

Knowledge Management

More Than the Sum of Its Parts

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Doing More KM for Less with Microsoft SharePoint

ROB SACCONI **KMLAW**

The days of specialized knowledge management systems are over. It's no longer acceptable to add large budget line items for separate enterprise search, business intelligence, expertise tracking and other KM systems that support only a part of a KM strategy. The licensing costs of these systems, along with the cost and effort to deploy and then integrate these systems, undermine the ROI that KM should be delivering.

KM professionals should focus on delivering KM capabilities to their firms through a set of integrated and reusable tools and applications designed to be flexible and adaptable to the different needs of their firms' practice groups, partners and attorneys. In order to deliver these capabilities, KM leaders need a solid platform that provides the technology plumbing and tool set required to deliver such capabilities in a cohesive and supportable way.

Enter Microsoft SharePoint, a robust, yet affordable, platform for powering a wide variety of information and KM initiatives.

Firms today are using SharePoint to deliver a host of connected tools, applications and collaborative capabilities that incrementally build on each other. After working with more than 80 law firms globally, we've found there are almost limitless ways in which firms think about their information and knowledge assets and how they can be used together. We also found that most firms start from a common set of practical applications. These often include the following:

- **Internal Facebooks and Attorney Directories.** Beyond a simple phone list or photo book, these applications

can bring together biographical and professional backgrounds, client and matter history, work product and other searchable data that serve as a key source of a firm's collective experience and expertise.

- **Client and Matter Portals.** As a portal framework, SharePoint does an excellent job of organizing and delivering all the information a firm has about individual clients and matters. These applications also can provide value to marketing and business development efforts.
- **Enterprise Search.** SharePoint provides a powerful enterprise search engine, and with some additional investment, it can present a rich search experience across systems at a fraction of the cost of other specialized search systems.
- **Wikis, Blogs and More.** SharePoint includes built-in support for basic wikis, blogs, discussion threads, and other "social" applications. These are often used within other applications, such as integrating blog capabilities with the attorney directory or providing client or practice wikis within intranet sites.

THE BOTTOM LINE

With tight budgets and limited resources, many firms are being forced to cut their planned KM and technology projects. By leveraging SharePoint, it's possible to keep your KM initiatives moving forward by providing a foundation that can grow and change with your firm's needs. Firms can do more with less instead of putting KM efforts on hold. **ILTA**