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# LPM

LEGAL PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

EXPERT  
COLUMNISTS  
AND ADVICE  
FROM PRACTICE  
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LPM ASKS

*Emma Whiting at  
Torque Law on the firm's  
neurodiversity campaign*

LPM EVENTS

*Retail-like branding lessons  
from 2019 speaker  
Bernard Savage*



## Seeds of change

*How can SME law firms nurture the environment, finance  
and support to encourage growth?*

BUSINESS INFORMATION FOR EVERYONE IN PRACTICE MANAGEMENT



*When you can see it all neatly pieced together, you can see some really interesting patterns appearing*



## Aggregation power

SARAH TRUDE, THE DATA OPTIMISER

We have recently secured a major deal to license, develop and support a product that is taking the accountancy sector by storm – it's called Practice Portal. Price Bailey developed this groundbreaking platform as a direct result of getting a £500k quote from a major industry-renowned supplier and, in my opinion, quite rightly felt that there had to be a better way to harness the power of CRM firm wide without such a huge ongoing financial footprint.

So how does what Price Bailey did change the narrative? Well, I'd like you to think about aggregation as opposed to integration. Once we let go, albeit only momentarily, of the hunger to attain an integrated ecosystem, we can start to see that aggregation brings huge service delivery and client relationship benefits.

Let me elaborate. You almost certainly already have systems in place that provide information on your clients' WIP, billing and lockup, which teams sell to them currently, how engaged they are with marketing, recent documents, open opportunities, appointments, their Companies House status, outstanding tasks and so on.

So all of that critical information is stored in a variety of places: CRM if you have already deployed it, (Excel spreadsheets if not); your practice management system, Outlook, document management, Companies House, MS Planner, a tool such as Act-On, Mailchimp or Salesfusion ... the list goes on. Now that data, in all of those different platforms, is great, but it becomes invaluable when you get to put it all together like a fabulous client jigsaw puzzle. When you can see it all effortlessly laid out, you will notice some really interesting patterns appearing.

Let's imagine you have a key commercial client who you've been happily working with for the last two years – you're busy, he's busy and

naturally you don't speak quite as much as you did in the beginning; let's call this client Bob.

So, Bob's debtor days have slipped recently, and he hasn't been signing off opportunities where you would normally expect to see work closing regularly. His company accounts are late at Companies House and he's stopped engaging with your marketing activity and cancelled your last two meetings. You're a good relationship builder and so you'll have noticed the cancellations, and possibly the open opportunities if you're a coveted rainmaker, but by my reckoning that's at least five – yes five – systems you'd need to check to build that whole picture as described above.

If your firm is on top of its game, maybe three of those areas are producing reports for you, but you still have to apply the logic and business rationale to pull everything together to see the trends.

And this is where we need to put our grownup pants on and honestly ask ourselves, do we actually really do that consistently, and do we take action on it? Because Bob is either going through a tough time, and could potentially benefit from your advice, or he is disengaging from your services.

You see, integration would mean that the systems above would all share data, improve data quality and of course bring a host of other benefits – there is no disputing that.

But what it wouldn't tell you, from a single source of truth, is that you need to call Bob and offer to reschedule those appointments he's cancelled (in the pub preferably as an incentive) and get to the bottom of what's going on in his world.

Integration won't do that, but aggregation will, and the good news is that aggregation is a simpler beast to tame – you just need a portal to your practice.

Funnily enough, I know someone who can help you with that. Office or pub will do! **LPM**



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