

How Brachers moved to operating remotely overnight



The challenge facing law firms following the Covid-19 pandemic is how to quickly adapt to operating remotely. Brachers, an award-winning law firm advising companies and individuals for 125 years, provides a leading example on making this change in 24 hours.

We speak with Tom Hall, Brachers' Chief Operating Officer, about the key ingredients which made this possible.

Having a forward-looking mindset

"One of the biggest surprises was just how easy it was to move 200+ people to working from home without impacting client experience or service. It just happened overnight" explained Tom.

There are broadly two types of firms: those who are forward-looking: actively looking at how to be more efficient and deliver a better client service; and those who don't want to change unless it is absolutely necessary to do so. There can be no doubt - it is now absolutely necessary. Fortunately for Brachers, they fall squarely within the first bucket of firms which meant they were able to adapt to changing circumstances quickly and seamlessly.

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– Tom Hall, Chief Operating Officer of Brachers

“Brachers has been using cloud-based technology for two years. Following the severe winter in 2018, and the impact it had on staff travel, we made the decision that it was key for business continuity that all staff were able to work remotely. We already use Office 365 and so when it came to the Covid-19 crisis, all people had to do was pack up their desks.”

The forward-looking mindset didn't just help with the transition for staff, it also meant clients had a seamless experience. “From a payments perspective, because we had already implemented Legl's online payment system it meant the experience for clients was seamless: the payments experience hadn't changed.”

Leveraging technology

For Brachers, part of having a forward-looking mindset is a willingness to invest in new technology. “Leveraging technology like Legl, has been key to Brachers' ability to operate remotely and maintain business continuity. Over the past few weeks we've seen a rise in the number of clients who have paid their invoice online using Legl. If we didn't have this option, we wouldn't have been able to take those payments.”

Brachers uses around four cloud-based software solutions, including their document management system, Legl's online payments tool, a VPN product and Microsoft Teams. And while Brachers had already implemented a number of these tools, the key to successfully transitioning to remote working was their approach to the tools they hadn't yet implemented. Brachers took quick and decisive action to speed up the implementation of technology tools which facilitated remote working. “At the end of all of this, we will only have one system physically on premises: everything else is cloud-based.”



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People

The final key ingredient to successfully moving to operating remotely is Brachers' people.

"I think our biggest success in this process has been how the whole firm, all 200+ people, have pulled together to make this work. Everyone has adapted to using new tools, been creative about approaching problems and brought a sense of humour to the situation with new team activities and virtual drinks!"

What Tom illustrates is that it's not just enough to have the vision and the technology, you need to have the people who are willing to adopt new tools and adapt quickly.

What's changed?

Because Brachers had already implemented technology tools, the changes haven't been huge, but there have been some.

"We ask more clients to pay money on account, but it's very helpful that people can do this online using Legl. This is one of the most useful features of Legl: the ability to accept payments into either office or client account. Marketing has also changed: we use social media and content marketing more than we would have before. Also, we've changed other things like how we serve, and accept service of, court documents."

"One of the most positive changes has been in communications: operating remotely has meant that teams are communicating more. Before, people might have occasionally bumped into each other at lunch but now we're creating the time, space and ability for people to have those conversations virtually."

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Looking forward

Now that Brachers is successfully operating remotely, what next?

“People want to be able to do things online, which means we as a law firm need to invest in technology to deliver this. Technology, like Legl’s, allows firms to operate remotely now and in the future.”

“I think that following this pandemic we will see that expectations have changed. Clients will expect their lawyers to interact with them more digitally, and more of our staff will want to work remotely. The key is to always be looking to the future: how can we continue to be creative and use technology to deliver a better service to our clients.”

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About Legl

Legl gives law firms the tools to grow and succeed in a digital-first world. From digital client onboarding to better payment options, Legl’s easy-to-use software helps law firms give their clients a great experience while modernising manual processes.

Top-100 UK law firms use Legl to engage with thousands of clients and process millions of pounds in payments. Legl has won the LexisNexis Award for Legal Supplier Innovation (2020), the Modern Law Award for Business Growth (2019) and was chosen by the leading law firm network, LawNet as a Preferred Supplier.

