

Legal Tech Can Differentiate Young Lawyers at Law Firm Interviews

By Dan Reed
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Law firm interview season is almost upon us. Traditionally, this is when hiring partners quiz law students on their awareness of the law and trends in the wider legal industry. But in today's rapidly changing legal climate, students can expect to confront a new topic: legal tech.

Now is the time for students to ensure they are primed to face difficult questions about how legal tech is **transforming the industry** and client delivery and prepared with questions about how the interviewing firm fits within this new ecosystem.

What do new lawyers need to know going into these interviews? To start, they should represent themselves as change agents who embrace legal tech. Firms will want to hear that these interviewees are prepared to play a crucial role in ensuring these technologies are embedded right at the heart of the profession—and their firm.

Firms should seize this opportunity to hire “digital lawyers,” but that is a more nuanced concept than it may seem. In the legal industry, “digital” means more than technology. For example, it's not about what specific technological tools you use to draw up a contract; it's knowing that the world is moving too quickly for old-style contracts to keep pace. Digital lawyers adapt to work in ways that evolve in step with technology and deliver work product that does not lose relevance soon after it is created.

Embracing legal tech means bringing lawyers' thinking into the present day and being eager to navigate the changes ahead.

Digital lawyers set themselves apart by combining legal knowledge with the technological savvy to predict what may happen to that dusty deliverable down the line. They will be the ones suggesting to their firm or business the best new ways to deliver legal services through technology. This could even mean changing the very shape of the law business itself.

What do these technological innovations look like? They go beyond the basic work product—they make work easier.

A key technology quandary for law firms is deciding where to make their next IT investment. Should they retreat to the safety of the well-established and familiar? Or should they venture outside their comfort zone? Reluctance to look beyond current platforms could force a firm to play catch-up. Of course, blind progress brings a whole raft of other problems, including wasted money and time.

New lawyers need to know how the best law businesses approach this issue. As legal tech becomes more widespread, the shrewdest law firms will examine different strata of legal services and reassess how to best resource each layer. That could mean deciding between humans and machines, or determining whether lawyers still need to be housed within the law firm or law department.

There are no easy answers in legal tech to turn to during an interview—or indeed for the wider legal industry. To stand the best chance of impressing interviewers, law students must demonstrate their knowledge of what it takes to become a digital lawyer, what the technological innovations mean for the industry, and how the best law businesses approach them.

Most important, interest in legal tech shouldn't end at the interview. Becoming a digital lawyer—ready to fully embrace where the legal industry heads next—will be a necessary skill for the length of this next generation's career.



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