

# HOUSTON BUSINESS JOURNAL

## STRATEGIES

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### DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

## WHY LAW FIRMS MUST ADOPT NEW APPROACHES TO PROBLEM SOLVING



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Guest contributor

Like all businesses, law firms must evolve

and adapt in an attempt to become more efficient, effective and successful. It takes much more than the adoption of new technologies or increasing headcount for a firm to meet the expectations of business executives faced with complex issues on a daily basis.

Covid-19 has forced all businesses to examine how they work and to evolve the policies and procedures that are in place. The obvious change for law firms is learning to be digitally adept to counsel clients effectively, to manage internal teams that are working remotely, and to continue advocacy work for clients and groups in which they are involved, such as nonprofits and academia.

Law firms and all businesses are wise to embrace digital platforms like webinars and virtual meetings that have the potential to increase collaboration. They must



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be comfortable in virtual settings for depositions and hearings and prepared for pandemic-related mandates like face masks in the courtroom.

Even during a pandemic, a business law firm must look to new ways of evolving, including structuring a practice, delivering solutions to clients, and attracting talent. Legal knowledge must be complemented by business acumen and strong people skills to forge relationships and make human connections, even as technology advances efficiency.

Here are five key tenets for evolving a forward-looking law firm in today's complex and competitive business environment.

► Attorneys now work in teams with other business counselors, not just with

firm colleagues or other lawyers. Business owners expect their legal advisors to work with other business professionals, such as accountants, for a holistic approach at developing a solution and advancing a course of action.

► Becoming business advisors and problem-solvers is just as essential as the ability to interpret legal issues. Lawyers must have an understanding and knowledge of business operations in order to advise executives effectively.

► Most people do not associate a creative trait with lawyers. However, the complexity of business requires lawyers to be more innovative and think differently, adopting fresh perspectives, and then acting strategically.

► Smart law firms are effective at communicating with clients as well as establishing an internal communication network to encourage dialogue and feedback.

► Professional services firms, corporations, and family-owned businesses all have something in common: planning for the next generation of leadership to take the business forward. To be successful, law firm leaders of tomorrow must have a combined skill set of legal prowess, business knowledge, and the ability to form personal connections.

Finally, it's helpful when an organization knows its values and consistently and clearly communicates them. Thriving in times of change can be challenging, but when your organization is backed by strong values, decision-making becomes a bit less murky, and the organization more resilient.

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