advanced

2022 Legal Business Trends Report

Recovery and Growth:
The role of technology in helping firms achieve their post-pandemic goals

Author: Doug Hargrove

Software Powered Possibility

Introduction

This paper summarises research conducted in 2021 on legal business trends, particularly in relation to technology.

We wanted to get a better understanding of business priorities, how companies use and value technology, and which issues are shaping how organisations plan to move forward. For answers, Advanced commissioned research among 1,078 senior decision makers within UK businesses that have more than 100 employees.

Of this total, 77 of our respondents worked in legal firms and were personally involved with the day-to-day charting of the organisation's future. This paper details the responses from the legal sector, which were given between the 3rd and 17th September 2021, alongside some wider contextual commentary.

The areas of focus are:

1. **Business growth and technology**
2. **Security and compliance**
3. **Employee wellbeing, development, and retention**
4. **Environmental sustainability**

Quotes and data extracted from the Advanced – Strategy Survey 2021, by Research Without Barriers (RWB)

Business growth and technology

Across all the firms surveyed, our research revealed that business growth and development is the top area of focus for the next 12 months.

This is the priority cited by just under two thirds (65%) of our respondents, and just over half (51%) felt that increasing profit was a priority for the leadership of their firm.

This desire is likely driven by the fact that, in the wake of Brexit and COVID-19, turnover and gross value added (GVA) in the legal sector as a whole (solicitors, barristers and other legal sector providers) was down by around 10% in 2020. The Law Society does not expect a recovery to previous levels until the end of 2022. This is what our respondents are now focused on achieving in the short term.

In the longer term, there are bigger gains to be made. The Law Society forecasts that by 2028 turnover in the sector will exceed pre-pandemic levels by 14%. It's interesting to note that despite this sustained increase in turnover, in the same timeframe, headcount is only expected to grow by 3%.

It demonstrates the degree to which there's an expectation that productivity growth (mainly enabled by technology) will continue as it did in the decade following the financial shocks of 2008. Between 2009 and 2018, the average number of people employed in the sector per enterprise fell, even as turnover and GVA increased.

Takeaway:

To what extent do firms need to change their business model to survive the headwinds of competition and achieve the growth they want? One option is to convert from a traditional partnership to an alternative business structure (ABS) that makes it easier to access new investment and attract fresh talent. Change is difficult for firms, especially getting a large number of partners to agree to it. But winners know how to evolve. The firms that can accept new perspectives and thinking will be best placed for success.

Business growth and technology

In all this, what's the link between business growth and technology? We found that less than a third (30%) of our respondents see technology as a top priority for their firm. This is possibly because tech isn't really an objective, but rather a means to an end. And most of the time, the end goal of technology will be to support business growth. In recognition of this, our firms have said that among the important issues remote working highlighted for their firm in the past year, nearly half (44%) identified the need to improve the software they use, while only a quarter wanted fewer business apps.

The technologies in use

As to which technologies are valued, Oxford University surveyed 900 firms regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority and concluded that, largely because of COVID-19, there's been a step-change in the adoption of legal technology in the sector.

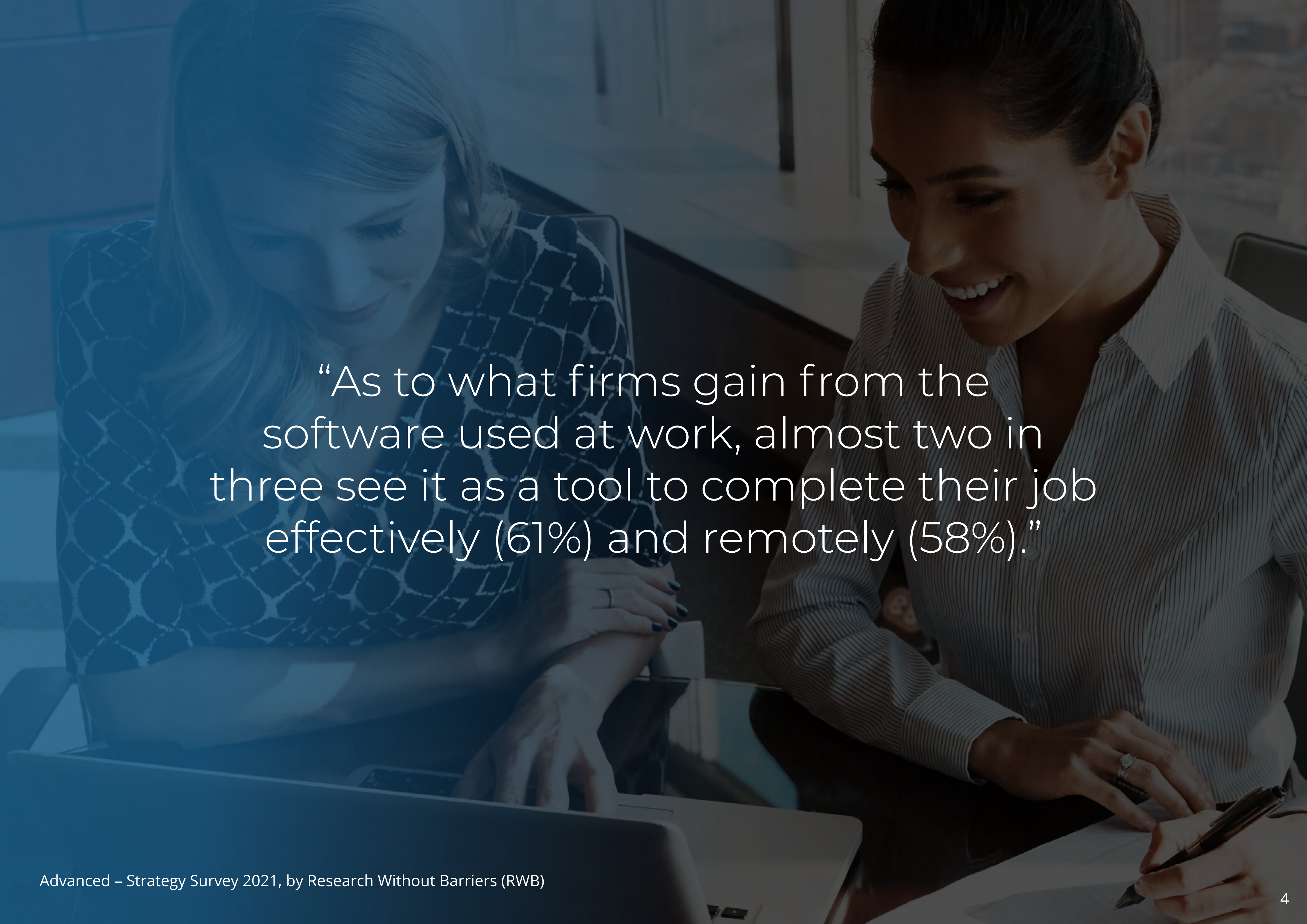
More than half (51%) of their respondents increased the use of technology to manage or process work, 48% to interact with clients, and 26% to attract new clients. They found the five most prevalent types of technology in use were for videoconferencing with clients (87%), storing data in the cloud (66%), practice management software (62%), legal research software (50%), and e-verification/e-signature software (37%).

Business software

When we asked which technologies our firms relied on in 2021, and which were supporting business growth, 97% cited at least one type of business software that was helping them deliver. Of this total, fewer than the Oxford study said they relied on collaboration tools like Zoom and Microsoft Teams in daily working life (58%), but this was still the most used technology.

Meanwhile, 45% said they relied on real time reporting, 44% on business intelligence technology, followed by 36% on predictive analytics, and only marginally fewer (35%) on artificial intelligence (AI) e.g Siri, Alexa, or other smart assistants.

44% identified the need to improve the software they use



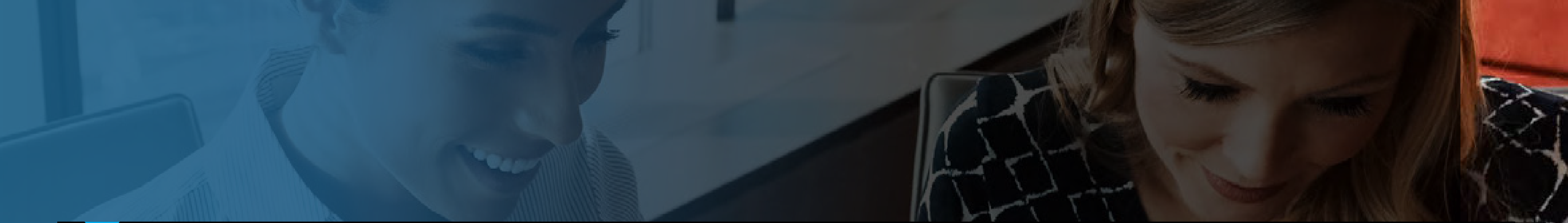
"As to what firms gain from the software used at work, almost two in three see it as a tool to complete their job effectively (61%) and remotely (58%)."

Advanced – Strategy Survey 2021, by Research Without Barriers (RWB)

Almost a third of respondent firms use single sign-on systems (32%) and automation tools (31%) daily. Just under a quarter use carbon footprint tools (23%), with the same proportion using virtual assistants, including chatbots and predictive modelling. As stated, a negligible 3% use none of the above.

As to what these firms gain from the software they use at work, almost two in three see it as a tool that enables them to complete their job both effectively (61%) and remotely (58%). Matching this at 58% was collaboration. There is a dip when it comes to “the information I need to make the right decisions” as the key deliverable (45%). And over a third (38%) of respondents felt that a real-time view of the business was what the software gave them. Just under a quarter (23%) cited one unified system that minimises distractions as the key deliverable.

We asked if the speed of implementation of new technologies over the last 12 months had increased, decreased, or stayed the same. For the majority (68%) it increased, with 94% of this group saying this was due to more user-friendly technology. For 16%, the speed of implementation decreased. Meanwhile, only 3% didn’t roll out any new technology at all.



Takeaway:

What matters most when firms adopt new technology?

Our research identified that the ability to meet present needs is what's perceived as the most important factor when adopting new technology. To that end, the ability to adapt to remote/hybrid working (48%) – which is key both to client service delivery and staff well-being and the need to measure performance (45%) were the two most important factors for our respondents.

In 2020, the capacity to adapt to remote working was already well-established. But in 2021 the interest in measuring performance has more than doubled from the 22% recorded 12 months earlier. We think this is related to a more acute focus on cost in the current climate, and the attendant increase in pressure it puts on getting a rapid ROI.

The next most important factor in the adoption of new technology was said to be cost and the ability to measure ROI (45%), followed closely by embedded security (44%), commitment from leadership (40%), and speed of implementation (39%). While the ability to integrate with legacy systems (35%) was seen as only slightly less important. This was only a little more important than change management, which was important to just under a third of adopters (29%). Efficient change management was of course a vital differentiator in the transition to home working. Trust in suppliers mattered least of all, but still does to nearly a third (30%) of respondents..

There is also evidence that the impact of a technology depends on how established it is. When asked if a chatbot/virtual assistant would provide information faster that their boss, 53% of our respondents said yes, while 38% said no. This does seem to indicate a growing acceptance of AI.

In 2021, what factors inhibited the adoption of new technology?

Firms can undoubtedly benefit from using technology that introduces new capabilities (or improves existing ones). The Oxford study notes that legal technology is adopted to improve quality, efficiency, and flexibility. And that the top five purposes of legal technology are: to improve service quality (72% of total respondents), improve efficiency of workflows (71%), allow staff to work more flexibly (44%), reduce the overall cost of service delivery (33%), and increase security/compliance (22%). Yet several factors still inhibit adoption.

Our finding was that the biggest inhibitor was concern around cost or failure to deliver ROI - cited by a significant 52%, followed by making the wrong technology choices (42%), with the latter increasing from the 29% recorded in the previous year. These figures indicate the pressure that firms are feeling around cost, perhaps they need vendors to better explain how technology doesn't have to be expensive or disruptive.

Staff productivity

There was also significant concern around the possibility that new technology wouldn't integrate with legacy systems (44%), which might be an education or vendor support issue.

Our respondents were also thinking about their staff. Almost half of respondents (45%) said that disruption to staff productivity was a concern, followed by more than a third (40%) that felt a lack of skills, training, or enthusiasm among the workforce was suppressing their firm's appetite for new technology. A lack of management buy-in was cited by 29%.

Of concern to software vendors, a poor or clunky interface was a worry for more than a fifth (22%) of respondents. Almost the same proportion registered concerns about the threat of cyber-attacks (19%) as a reason for not modernising systems with new technology – even though modern technology is much more resistant to cybercrime.

And despite the disinclination to invest in new technology for the above reasons, almost two thirds of respondents (60%) also admitted that their organisation's existing technology was providing only limited support to remote working, an aspect which has become hugely important to service delivery.

We also asked about the overall organisational appetite for new technology. Our respondents judged it to be reasonably strong, with 53% and 49% respectively reporting that their people are keen to adopt new technology and are open to learning about the benefits.

Conversely, 39% are concerned about change, and 30% felt that staff feel overwhelmed with existing technology or "want to work their own way" rather than adopting new technology. Technology vendors must, however, be concerned that almost a third (30%) are sceptical about the benefits of adopting new technology.

Takeaway:

The trouble with innovation

Despite, or maybe due to the turbulence of the last two years, law firms on the whole are relatively reluctant to innovate with new technology. The SRA/Oxford research concluded that only 37% are currently looking to adopt new legal tech. Yet in the general business population, 75% of CIOs are “driving digital strategy development to take advantage of business opportunities and ward off competitive threats”. So why are those in law so hesitant around technology and innovation?

One reason might be that it is difficult for firms to find the money. Partnerships don’t have access to external capital and partners perhaps don’t want to sacrifice income here and now for a potentially more successful future. Lawyers are also trained to be sceptical, and to always have their eye on the ball. These traits don’t pair well with the idea of experimentation or innovation, which is perhaps further hindered by the number of partners it takes to get a firm to agree to a consolidated action. There’s pressure internally to maintain the number of billed hours. Utilisation can’t be sacrificed, which makes it hard to invest time in anything that’s not billable. Also, successful innovators accept the possibility that sometimes they’ll fail, which doesn’t sit well with lawyers.

But if today’s firms want to find a competitive edge, innovation – technology based and otherwise – will help them. One route could be to buy some thinking time, by moving away from the billable hour and venturing into fixed price models. Firms could also look to incentivise idea-bringers and widen the ways in which they measure success. Another investment could be to increase the diversity among decision-makers, by introducing non-lawyers who don’t share typical lawyer personality traits and can bring a new perspective, such as data scientists or legal technology experts.

Know too that the biggest barrier around embracing innovation in law firms might simply be complacency. But if the last two years have taught us anything, it’s that not being ready for change can be the biggest issue a firm faces.

Security and compliance

Cyber security is the main business priority for over a third of our respondents (36%).

Law firms have access to a wealth of valuable information, which is why they've become a prime target for cybercriminals

Even before the pandemic, professional services firms (mainly accountants and law firms) were the top choice for ransomware attacks. In the first quarter of 2019, professional services firms sustained 22% of all attacks.

The assets held by firms and prized by cybercriminals include trade secrets, intellectual property, and sensitive personal details. Firms have regulatory and professional obligations to safeguard these assets.

In addition, a security breach or being the victim of cybercrime could cause huge reputational and financial damage to a firm, severely prohibiting prospects of growth.

The threat appears to be well understood by our respondents. As a result, more than four out of every five firms (82%) feel that they are prepared for a potential cyberattack. That has grown from 60% in the previous year indicating that law firms are getting more savvy around cybersecurity.

Takeaway:

The penalties of cyberattack:

- Cost of: business disruption
  - replacing hardware
  - cybersecurity consulting fees
  - client churn
  - regulatory fines
  - professional sanctions
- Damage to firm's reputation
- Fines and malpractice suits from clients
- Cost of paying a ransom, maybe more than once

"**96**% of firms are now engaging in hybrid working. Just under two thirds (60%) feel that they are at a greater risk of cyberattacks because of this."

Advanced – Strategy Survey 2021, by Research Without Barriers (RWB)

Remote working

As to the difference remote working makes, among the vast majority (96%) of firms engaging in hybrid working, just under two thirds (60%) feel that they are now at a greater risk of cyberattack. One in five think they're not at greater risk.

The reality is that the pandemic has greatly increased the use of internet-connected devices and BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) - both necessary for remote working. This has increased the risks significantly and resulted in a growing number of cyberattacks. The UK Government noted that "the risk level is potentially higher than ever under COVID-19, and that businesses are finding it harder to administer cyber security measures during the pandemic".

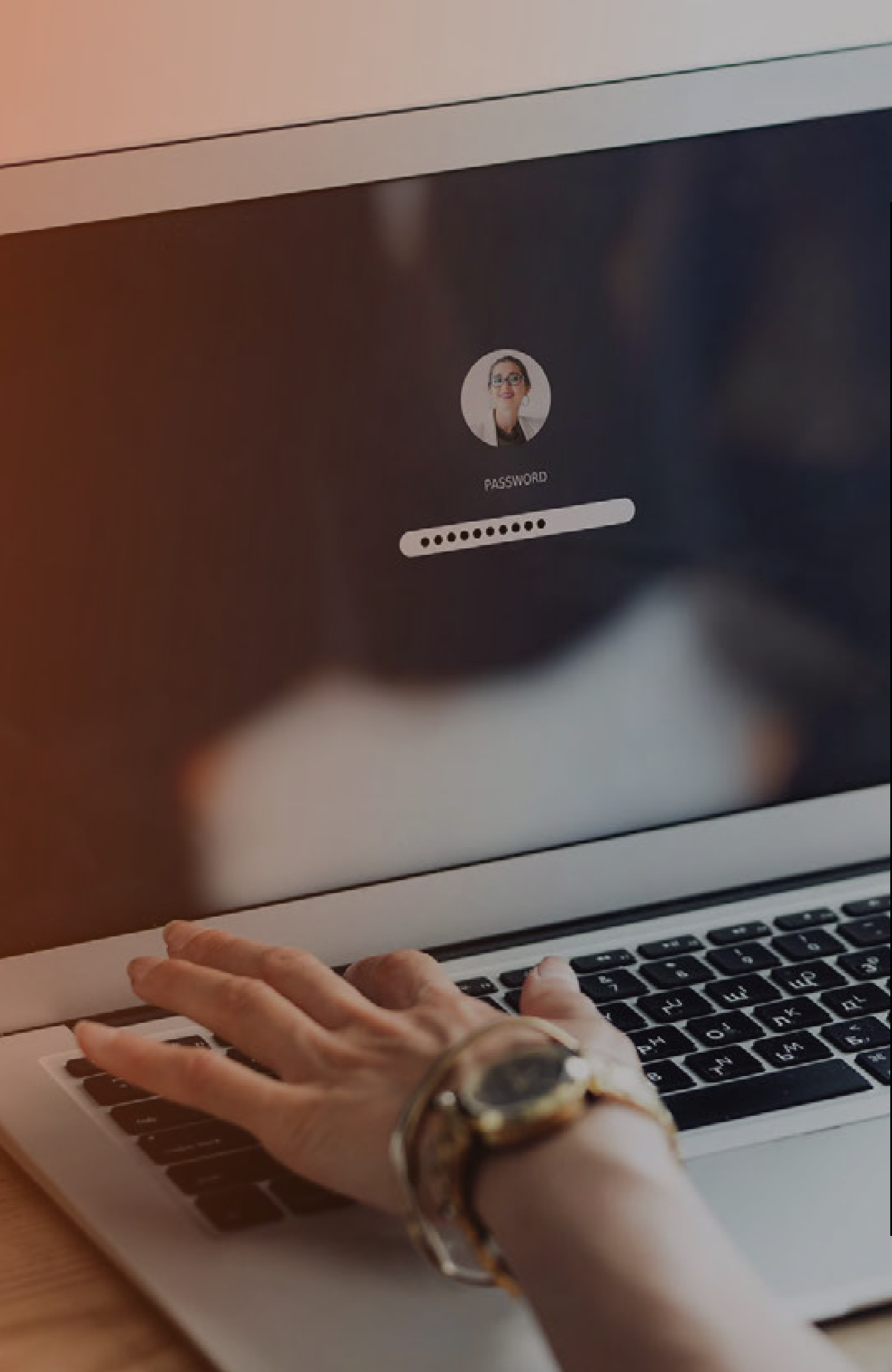
It's also the case that the vast majority of cyberattacks target personnel. Studies have established that human error is responsible for over 90% of security breaches. Potential mistakes made when browsing the web, communicating via email, poor password security, inadequate document management/disposal, and basic security in traditional office space are all active risks.

Training and education

It's therefore vital to ensure effective awareness of security risks within the firm, with an ongoing training and education programme helping individuals understand the role they play in helping combat security threats.

Firms need to engage in cyber-risk awareness training. Happily, more than three quarters (77%) of our respondents felt their firm was providing enough support and training to ensure that staff could work from home securely. However, it still leaves 15% who think their staff don't get enough training, and 8% who don't know – and if they don't know, maybe that means the level of support is inadequate.

90% of security breaches is due to human error



Takeaway:

Conveyancing targeted

If law firms weren't already clear about the cost of falling prey to a cyberattack, the Simplify Group has provided a stark illustration of the dangers. In November 2021, the group was hit by a security incident that took four of the group's conveyancing firms offline. Despite "robust business security plans", a growing backlog of deeply unhappy clients took to social media to share their displeasure. Simplify were forced to recommend that clients who hadn't exchanged should go elsewhere. To date the cost has been loss of revenue and a big reputational hit. And there's still potential for a regulatory fine.

Meanwhile, the Law Society, in collaboration with the National Crime Agency and the National Economic Crime Centre, issued joint guidance to the public to alert house buyers that criminals are actively targeting property purchases. This involves sophisticated fraud that almost always involves criminals intercepting emails from lawyer to client pretending to be the lawyer. Firms need to be vigilant about protecting their clients from these potentially devastating scams.

Employee wellbeing, development, and retention

The pandemic seems to have changed the paradigm in terms of what staff want and expect from their firm – and firms know it.

Consequently, when asked what the leadership of the firm is prioritising, a healthy 45% of our respondents said "reaching inclusion and diversity at all levels".

Only slightly fewer (40%) felt their leadership was prioritising "hitting environmental targets", with a few less (38%) seeing investing in the right talent as a leadership priority.

These findings align with responses given in the wider context of business priorities, where staff issues dominated the mid-table. Remote, hybrid, and flexible working (45%), employee retention and development (43%), staff wellbeing (39%), diversity and inclusion (D&I) (35%), and recruitment/being an employer of choice (32%) took the second to fourth and sixth/seventh places in our respondents' business priorities for the next year.

That said, the area which saw the most substantial shift between 2020 and 2021 was retention and development, jumping from 29% to 43%. Recruitment also increased in priority by 3% compared to the last year. This highlights a growing awareness that retaining talent is likely to be a bigger issue going forward.

Takeaway:

Lawyers work long hours in a demanding job, leaving them at high risk of burnout. Many are becoming dissatisfied with the status quo, leaving law firms with issues around performance and the retention of key talent.

Work satisfaction and productivity can be linked to several elements such as improved communication, flexible working, and higher productivity from having the tools to do more in less time.

"**69%** of legal professionals experienced mental ill-health in the 12 months preceding the survey, but only half of them had talked about it at work; 1 in 5 had been bullied, harassed or discriminated against."

Advanced – Strategy Survey 2021, by Research Without Barriers (RWB)

Time for change?

This chimes with a mounting body of research on the personal toll of working as a lawyer, and a growing groundswell of opinion that it's an issue the profession should address. In 2021 legal charity Law Care conducted the UK's first ever research of its kind into mental health and wellbeing in the legal profession, and 1,700 UK and Ireland legal professionals took part.

With lawyers working more than 14 hours a day to meet their billing targets, findings concluded that 69% of legal professionals experienced mental ill-health in the 12 months preceding the survey, but only half of them had talked about it at work. One in five had been bullied, harassed, or discriminated against.

Harming wellbeing

Along with the International Bar Association's global study and the Bar Council's 2021 Barristers' Working Lives report , there's growing evidence that the accepted working practices and culture in law undermine mental wellbeing. Legal professionals are at a high risk of burnout, and stigma still prevents many from speaking out at work.

A separate Bellwether study from LexisNexus noted the risk that low job satisfaction represents to small firms. Sixty-five per cent of the SME firms polled said they felt that the difficulty of attracting and retaining good lawyers was a significant threat to their firm. Perhaps even more notable is that 38% of lawyers polled said they wouldn't go into law if they were starting over.

As a result of the pandemic, there's greater flexibility in the working lives of lawyers, and some extra time to reflect on what they want from work and life. Working from home has been a mixed bag. Some people adore it and are fighting to retain it. For some others it's been more problematic, bringing isolation, blurring the boundaries between work and life, and increasing workloads and stress.

38% of lawyers polled said they wouldn't go into law if they were starting over

Generational shift

We can also see signs of a generational shift. Younger and early career lawyers are more open about mental health, have better mental health literacy, and are more willing to express concerns around wellbeing issues. They also know that their working lives are likely to be longer. Perhaps for this reason they want to pace themselves. Thomson Reuters surveyed 1,170 lawyers globally and found that lawyers under 40 ideally want to work 2,000 hours annually, while lawyers between 40-60 want to work 2,200 hours. It could mean that longer hours are likely to lead young lawyers to revaluate their working lives and who they work for.

Clearly technology has a role to play in enhancing wellbeing. It can enable greater flexibility and efficiency, which ought to free up time. Automation can lift the burden of tedious, repetitive tasks: for instance, software that automatically files emails into a document management system. Technology can also keep people connected, by enabling regular catchups that are an important factor for wellbeing when people are working remotely. Forward-focused firms can also leverage their adoption of modern technology as a point of difference when attracting and retaining talent.

The role of diversity and inclusion

Lastly, under the ESG heading, our firms recognised that D&I policies and initiatives have value when it comes to recruiting talent and building a more engaged workforce. We found that 75% of respondents felt their firm was doing enough to create a more diverse workforce. This is up 19 points from 2020.

That said, when asked if they actually published a diversity pay gap report, the number was smaller (61%). Though this is still higher than in the wider business survey, where it was 57%. When we asked whether firms had or are implementing a process to reduce unconscious bias in hiring, broadly the same proportion (65%) said yes, just over one in five (23%) said no, and 12% didn't know.

75% of respondents saw their firm as doing enough to create a more diverse workforce

Takeaway:

What are the most important attributes for today's firm leaders?

We wanted to know which attributes are seen to be important for firm leadership in 2021, and whether these are changing to reflect a heightened concern around employee wellbeing, development, and retention.

The results suggest they are. The proportion of respondents who said that encouraging positive environmental practices should be the most important attribute for firm leadership shot up, from 22% in 2020, to 58% in 2021, well over double. Meanwhile 40% of respondents thought that the leadership within their organisation was prioritising environmental targets.

More pragmatically, a healthy 51% of respondents said that leaders need to ensure staff have the tools to be productive.

Unsurprisingly, given the turmoil of the last 24 months, the notion of strong leadership during major change scored highly (47%), as did reacting with pace and making bold decisions (39%).

But when we asked about leadership priorities, only 39% mentioned that handling future challenges/crises was a priority. This middling response may be because, post-pandemic, firms feel they've become resilient to change, because now they have invested in stronger resilience provisions such as the capacity to work remotely.
A relatively low 25% think that a clear strategy during economic uncertainty is what matters most, down from 42% in 2020.

Likewise, and reflecting the culture, 47% think it's important that leaders support diversity and inclusion in the workplace, 45% think that leaders proactively support staff wellbeing, and 43% think leaders should prioritise cyber security and compliance. Almost the same proportion (42%) think they should implement corporate social responsibility initiatives.

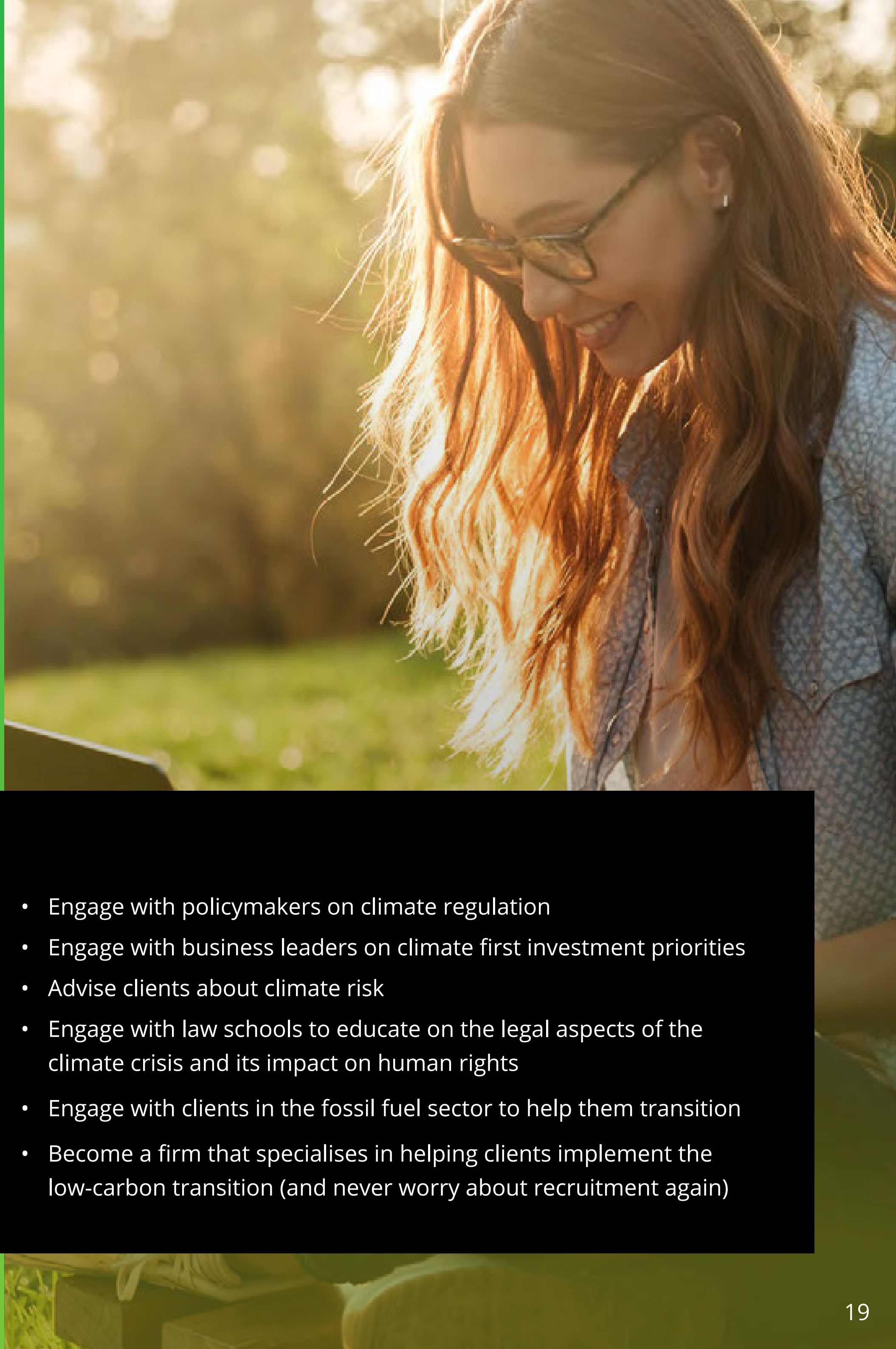
Finally, going back to wellbeing, over a third (34%) think the hallmark of effective leadership is to be communicative when staff are working remotely.

Environmental sustainability

The legal profession has recognised the growing societal pressure to act on its environmental impact

Law firms are now under pressure to show they consider the environmental impact of their activities. Although not quite a high priority topic for them yet, it is on their radar, and most firms are very interested in the ways going green can help them reduce costs.

Already, 62% of the firms we surveyed are using software to measure their environmental, social and governance (ESG) performance, and two thirds of respondents understand their organisation's carbon footprint.



Takeaway:

What law firms can do to address the climate crisis:

- Use less paper
- Use less energy by downsizing office space
- Use less energy by changing to low energy tech and light bulbs
- Switch to green energy suppliers
- Travel less
- Build climate clauses and KPIs into suppliers' contracts
- Engage with policymakers on climate regulation
- Engage with business leaders on climate first investment priorities
- Advise clients about climate risk
- Engage with law schools to educate on the legal aspects of the climate crisis and its impact on human rights
- Engage with clients in the fossil fuel sector to help them transition
- Become a firm that specialises in helping clients implement the low-carbon transition (and never worry about recruitment again)

General awakening

This echoes a general awakening of real concern in the legal sector about the climate crisis. This is evidenced by the fact that a group of law firms including Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, Mishcon de Reya, Simmons & Simmons, and HFW have pledged to reduce their environmental impact by limiting travel and paper use. Part of the pledge states that if lawyers must go to court, they should get there by cycling, walking, or using public transport.

On a global scale, climate alliances have emerged. These include the Australian Legal Sector Alliance, Lawyers for Climate Justice in Canada, Lawyers for Climate Action in New Zealand, and the Chancery Lane Project in the UK.

In June 2021, the in-house counsel initiative Lawyers for Net Zero was launched in the UK. All these groups aim to drive climate action in individual workplaces and the wider profession. There's also a role for lawyers to play in helping their clients understand the transition and how it will impact their business.

Drivers of change

Of course, the move to lower carbon activity isn't entirely altruistic. Another driver of change is that clients are feeling pressure themselves to act and will increasingly seek to work with firms that demonstrate the same values. Working with those who can evidence they are acting on emissions reduction, because this can help clients to meet their own carbon commitments.

Secondly, authentic green credentials are a great recruitment tool when it comes to attracting top young talent too. But firms will have to act with integrity. Environmental and social justice claims should be evidenced, for instance, with independently audited GHG reports on the firm's website.

In response there's a growing interest in talking about 'going green' among big firms. Allen & Overy have announced a relocation that will cut their London office footprint in half. The firm have said the move will contribute to an estimated 80% reduction in their annual London office carbon emissions. Baker McKenzie have appointed a chief sustainability officer and pledged to reduce emissions from energy consumption by 92% by 2030. The firm will curb business travel emissions by using video conferencing.

"**43%** have worked with suppliers to reduce usage of fossil fuels and almost as many (42%) have increased the efficiency of their office lighting"

Advanced – Strategy Survey 2021, by Research Without Barriers (RWB)

Reducing the carbon footprint

Meanwhile there's evidence that our surveyed firms are responding to the need for more climate action. The top measure they've taken to reduce their carbon footprint is educating staff and customers (57%), followed by switching to a green energy provider (48%).

An even more profound change has been that 44% of firms we spoke to had downsized their offices. Although, the prime reason for doing so was due to hybrid working, as they now need less space.

Forty-three per cent have worked with suppliers to reduce usage of fossil fuels, and almost as many (42%) have increased the efficiency of their office lighting.

Travel requirements are now reviewed for carbon by 40% of respondents, but the pandemic has largely been the factor that curtailed travel.
Still, more than a quarter of firms (26%) have proactively purchased carbon offsets to make an impact on reducing their carbon footprint.

This positive picture is somewhat tempered, however, by the admission from 39% of our respondents that they do think their firm has been guilty of trying to appear more environmentally sustainable than they actually are (greenwashing). Also, almost a third (29%) of firms don't use software to measure their company's ESG performance, and more than a quarter (27%) don't understand the organisation's carbon footprint.

Conclusion

Law firms are now emerging into a post-pandemic landscape that's somewhat different from the world before. Some things, of course, remain the same: firms are still operating in a highly competitive environment in which they still need to control costs, demonstrate value to clients, get paid on time, and hopefully continue to acquire new clients. But there are new pressures, including the need to manage frequent changes in government guidance and employment laws, cope with changes in court practice, and for some, maintain cash flow when court cases are stalled.

The biggest change, however, is that firms have had to transition abruptly to an environment in which hybrid working is the new normal. This has meant a step-change in the pace of technology adoption. Ninety-six per cent of the firms we surveyed had adopted remote or hybrid working as a direct result of the pandemic. The mass movement to working from home has also increased the attack surface for cyber-criminals and put law firms under a greater than ever threat of cyberattack.

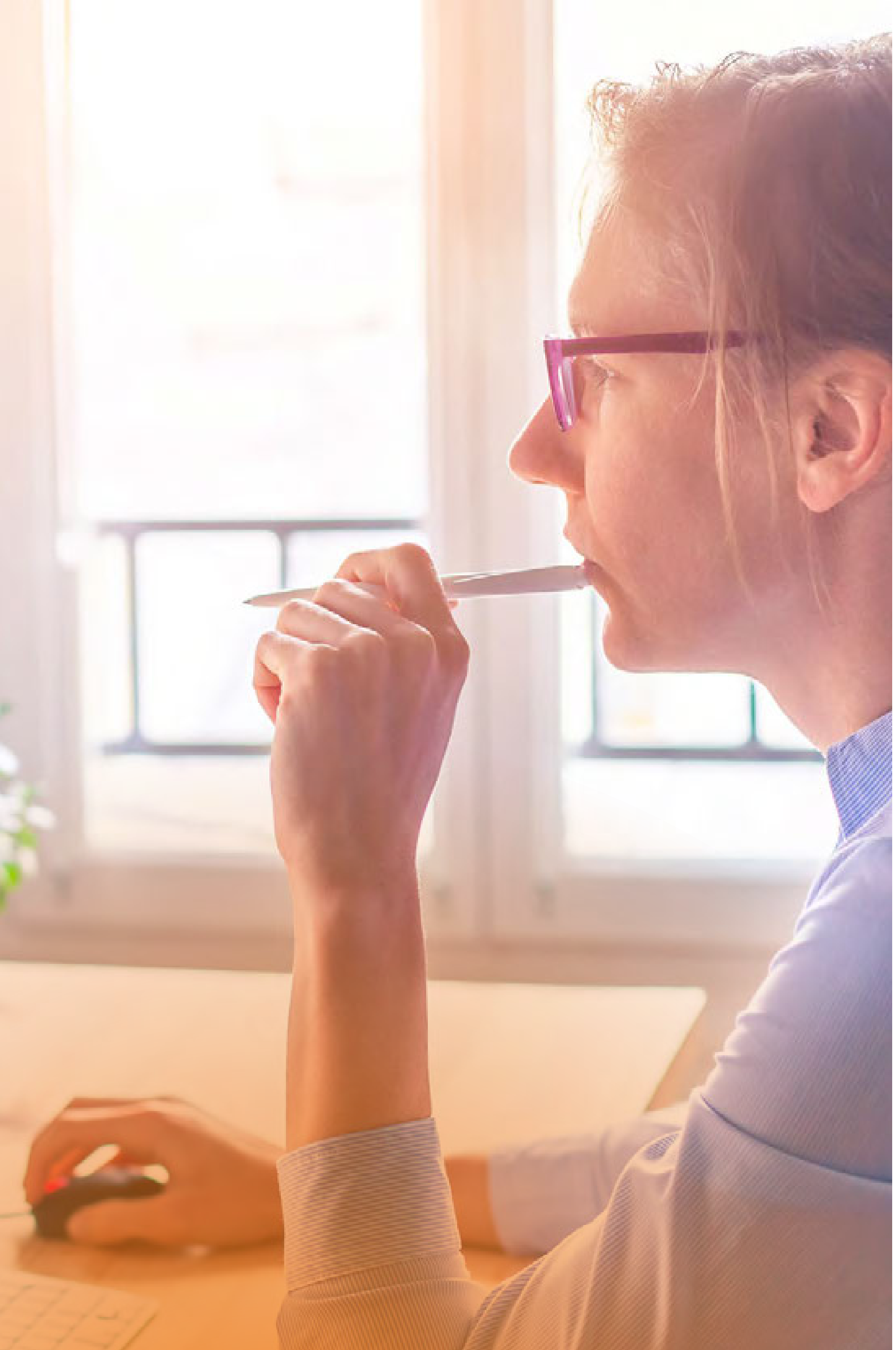
Simultaneously, the way work has been disrupted has caused a good deal of soul-searching around, among other things, the work/life balance. One consequence in the wider economy has been "the Great Resignation". In law it's meant that the competition for talent is getting fiercer, to the extent that employee retention and development have become much higher priorities than before for our respondents.

Relatedly, firms are responding to the wider society by addressing previously underrepresented facets of organisational culture. There's a growing awareness that the signifiers of a progressive firm (of the kind that can attract and retain new clients and young talent) are greater transparency, and a sincere and demonstrable commitment to the wellbeing of people and the planet. As a result, for our respondents, interest in the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) agenda, including Diversity and Inclusion (D&I), has never been so high. In 2020, only around one in ten put it as a priority. In 2021, that figure had nearly tripled, and well over a third said that D&I is now a priority issue.

It remains the case that law has been slower to adopt new technology than other areas of professional services. This is perhaps because the billable hour leaves little room to experiment. Or because the partner model tends to stymy longer term investments. It may be because many lawyers are temperamentally conservative by nature. Among our respondents over half (52%) still had some doubt that technology would deliver an ROI, and 45% would hold back from modernising because of the perceived disruption it would bring to staff productivity.

Whatever the root cause, if firms are to achieve the growth they seek, they'll need to invest in innovations that can continue to increase efficiency and reduce costs, to secure data, and to improve the client and lawyer experience. These are all areas where technology can create value for firms.

In that light, the encouraging news is that the individuals we polled do feel that people within their organisation are broadly open to learning about the benefits, and are keen to adopt new technology that can secure business growth, strengthen data security, help enhance employee well-being, and environmental sustainability too. They see a future where technology can undoubtedly help firms achieve their post-pandemic goals and are willing to embrace it.



Methodology

The 2022 Legal Trends Report research was carried out by Research Without Barriers (RWB). All surveys were conducted between 3rd September 2021 and 17th September 2021. The sample comprised 1,078 UK senior decision makers in organisations consisting of 100 or more employees.

All research conducted adheres to the UK Market Research Society (MRS) code of conduct (2019). RWB is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office and complies with the DPA (2018).

About Advanced

We are a dynamic British software and service business with over 19,000 customers globally. We provide mission-critical software that helps our customers to accelerate and transform digitally.

Our Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), Human Capital Management (HCM) and vertical market software solutions make a difference to millions of lives every day, by making the complex simple, inspiring innovation, and delivering exceptional customer service.

By using our solutions, organisations can adapt to the changing needs of their business, the markets they operate within, while providing their people with the right tools needed to excel. We work with organisations in all sectors, from healthcare to legal, and of all sizes, whether they want to move to the Cloud, invest in ERP, manage core business functions through one unified system or upgrade their legacy applications.

Work smarter, communicate more effectively, and deliver legal services with speed and security through our trusted solutions. Trusted by more than 5,000 law firms and barristers' chambers and with over 30 years of experience, our end-to-end legal-centric software provides you with the accuracy and flexibility to identify opportunities for growth and greater efficiency while also allowing your team to work in a secure environment.

Our many legal customers include Knights PLC, Ellisons Solicitors, Merovitz Potechin, Keystone law, and more.

advanced

We would love to hear from you

Hopefully this was a helpful insight into Advanced's legal services. If you'd like to find out more about what legal services we can provide to your firm with and ensure you are ready to meet the future, get in touch with us today.

Contact us

+44(0) 330 343 8000

www.oneadvanced.com

hello@oneadvanced.com