ways of working.

Gaining buy-in from every user across the firm is a challenge. Select passionate lawyers with strong relationships across the firm, who already work collaboratively to help address this challenge. They can play an important role in adopting cloud collaboration tools. They are knowledgeable, committed to furthering their expertise and are willing to provide peer coaching and assistance. They can help reduce the strain on the resources of the core project team and drive engagement with cloud collaboration tools throughout the firm.

The initial implementation of cloud collaboration tools in your firm will lead to people seeing immediate value. But that is just the beginning. New collaboration features will continue to be added, and people will want to do more with the service as their understanding of the tools improve. Set yourself up to help your people take advantage of this will lead to long-term success and continuously measure, and share progress to drive adoption of cloud collaboration in the firm further.

**"Increasingly, my expectations of the legal service providers I retain for 8x8 also need to use collaboration technology in ways that make our work easier, quicker, and more cost-effective. We work in a fast-moving industry, so it is imperative our advisors find ways to do things differently using video conferencing, collaboration tools or even instant messaging."**

**Jamie Snaddon**, 8x8 Senior Director & General Counsel, Europe

# 5 Steps to Promote Collaboration in Your Firm

## 1. Small steps

Start your cloud collaboration program with a small cross-functional team. It can help identify and resolve any issues before a firm-wide replacement of your current technology. Careful planning is required as new workflows are introduced that change workplace behaviours. Secure executive sponsors and have the leadership team on board—they will help ensure business commitment to sustain momentum and achieve practice-wide adoption of the new tools.

## 2. Select the right change-agents

Choose fee-earners who already model collaborative behaviours and gauge their interest in championing cloud collaboration. Keep in mind that partners and senior fee-earners have significant influence when it comes to employing changes to the existing IT landscape. They can be valuable project enablers and offer a rounded view of the implications of cloud collaboration tools and the changes it brings.

## 3. Host regular feedback sessions

Change is not an event; it's a process. Communicate regularly and clearly from the beginning right through to implementation. The beginning of the project, communications would focus on the motives for cloud collaboration tools and describing the project timeline and milestones. After deployment, conversations would move to trouble-shooting, reiterating desired collaboration outcomes and sharing successes.

## 4. Be open and transparent

Honesty and candour help foster a sense of common purpose by giving participants a deeper understanding of the issue and how various cloud collaboration tools intersect; it also aids learning as both lawyers and non-legal staff get exposure to different ways of collaborative approaches—not simply their end results.

## 5. Ongoing training and support

Demonstrate cloud collaboration best practices in high-visibility meetings. More often than not, you want lawyers to emulate collaborative behaviour. Also provide regular training, assistance, and advice on how to use new collaboration tools to achieve the best collaborative outcomes between fee-earners, external specialists, and clients.

## A way forward

Cloud collaboration tools unleash the full potential of legal firms by helping them to utilise their expertise with clients better. It also gives firms tremendous opportunities to improve their relationships with their external counsel by breaking down the legal and non-legal siloes within their own companies.

Today legal practices face mounting pressure to find efficiencies and meet the ever-growing client demands. It's cloud collaboration technology that can enable progressive firms to innovate their services, engage clients in new ways and improve operational efficiency. It allows firms to pursue new business opportunities, explore partnerships and do things differently in a highly competitive and evolving market.

As legal firms evaluate cloud collaboration tools, the human aspect of successful transition must not go unnoticed. Innovative technology provides the tools, but it is people's willingness and ability to accept new systems and change their ways of working, that will guarantee success for today's law firms.

See how cloud collaboration can set your firm apart from the competition.

**Visit [8x8.com/solutions/legal](https://8x8.com/solutions/legal)**



# About 8x8

8x8, Inc. (NYSE: EGHT) is transforming the future of business communications as a leading Software-as-a-Service provider of 8x8 XCaaS™ (eXperience Communications as a Service™), an integrated contact centre, voice communications, video, chat, and API solution built on one global cloud communications platform. 8x8 uniquely eliminates the silos between Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS) and Contact Centre as a Service (CCaaS) to power the communications requirements of all employees globally as they work together to deliver differentiated customer experiences. For additional information, visit [www.8x8.com](http://www.8x8.com), or follow 8x8 on LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook.

The logo for 8x8, consisting of the text "8x8" in white on a red square background.

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