

Digitalization of legal departments; now or never?



In your opinion, will the recent explosion in the need for telework impact the digitalization of legal work?

[Donatien] That remains to be verified! People have been talking about the jurist or lawyer 2.0 for 20 years but, in several European countries, the reality has not radically changed. However, the current crisis may act as an accelerator.

What do you mean?

[Donatien] That for those who are otherwise engaged in a reflection on the digitalization of their work will find here additional arguments to make firm decisions. Those who, on the other hand, have not understood that becoming efficient is no longer a "plus" but a basic requirement in the same way as legal expertise is, will hasten back to their former practices. What makes the real difference is the operational vision of the decision-maker. And having one in the legal sector is by no means self-evident.

Precisely, what are the arguments supporting the good management of legal operations?

[Donatien] They are of many orders. They are certainly economical: some of our partners have estimated that 60 to 90 minutes a day is lost in useless, redundant tasks or in searching for information "that we remember seeing somewhere". With a lawyer costing from 40€ (company lawyer mediator) to 200€ (senior lawyer) per hour, the loss per month is massive. Qualitative too: copy/paste or addressing errors, for example, can easily be avoided.

But perhaps the arguments that matter most are precisely those relating to the operational vision I mentioned.

A vision based on the famous Legal Tech?

[Gatien] Actually, no. In our opinion, it is based on the work processes themselves, of which digital is only the tool! It is less a digital innovation than a breakthrough in the operational paradigm.

What do you mean?

[Gatien] In a law firm or legal department, with a few exceptions, there are as many work procedures as there are lawyers. There is no explicit agreement on the steps involved in processing files, the tasks by steps, the people involved by task, the data to be processed and how to collaborate around all of those elements.

As a result, the Legal Tech element is an important part of a good business model but limited to 20%: it is only the tip of the iceberg.

What do you think the remaining 80% is made up of?

[Donatien] Essentially (1) to formalize processes that often do not exist, (2) to prepare and support those involved in the change, and (3) to integrate and adapt efforts to ensure the stability and agility of the new operational model in production.

Can you specify the arguments specifically related to the operational vision?

[Donatien] Absolutely! Today, in the current context, we relate to it on a daily basis: business continuity. If working at a distance is an exception, productivity can suffer. If, on the other hand, your business relies on digital systems aligned with the needs of lawyers, office presence becomes a social advantage but not a condition for productivity.

The speed of processing is also impacted: digital and centralized documents, effortless management of e-mails linked to a case and the possibility of substituting a lawyer who has become unavailable are among the basic conditions that every (corporate) lawyer should be obliged to respect.

Moreover, reporting on current cases now takes up a lot of time for limited satisfaction and decision support. As soon as you use a really appropriate software, such as ActionStep for example, you benefit from multiple reporting adapted to each audience: lawyers, management, CFOs, etc.

Beyond this aspect, a lot of time is wasted today in providing information or finding out the status of a file. This should never take more than 30 seconds to process.

The prospect is tempting. But is it easy to reach this level of efficiency?

[Gatien] Today very clearly, yes. A solution tailored to the customer's needs can be implemented

in just a few days (3 to 5 typically). We are talking here about a solution that places the work process at the heart of the legal operations improvement project and, by remaining simple and intuitive to use, allows the full benefits mentioned above to be reaped. Costs are very limited and adoption is easy.

Which basic solution are you referring to?

[Donatien] The computer system we propose is called ActionStep. It is a pioneer in terms of a digital solution for the management of legal files. GOlegal has been using it successfully for 3,5 years and the working process has been designed in-house based on this experience and by continuously integrating feedback from our clients and service providers. In April of this year, GOlegal also obtained professional certification for this tool, which has been used for more than 15 years by more than 10,000 users worldwide.

One solution for all?

[Gatien] Not necessarily, but by demystifying this type of project somewhat, simplicity appears to be the ultimate form of efficiency.

If certain organizations wish to adapt this solution to their own needs by requesting the implementation of tailor-made processes or specific reporting, GOlegal is of course able to meet these requests easily.

For more information on this topic or to extend the discussion, click [here](#).