

# THE LEGAL TECHNOLOGIST

---

CAREERS SUPPLEMENT

JULY 2019

---

## FEATURES

### CAREER STORY

## What's your story?

We have career stories from a wide variety of different legal tech or innovation roles.

### NEW FEATURE

## #AskHenry

Your legal tech career-related questions will now be answered by Henry Venmore-Rowland of Harrier Search.

---



# Our Staff.

**Editor**

Marc May

**Junior Editor**

Rebecca Baker

**Marketing Manager**

Eaindra Cho

**Contributors**

David Law

Julia Babiarz

Ondrej Materna

Ben Chiriboga

Joanne Chuang

Rachael Digby-Morgan

Andrea Marquez

David Sutherland

Henry Venmore-Rowland

Josh Harris

Shaz Aziz

**Website**

<http://www.legaltechnologist.co.uk>

**Twitter**

<http://www.twitter.com/LTechnologist>

**Facebook**

'The Legal Technologist'

**Email**

[marc@legaltechnologist.co.uk](mailto:marc@legaltechnologist.co.uk)

Insight into the future of law

# The Legal Technologist

**1**

**The CEO**  
Josh Harris

**10**

**The Director**  
Shaz Aziz

**The Recruiter**  
Henry Venmore-  
Rowland

**6**

**The CEO**  
Ondrej Materna

**14**

**18**

**The Legal  
Engineer**  
Andrea Marquez

**25**

**The Legal  
Engineer**  
Julia Babiarz

**The Legal  
Designer**  
Rae Digby-  
Morgan

**23**

**The Legal  
Engineer**  
David Law

**29**

**33**

**The Innovator**  
David Sutherland

**44**

**The AI Expert**  
Joanne Chuang

**39**

**The Marketer**  
Ben Chiriboga

# A note from the editor

The legal profession is modernising and technology is having a huge impact on the way that lawyers carry out their work, be it through faster communication, drafting or document review. Those that are able to bridge the divide between law and technology, and facilitate lawyer efficiencies, will be in demand in the coming years.

However despite the clear need for people with these skills, it isn't very clear how one pursues a career in legal tech or innovation. This magazine aims to give an insight into which roles are currently available and what skills are required. It's not an exhaustive list, and there are other areas such as e-Discovery we haven't covered, but I hope there is still a good variety of roles.

I'm grateful to all those that have provided their career stories and also to Henry for offering to answer any career-related questions people may have.

If you have found this supplement useful please do get in touch and tell us!

**Marc May**

# The Recruiter

*"Sometimes a great career change can happen because you just took the initiative and volunteered for something."*

Henry Venmore-Rowland, Harrier Search

# Henry Venmore- Rowland

Founder of Harrier Search

*“A wise man knows he knows nothing.”*

Yes, quoting Socrates might be an unusual starting point in a piece about careers in the field of legal tech, but accepting one’s limitations is something I’ve always been comfortable with. This article is to introduce a new feature to The Legal Technologist: a regular column where I do my best to answer questions from readers like you who are after some advice on careers in this new field.

So who am I to be doling out advice on careers in legal tech? I was lucky enough to join Legal AI company Luminance in Spring 2016 as their first non-tech employee. This was six months before the company went to market, and the London team was the CEO, the COO and me. Officially I’d joined to help with the branding, marketing, investor memos etc. as I had a writing background. How did I get the job? I asked for it, not knowing there was one to be had. I was working in an analysis role for a cyber security firm that was in the same venture capital firm’s portfolio. The role wasn’t stretching me so I asked one of the VC’s partners if there was any extra work that I could do. Then the partners said there was this new legal tech company that would soon be launching to market, and would I be interested in joining them? I bit their hands off.

The next two and a half years were a rollercoaster. Thinking up how to approach the legal market with terms like neural networks and supervised vs unsupervised machine learning, launching the platform, growing the team, winning clients, opening international offices, building and monitoring a pipeline, drafting board reports, it was as though I was at business school but being paid for the privilege. It felt like my role changed every four months, as the company grew and its needs changed. I was very lucky to work for a CEO who appreciated my need to be stretched and tolerated my unique sense of humour!

By the time I left, I was Head of Business Development and Operations, but I had been mulling the idea of starting up my own business. I'd built up a network of Partners, CIOs, KM lawyers, Innovation Managers et al. from California to New Zealand, and a fair few places in between. The number of legal tech startups was growing, law firms big and small were investigating the benefits of adopting AI and other tech tools, and corporations were beginning to build bespoke Legal Operations teams in order to treat Legal as a business, not just as a cost-centre.

So what does this mean for you? This is a brand new market: there is no uniformity. One firm's Legal Technologist is another's Solution Assistant. Some firms build their tech tools from scratch, others buy off the shelf solutions, still others have a hybrid approach. We are now starting to see law schools take out academic licences in order to demo the latest tools to their students and try to equip them for law in the twenty-first century. Today we are seeing the very first graduates coming out of law school with a specific desire to find a legal tech role, whereas a large number of those already in the industry I'd

hazard fell into their roles either by accident, or because they were bold enough to take up a new challenge. Sometimes a great career change can happen because you just took the initiative and volunteered for something.

I left Luminance to start up a specialist legal tech recruitment firm, Harrier Search, that works globally with law firms, legal tech vendors and in-house teams to find candidates who can excel in this field. I'm grateful to the editor, Marc, for the opportunity to provide some free advice to anyone willing to write in with their questions about legal tech careers as part of a regular 'Ask the Expert' column. If you have any questions do please drop a line to [marc@legaltechnologist.co.uk](mailto:marc@legaltechnologist.co.uk) and keep an eye out for an answer in future issues. I look forward to hearing from you.

**Henry Venmore-Rowland**

**@HarrierSearch**

# The CEOs

*"I don't think any lawyer should start a legal tech company without partnering up with specialists in areas such as software development, sales & marketing and finance."*

Ondrej Materna, CEO Legito



# Josh Harris

CEO of Doc2

My name is Josh Harris and I am the CEO and co-founder of Doc2, a legal technology platform that drastically improves the contract creation and eSigning process for SME businesses.

As a founder of a technology business, my day-to-day role varies quite dramatically depending on what the priority is. A typical day will include a combination of the following; client set up and management, discussions with the technical development team as well as sales, marketing and social media.

What I enjoy the most is speaking with our clients, getting to know their businesses, and their processes. From here, it's about seeing how we can assist to make their processes more efficient, and therefore, their business more competitive within their industry. As we work across a wide range of industries, understanding each business is paramount. It is only then that we can implement the optimum solution to deliver the best, and industry beating results.

Getting satisfied customer testimonials, feedback and seeing dramatic process improvement is a real perk of the job. And as with any SaaS product, the continued relationship is always exciting to see how two businesses can continue to work together.

### **How I got there**

My background is as a Chartered Accountant and a corporate tax advisor at a Big 4 accounting firm. It was here where I experienced terrible inefficiencies in document creation. It became apparent that thousands of hours were wasted each week on low value adding, but necessary, document tasks. This included copy and pasting, editing word documents and getting documents physically signed. Not only was this happening in my firm, but in businesses, big and small, across the country every single day.

I found these processes painful and importantly I believed the lack of innovative technology had both a damaging impact on our clients and productivity as a whole. Thankfully, my brother (and co-founder), is a developer. This enabled us to create a platform that alleviated the document creation issues I was facing and deliver these to business throughout the UK and the rest of the world through a SaaS platform.

For us it was clear that the SME legal technology market is severely under invested in, and therefore, represented a massive potential opportunity. We started prototyping straight away and launched Doc2 in late 2018. Since then we have been continually iterating and improving our offering to creating a seamless document creation and eSigning platform.

### **Advice on this route**

Leaving the comfort of a well-paid, stable job to start up a business was no easy feat. However, this is a route that shouldn't necessarily be discounted. As with any business, it requires a lot of planning, persistence and patience. And if you have planned, persisted and been patient, the benefits of running your own business can far outweigh the stability you had previously.

The first port of call is to identify a problem. The easiest way to go about this is looking at your day-to-day life, whether at home or at work, and look for the things that really wind you up, not just a little bit, but seriously frustrate you. Then, you just need to answer two more questions; 'can I, with what and who I know, solve this problem' and 'can I somehow monetise this solution'? If the answer is yes to both of these, it's time to plan.

Planning is one of the most important steps. It's at this point where you can actually decide if your idea will work, both technically and commercially. Planning is relatively simple, although not necessarily quick. Draw up some designs of your solution, then write down all of the possible problems and risks to the business – yes all of them – and then try to solve them. If there are big ones that you simply can't solve, then you may

have to move onto another idea. This might feel like a lot of wasted time, however, you will most likely save yourself even more wasted time and money than if you had just ploughed on through, ignoring the elephant in the room.

Persistence is key, just because the first idea and weeks of planning didn't result in a business coming to fruition, it doesn't mean you should stop. Try again, and again and again until you find something that works – this is where the patience comes in. Eventually, you'll get there.

If you're interested in finding out more about Doc2 or starting your own business (legal tech or otherwise), add me on LinkedIn and drop me a message, I'm more than happy to help.

**Josh Harris**

# Ondrej Materna

## CEO of Legito

I am a co-founder and the CEO of the legal tech company Legito. Legito is a smart document workspace platform which has over 100,000 users in 37 countries. It is used by a wide range of companies, from small law firms to Fortune 500 companies such as PwC. Legito has grown from a startup with four people to a global company with offices on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

I hold a master's degree in law and a master's degree in computer science, so some might say the legal tech industry was a clear choice for me, but it wasn't. Despite creating my first webpage when I was around 11 years old and a love for computers at school, I was still very motivated to study law. I found an internship job in a small law firm right after I finished the first year at law school.

In the last year of my law studies, I decided to study IT as well. My intention back then wasn't to move to software development but to specialise in legal services to IT companies. Studying IT and being in close touch with programmers and other IT professionals completely changed my perspective. I suddenly started seeing all the unnecessarily repetitive and mundane work which can be easily done by computers. I knew I could create a robot that can do a significant part of my job better and way faster than me. That was the first sign I wanted to transfer from practising law to developing software.

I loved being a lawyer and helping people, but I felt like I was missing something. As a lawyer, each case starts from scratch. However, I wanted to continuously build something. The second sign I wanted to move into software development was when my friends introduced me to a start-up community. It helped me to connect all the dots. I realised that I can connect my legal and IT knowledge and start building a legal tech startup.

I prefer evolution over revolution, so I started building Legito overnight and at weekends. After we verified the concept for Legito, I went from full-time to part-time at the law firm I was working in. Then we received some revenue, so I started focusing mainly on Legito but continued to work on a few select cases for the law firm. When Legito started to generate decent revenue, I began working exclusively on Legito.

As a “lawyer turned legal-tech startup CEO”, I benefited from detailed knowledge of the legal services industry and my legal network. Being a lawyer also enabled me to negotiate, discuss, and formulate ideas. Unlike many startup founders, I was already used to working under pressure and already used to making decisions based on the critical evaluation of a situation. That said, I would say the key benefit was that I was able to speak the lawyers’ language, so it was easier for me to explain the benefits and use-cases for our software. However, there were some areas of running a business being a lawyer didn’t teach me, such as financial management, marketing and sales, and I had to learn those skills.

I don’t think any lawyer should start a legal tech company without partnering up with specialists in areas such as software development, sales & marketing and finance. I’m one

of four co-founders of Legito and I'm the only lawyer. The others are specialists in the aforementioned areas. Without them, Legito wouldn't be where it is today.

Lawyers are used to avoiding any potential risk. I had to change this mindset and accept that risk is inevitable when building a legal tech company from scratch. I'd recommend doing the same thing to anyone making the decision to start a new legal tech business, as otherwise your technical and business development will be much too slow.

My other recommendation for lawyers who would like to move into legal tech would be to try and build software that will replace yourself. Try to build a robot that can perform your day-to-day tasks to the same quality as you. You know your daily tasks very well so it will be easy for you to design software that will do them for you. Realising your vision probably won't be easy but you will at least know you are building something that will bring some real added value. Of course, the next step would be to create a robot that can perform those tasks better than you!

After being in daily touch with lawyers and programmers for several years, I can say they have one thing in common. They like doing things their way. For this reason, I'd recommend creating legal tech solution as customisable and modular as possible. Of course, don't forget to create robust permission management because, you know, we lawyers love to control everything.

**Ondrej Materna**

# The Director

*"..my profession is undergoing revolutionary change, and I want to be a part of the shaping its future."*

Shaz Aziz, Director at Neota Logic

# Shaz Aziz

## Director of Customer Engagement and Solutions at Neota Logic

It has only been a couple of months since I left private practice for the technology space. Having been an associate in the corporate team at Herbert Smith Freehills (HSF), I am now Director of Customer Engagement and Solutions at Neota Logic, where I am responsible for onboarding new customers.

Neota Logic is an automation tool for the professions. We want to provide professionals with a wide range of easy-to-use tools to rapidly build applications that automate aspects of their services, using the power of automation to deliver high-quality advice and expertise to their clients and business for a fraction of the cost. It is easy for companies to get sold on the automation dream, without appreciating what it takes to get real value from it. Whether it be through hackathons, workshops, webinars or focus groups, I help our customers generate ideas and get real value from our platform as quickly as possible.

Like many others, I had been focused on the dream of a corporate legal career since the day I arrived at university, and I soon set about applying for workshops, open days, insight schemes and anything else I thought would give me an edge for vacation scheme applications. I was committed to the City. It is difficult to pinpoint when I started to change my mind, but the year before starting my training contract was an important period in the timeline. I worked at Debate Mate, a social enterprise teaching debating in schools internationally. I met

some of the sharpest and most driven people I know during my time there, many of whom went on to turn down or exit City professions to do what was, in their minds, more meaningful work.

Once I arrived at HSF, I was committed to reaching the promised land of partnership. However, I found myself quickly becoming frustrated at a lack of control: control over my time, over work processes and over the advice and services delivered to clients, which I would pour so many of hours into.

By the time I qualified in 2018, automation was already beginning to take root around me - both in my work and in my network. My department had begun trialling some new technologies, and a trickle of friends entering the technology space became a steady stream. Despite being at the finish line of a 24-month marathon, I did not feel the relief or the elation that I had expected. Instead, I nurtured a growing interest in legal technology, which eventually led me to Neota.

The scariest part of leaving corporate law is the few days before you communicate your decision. You worry about the opportunity cost (would I have become a legendary City dealmaker with a roster of FTSE clients and a 30-acre estate?). You worry about being too hasty (should I gather a couple more years of experience before taking the leap?). You worry about taking a pay cut, about starting at the bottom of a new industry, about things falling apart. You worry about disappointing the people at your firm who invested time and energy to train and develop you as a lawyer. In the end, all these worries went quiet in the shadow of a bigger and more powerful realisation: that my profession is undergoing revolutionary change, and I want to be a part of the shaping its future.

I am sure there are many young, new lawyers in the City who feel as I did. If you are thinking about entering tech, or another industry, I think it is important to pursue (or at least seriously investigate) the impulse. There is no better time to take a career risk, and speaking after only a couple of months experience, it is far easier to invest your time, energy and effort into something that fascinates you. It is scary, and it could go wrong, but you should trust in your own resilience and start building a career that, had you remained where you were, your old self would envy.

**Shaz Aziz**

# The Legal Designer

*"You need to take on roles that will give you a broad experience and varied perspective. The legal sector is often insular and so experience outside of a law firm is in my view critical for effective innovation."*

Rachael Digby-Morgan, Director at Wilson  
Fletcher



# Rae Digby-Morgan

Consultancy Director at Wilson Fletcher

Wilson Fletcher is a business and service innovation consultancy designing digital-first strategies, services and experiences that help our clients to accelerate service innovation and modernise their businesses. We work across a wide range of industries, sectors and organisations including legal. My role is focussed on driving habitual innovation within firms, establishing opportunities, developing digital-first

strategies and drawing out those big ideas. My experience lends itself well to leading on programmes in the legal sector or those with a heavier product development angle.

One of the aspects I enjoy most about my job is working across different industries and applying that insight and experience into a completely different sector. It gives us an edge as an organisation and much better outcomes for our clients. I really enjoy future visioning a service or experience, it's the most effective way of leaving the legacy experience behind and stripping off the perceived constraints holding you back.

Watching that shift in mindset across a team is really rewarding, especially when they realise that some of the best ideas won't come out in that room, but over the next few days or weeks whilst they are sitting on the bus, having a shower or talking to someone about something completely unrelated.

### **How I got my role**

My experience is varied and I have amassed skills in a variety of different and complementary disciplines. That has meant I can take responsibility for a wide range of projects, which expands your experience faster and broadens your perspective.

I have a law degree but quickly decided that my interest in law didn't extend to becoming a solicitor or barrister. I joined LexisNexis (as it was then Butterworths) and held roles in online product support and adoption before moving into digital product development, creating and managing products for the legal sector.

Over the course of one large and difficult project I realised I could have delivered a whole quarter earlier if my project management skills had been better. I moved to the project management function to upskill in large scale project delivery and my first experiences of agile delivery mechanisms.

My heart really lay in product development and so I returned to portfolio product management for the Pacific region and then a senior lead role in the UK Product team. Latterly I was running concept development and service design innovation for Lexis in the UK legal market.

I left Lexis to set up my own innovation and service design house specialising in legal and public sectors. I was a client of Wilson Fletcher whilst at Lexis, and the engagement was so good for both of us that we stayed in contact. I had been running my own company for a while when the opportunity came up at Wilson Fletcher and I was invited to join. I now work in the strategy, digital design and innovation space helping firms and companies thrive in the digital market place, monetise their assets, and shift their thinking and activities from modernisation to innovation. Recently, we've been designing and implementing flexible innovation processes which is having a big impact and we're starting to see the first fruits of that mindset shift coming through.

### **Advice to pursue a job like this**

You need to take on roles that will give you a broad experience and varied perspective. The legal sector is often insular and so experience outside of a law firm is critical for effective innovation in my view. Legal experience is useful in understanding the market but can hold you back if you assume that user behaviour or problems mimic your own. I have taken

courses in user experience which will not make me a UX professional (as that would take years more experience) but helped me to understand the design process, how best to feed that process and how to form and lead successful teams around it. That can be a great way to extend your understanding whilst in your current role and pave the way to shift to another.

A job like mine requires you to be great at listening and it's a skill that many people lose over the course of their careers. Be open, collaborative, respectful of other disciplines and willing to learn from anyone regardless of their seniority. It really is immense fun when you do.

**Rae Digby-Morgan**

# The Legal Engineers

*"Anyone who is looking to a career in modern law, and especially legal tech, must have an understanding of both the law firm environment but also of the real business of the clients who will be paying the bills. Only when you understand both sides of a problem can a solution be properly put in place."*

David Law, Senior Legal Engineer at SYKE



# Andrea Marquez

Legal Engineer at Cuatrecasas

I started my LegalTech career seven years ago, when I was a first year political science candidate at Drexel University in Philadelphia. My first job was as a legislative intern for a State Representative for Philadelphia. My goal was to study law as a Masters program and going into politics felt like the correct path at the time.

Drexel University is very tech-savvy, and it has an incredible engineering college. As students from any major can take electives, I decided to take a course on “Entertainment Engineering”. This was my first experience coding, and my first step towards a career into LegalTech.

After graduating from Drexel with a Legal Studies degree, I moved to London and completed the Graduate LLB at the University of Law, Bloomsbury. I worked for LexisNexis as a student ambassador and at Duncan Lewis as a Judicial Review case worker while studying. I also volunteered at Toynbee Hall and the Free Representation Unit.

As a young law student, my goal was to obtain a training contract. The only issue was that, as I am a Venezuelan national with no European passport, I would need a work visa if I wanted to become a solicitor. These are especially hard to obtain in the UK and even harder for prospective trainees. The competition is too high and hiring a foreign worker is tedious.

After five months of waiting, I was granted a work permit in Spain. Shortly afterwards, I was recruited by one of the top five law firms in continental Europe to work on a new innovative project as a Legal Engineer.

I started off by training artificial intelligence, moving on to other projects including automation, machine learning, LegalBots and knowledge management. My manager is a very tech savvy lawyer, with whom I've learned how to manage and implement new technologies in the context of law firms.

LegalTech is opening doors to a whole new generation of lawyers with no boundaries, professionally or geographically. I disagree with the common notion that it will eventually replace us; a lawyer's empathy and instinct will always be valued. I recommend embracing change and digging into the subject deeper.

**Andrea Marquez**



# David Law

Senior Legal Engineer  
at SYKE

When I think about it, my journey into legal tech probably started in 2006 when I completed my LPC. This was the year when Tony Blair was still PM, Sven was still the England manager and, more significantly, Enron went the way of the pear.

Trying to secure a job (let alone a training contract) in a legal sector in the ever-tightening grip of a global recession was never going to be easy. Firms were increasingly turning to good quality support staff to maximise margin and productivity. Inevitably I followed this route and ended up working as a paralegal at a mid-sized firm in Yorkshire.

I realised fairly quickly that the economic conditions weren't going to improve any time soon and I decided to transfer my skills to a corporate role to mix things up while things returned to 'normal'.

Fast forward 3 years, things were picking up (I thought) and I returned to private practice to crack on with my legal career. What became clear however was that the recession had changed the sector and its clients forever. The wider economy was still in stagnation and there was simply no justification for law firms to return to the blank cheque billing they enjoyed pre-2007.

My time in paralegal limbo continued and I eventually racked up enough legal experience to qualify via the back door as a legal executive.

Throughout my career in practice I was consistently baffled by the tug of war that still exists in a lot of firms: there is an inherent inefficiency in the legal process and the way legal work is done and yet there is an ever-increasing pressure on law firms to give greater value for money. The answer is often to throw more people at the job and put them under more pressure for less reward (both financially and in terms of career progression). This seemed crazy and definitely not how I had envisaged the profession when I was studying 10 years earlier.

In 2015 I decided enough was enough and made the difficult decision to end my 'traditional' legal career. I began working with Catherine Bamford in the early days of BAM Legal and then with Alistair Maiden at SYKE where I remain today as a Senior Legal Engineer.

Through the last 4 years I have kept in mind my own experiences in practice and I think this is what drives me on in my new career. There will be someone using the solutions that we implement who, as a result, will be able to do so much more with their day and (hopefully) not be sat at a desk in the small hours drafting something that should take minutes not hours. I genuinely feel like I'm making a difference and that's a massive thing when you are looking at job satisfaction. I think this connection is also key when wading through the hype that seems to be flooding legal tech – knowing and understanding how the day to day works is critical to delivering the possible.

On a personal level, the creative problem solving and entrepreneurial elements of my current role are great and are simply way beyond what is experienced in day to day practice. This is not just my experience either; junior colleagues that we are bringing through now are being exposed to some amazing opportunities at a level that most people on the traditional practice career route would not experience until way down the line.

A lot of discussion around legal tech is that we (i.e. lawyers) are going to be replaced with automated process (note not robots!). At best this is click-bait, at worst massively irresponsible. Having worked closely with Manchester University's undergraduates I'm concerned that this rhetoric is stoking up genuine fear and confusion amongst the next generation of lawyers. My message to them however is that now is a fantastic time to be studying and eventually practising law; there is a huge new frontier of work for them to explore and make their own. If you are naturally inquisitive and process driven, then a career in legal tech can be hugely fulfilling.

If you are weighing up a move into legal tech then my advice would be to play. Get Alexa to make your morning coffee. Download a coding app and play with it. Book yourself into an evening class that teaches you how to make video games. Mess around with Excel until you can get it to play Tetris by itself. Only by doing things like this will you know if you enjoy the type of problem solving that is at the core of a lot of what we do.

My other piece of advice is aimed squarely at undergraduate law students and is to get as much working experience as possible – both in and out of law firms. Anyone who is looking to a career in modern law, and especially legal tech, must have an understanding of both the law firm environment but also of the real business of the clients who will be paying the bills. Only when you understand both sides of a problem can a solution be properly put in place.

My career path probably rings true with a lot of my peers from 2006/07 and I would strongly recommend that anyone else in the same position thinks about a career move into legal tech. Your knowledge and experience will be invaluable in shaping the future of law.

**David Law**



# Julia Babiarcz

Junior Legal Engineer at SYKE

I am currently working as a Junior Legal Engineer at SYKE. SYKE is a fast growing legal engineering business helping in-house legal teams and law firms to buy and implement legal technology. As a junior at SYKE, I have a very varied workload. I automate legal documents using a variety of different platforms, such as Contract Express, SpringCM and Contract Mill. I have also had the chance to work on developing a legal chatbot and have recently began developing my contract lifecycle management knowledge. The latter has given me the opportunity to travel abroad.

I currently shadow an experienced ex-lawyer with crossover tech skills. Having this relationship has given me the ability to learn fast and receive feedback on my work. One of the first projects I got involved in with SYKE was an Access to Justice project, and I recently had the opportunity to speak about this project at the ENCLE conference in Bratislava, Slovakia. I spoke about how tech could enable greater access to justice for litigants in person.

The project was focused on child care proceedings, and in particular the simplification of statement drafting for applicants. I was able to create a simple informative web based questionnaire using Contract Mill. The questionnaire also contained guidance and clear explanations, which allowed applicants to draft their statements quicker and easier. It was great to be able to innovate and transfer the legal tech skills I had developed to such an important cause. The legal tech world is evolving rapidly. The possibilities seem endless and I am excited to be part of that growth.

I have recently graduated from the School of Law at the University of Manchester. While on legal work placements during my studies, I often found myself doing robotic tasks for weeks on end. This led me to question why we aren't doing things differently within the legal profession. I came across Richard Susskind's 'Tomorrow's Lawyers'. This book inspired me greatly and led my view that the legal profession needed to change.

I knew that the current economic climate would shape the future into one centered around efficiency. In my final year of university, I had the opportunity to study a 'Legal Tech and Access to Justice' module. This consisted of building an app (using a platform we were taught to use as part of

the course) for a cause assigned to us by our lecturer. In groups, we had to work for and communicate with a client in order to produce a fully functioning app. This module was so different to any of the other traditional textbook law modules I have studied. Unlike my other modules, I walked away from the legal tech module with enhanced communication skills and a lot of practical skills and experience.

I would advise any law student to really question their environment while on work placements, and have a think about whether they have a vision for how things could be done differently and made more efficient. I would advise them to read *Tomorrows Lawyer's* and read up about particular areas of tech which interest them most (for me – this was legal robots serving in courts). Having knowledge of how tech creates efficiency is a skill that is becoming extremely valuable and will make you stand out to employers. Knowledge of legal tech can also quickly turn into a passion once you realise just how much value it can bring to clients and how many opportunities exist to improve access to justice.

**Julia Babiarz**

# The AI Expert

*"..you must be passionate about technology and have a hunger to transform the way lawyers work."*

Joanne Chuang, Head of Data Services at SYKE



# Joanne Chuang

Head of Data Services at SYKE

Being Asian, when I was young I was told “When you grow up, you should become a doctor, a lawyer or an engineer”. That basically summed up my career options at university. Naturally, one morning, I found myself reading Law at the University of Durham, walking down the old cobbled alleyways of old Durham city in my black gown, staring ahead at my future which was pretty much set. I was to become a lawyer; I would work in a legal firm and I would earn lots of money. And I would take the traditional path like many before me.

Fast forward 20 years later, I did become a lawyer and I have practised in a global legal firm, but I have also moved away from the traditional path.

I started off as a litigator and soon went on to become a solicitor in the United Kingdom before going in-house as a transactional lawyer in a global IT powerhouse.

Then I took on the role of General Counsel at a fast-moving consumer goods company. As I moved across the various roles, what became evident to me was that legal functions are often treated as back-end support. Lawyers are seen as cost centres, document caretakers and filing clerks when contracts are signed. We are much more than that. The legal function should contribute in every area of the organisation to safeguard business integrity and protect against legal risks. This realisation was the key impetus that led to the turning point in my career.

The varied experiences I gained from private practice and in-house legal roles equipped me with a good understanding of the challenges faced by legal firms and in-house counsel. This has also enabled me to be an effective interface between legal teams and technology experts to identify and creatively come up with solutions to resolve specific problems faced by legal teams.

When I took on the role of General Counsel in 2013, I dreamt of transforming the way we worked. Legal teams should not spend too much time on non-value adding work but should focus on high value and impactful activities to drive the business forward. These activities can come in many forms and may include:

- Being an effective (and available) business partner and advisor to key stakeholders;

- Attending business meetings and sales pitches with the business to enable legal risks and advice to be considered when important decisions are made;
- Analysis of data from contracts and legal relationships which could impact on business decision making;
- Monitoring legal and regulatory changes which could affect business activities;
- Usage of different media for communication and training to enable all levels of the business to grasp legal concepts and obligations;
- Continuous improvement in processes to increase compliance and efficiency;
- Continuous legal education to upskill.

By using technology to streamline and simplify legal processes, legal functions can be freed up to do more of these value adding activities.

In 2016, I led “Smarter Contracting” a global legal project to simplify, streamline and ‘easify’ (meaning: to make something more accessible: adapted from “easification”) contracting within the organisation. Unilever is one of the world’s leading consumer goods company, making and selling around 400 brands in more than 190 countries. This role gave me the opportunity to deep dive into global and local processes. I learnt how legal teams operated in all of the geographies ranging from tea plantations to sophisticated state-of-the art factories and supply chain.

One thing that remained constant across the geographies was the need for simpler or easier processes and documents. Legal teams needed to free up time from doing mundane tasks, to enable real business partnering. These include

proofreading non-legal documents, signature follow-ups, document retrieval; advising on non-legal matters. They needed to be present at meetings, and not hidden behind the filing cabinet. The legal function needed to embrace technology to automate, triage and amplify the impact of its contribution to the business.

I worked tirelessly with a dedicated team to design the transformation and we successfully roll out Smarter Contracting globally in 2018. The contracting process is now automated to enable users to self-service, i.e. to request for contracts more easily from all locations at any time. Key analytics from contractual documents (such as contract value, service levels, contract status) are captured and delivered to business stakeholders to enhance decision making. Streamlined processes and technology are put in place for approvals, signatures and storage of documents to improve and track the overall lifecycle of documents. As a result, legal teams across geographies are now slowly finding their space in boardroom meetings and are able to contribute even more to the business.

Today, I am a Legal Engineer and I head up the Data Services Team at SYKE. At SYKE, I help legal teams identify the pain points and bottlenecks faced within their legal firm or organizations. Stemming from these pain points, I would then recommend and deploy solutions aimed at simplifying and streamlining processes and ways to creatively use technology to further enhance legal support and drive interactions. Often, the use of technology is woven into the different aspects of the solution. The aim is to optimize transformation processes and to deploy products that enable legal teams to enhance their value to the business, whilst being agile in responding to organizational needs and changes.

Looking back, the legal career I knew 20 years ago is no longer the same one I know today. The legal industry is on the verge of a major transition, a transition from back-end support to a value-adding function, driven by the proliferation of technology in our everyday lives. That is a fact and we are going through a period of major disruptions and the key driver is the need for speed and simplicity.

What does it take to be a Legal Engineer or to be in legal tech? You must have a keen interest in learning, experimenting, exploring, mapping out processes and innovating ways to do it all better using technology. Knowledge and practical work experience from different organisations or private practice is a real added advantage; it helps broaden one's horizon to identify inefficiencies and to formulate creative solutions borrowing from experiences in different fields. There is a wide spectrum of legal engineers and their contribution to legal tech may differ. There are legal engineers who have IT ability to program and help customers build or configure software. On the flip side, there also legal engineers who have a good combination of skills to identify organisational issues which can be resolved through technology. At the end of the day, you must be passionate about technology and have a hunger to transform the way lawyers work.

If you have all of the above and are thinking of a career in legal tech, wait no more. The time is now. Jump on the bandwagon as quickly as you can. Be curious, be alert and be creative. But most importantly, be willing to embrace the disruption and allow yourself the opportunity to learn the different types of legal technology out there and ways it has and will continue to impact the legal space.

**Joanne Chuang**

# The Innovator

*"..remember that this should always be about the people. Putting your end user first is key to developing a solution that works and delivers what it needs to."*

David Sutherland, R & D Manager at DWF

A portrait of David Sutherland, a man with dark hair and glasses, wearing a light blue button-down shirt. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The image is framed by a red border on the left and right sides.

# David Sutherland

R & D Manager at DWF

I am the Research and Development Manager at DWF Ventures, the R&D arm of DWF. I work with the wider DWF business and clients to test and develop new products and services, combining specialist legal knowledge and expertise with emerging technologies. DWF Ventures is a test centre for ideas and a safe place to fail. In a nutshell, we start with a problem, break it down use various techniques, create

designs and, finally, experiment with solutions derived from those designs.

This is the most varied role of my entire career and that's probably what I enjoy about it the most. Each idea or problem is different and each individual works in different ways, so we will often need to tailor our approach for each piece of work. That's not to say we start from scratch with every new project as we have a huge toolkit of methods to draw from, but part of this job is understanding that the people should always be at the forefront of any work we do, and a method that fits for one may not necessarily be the right fit for another.

I've been in this role now for a year and it has been a huge learning curve for me. I'm still learning to deconstruct problems, frame ideas and prototype solutions using a whole host of different methods and experimenting with new techniques that are new to me. Each project teaches me something new and helps me refine and further develop my skills.

### **How did I get here?**

My journey to R&D Manager hasn't been particularly straightforward and there wasn't always a clear career path for me. I left university in 2007 and went into a stop-gap job within a manufacturing firm as part of a services team. This ended up lasting 5 years where I was in a supervisory/managerial role that I never really wanted. It was only when the area of the business I worked for was closing down that really motivated me to do something different.

I took some time off, went travelling and then went back to

university to do my master's degree, something I'd wanted to do for several years, but never 'had the time' because of my job. It was while I was back at university that I started a part-time role in a local school helping to collate the huge amounts of data available to transform that data into something useful. This job, although I didn't know this at the time, helped me drive the direction of my career forward and led me to where I am today.

I have learnt a lot from this job which has been particularly useful in my current role. Firstly, it allowed me to understand the importance of good and clear data, and I took away two key and crucial learning points. Firstly, more is not better unless you can do something with it. Secondly, this job always reminds me how much pressure our clients are under to deliver results with (quite often) very limited resources.

From here I moved into the legal world. I joined Eversheds and worked in document production for a little while before moving into legal engineering at Pinsent Masons. It was at Pinsents that I was able to use learnings from my data job whilst learning new skills, including some basic coding. Coding was useful, but interactions with people really helped me develop further. Being able to engage with the lawyers to understand their needs, frustrations and pressures and to work with them to make their life a little easier paved the way for moving into Ventures and the R&D role.

### **Advice for others**

My advice for people wanting to get into a legal tech role is to remember that this should always be about the people. Putting your end user first is key to developing a solution that works and delivers what it needs to. This isn't to say that

some amount of technical knowledge isn't important. It is still a key component in being successful in this area. Yet good technical knowledge won't go very far without the human element driving the whole process. Getting face-to-face time with people in the business to understand how they work, what they like and don't like, and what they really need has been very valuable for me as it allows me to create designs and solutions with the individual's needs being at the core of the work delivered.

It is useful to understand the value of what you can bring to the table. As someone who is not a lawyer, it is quite easy to feel like you are out of your depth. In actual fact, having different experiences and a different mind-set can really help with creativity, designing solutions and thinking outside of the box. Law firms have really started to embrace non-legal roles and understand the value these can bring to the business and their clients. It doesn't matter where you are in your career or what your background is, there is something very special you can bring to any new role you take.

**David Sutherland**

# The Marketer

*"If you are going to take a leap and attempt to transition into another role, the first thing you need to do is decide who you are not."*

Ben Chiriboga, Head of Growth at NEXL

# Ben Chiriboga

## Head of Growth for Nexl

I'd like to tell you a story about the process I went through to transition from my former job as a litigator into legal technology, and how I found meaning and purpose within this growing space.

Firstly, I'd like to explain some of the mistakes I made during that journey so that anyone who is thinking of pursuing such a path can avoid them. Secondly - but I believe most importantly - I hope to inspire others who are on the fence to make a career switch, or at least consider attempting it.

Now, more than ever, we need willing, enthusiastic minds within legal technology who can see things 'anew'. We need people who are willing to learn, take risks, and consider the "what if's" to transform the industry.

With that, let's get started.

In 2015, I was five years out of law school, practicing as a civil litigator in a boutique law firm in South Florida. The day to day work of a litigator was intellectually interesting. However, it lacked a degree of dynamism.

Due to a series of events, punctuated by being accepted into an online business program at Harvard Business School, in September 2015 I gave my firm my two weeks' notice, packed my bags for New York City and began what would turn out to be a three year journey into a career in legal technology. This led me to my position today as Head of

Growth for NEXL, an exciting legal technology company which aims to create a community of legal innovators, technologists and stakeholders.

Although the path hasn't been easy, a handful of events and decisions generated three principles which I believe helped me stay on track through this rather "re-inventive" time. Although I have no doubt that these principles will be applied differently by different people, a great number of people in my network have confirmed that many, if not all, of the following principles have played at least some role on their own path toward transition and growth.

### **PRINCIPLE 1:KNOW YOURSELF**

While this sounds simple enough, many of us are in fact strangers to ourselves. If you are going to take a leap and attempt to transition into another role, the first thing you need to do is decide who you are not.

In my case, I decided I was not the type of person who likes to say "no" to things. Although I had been trained to look for the flaws in things as a lawyer, I realised I was someone who was best when they were saying yes to opportunities and ideas - even if that meant potential failure.

When I looked out at the landscape of potential jobs, I knew the role I chose would be one that favoured action, and testing. It would be a role that asked me to say yes to things and be open to new ideas even if they were not part of a plan. In my case, this led me to a role in marketing.

## **PRINCIPLE 2: VALUE ACTION**

You will never be sure if you have the right answer and it will never be the right time. However, if you wait for the right answer at the right time, you will suffer immensely from “analysis paralysis” and do nothing. Jumping into legal technology will be filled with “known” unknowns but even more “unknown” unknowns. There is no playbook and, by and large, most people are making it up as they go along.

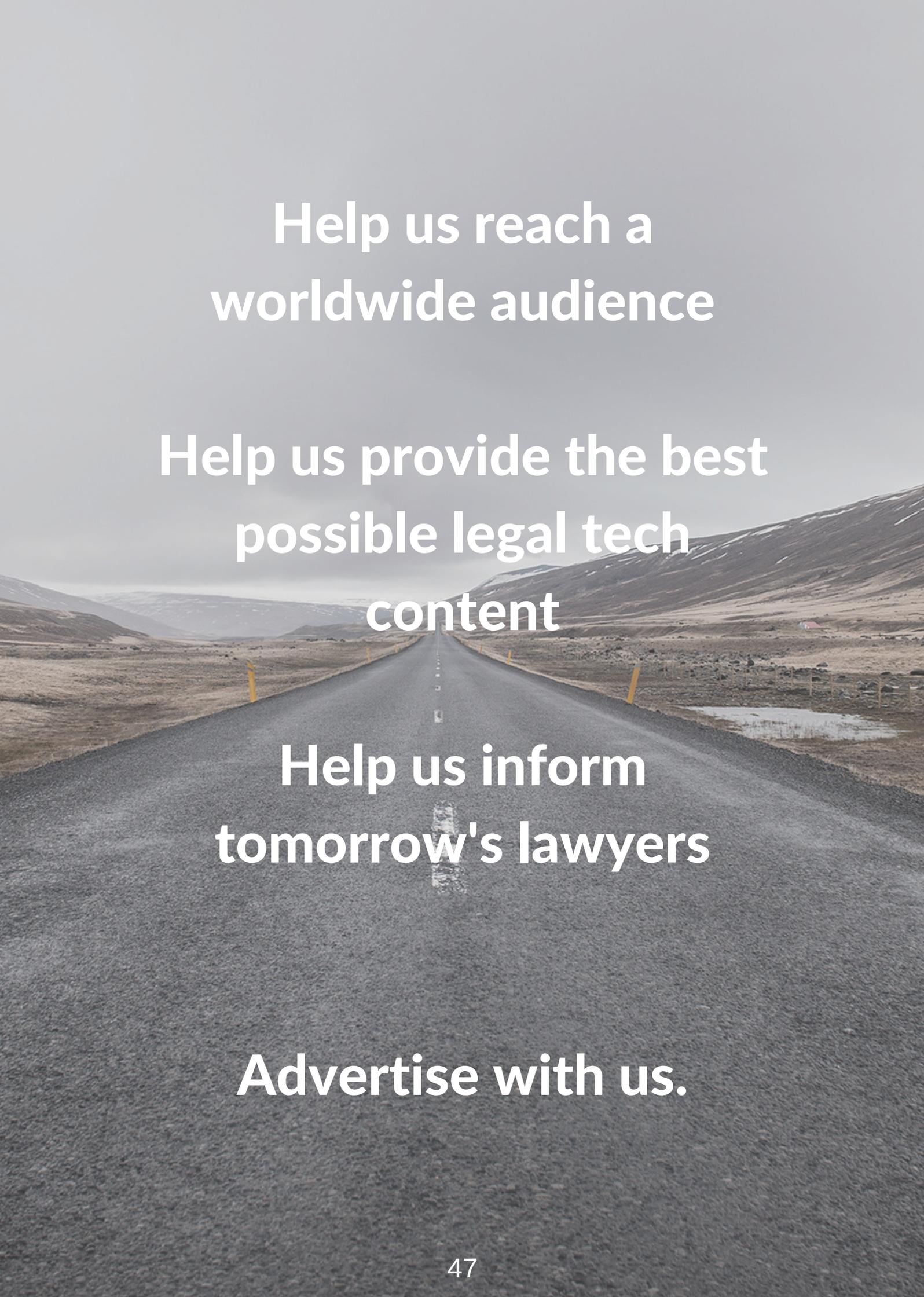
There is only one remedy when playing in this sort of dynamic domain: value action. You must always value action, and the action you take must be valuable. If you want to work in Legal Technology, you must be prepared to figuratively move a mountain or herd cats. Whichever analogy you choose, the point is this: do big things.

## **PRINCIPLE 3: LOOK TO SERVE**

The most important of these three principles is looking to serve. Breaking into a new role, in my opinion, is less about how qualified you are but rather how much you’re willing to serve that role and your team members. Only you can know that - and prove that - but I’ve come to see a willingness to serve rather than pre-requisite knowledge (to a degree) as a somewhat counter-intuitive way to guide myself through my career.

If you’re willing to serve, work hard and value action, then you should at least consider the idea of making a switch into legal technology. It’s a growing field that promises much to those who invest in it today.

**Ben Chiriboga**



**Help us reach a  
worldwide audience**

**Help us provide the best  
possible legal tech  
content**

**Help us inform  
tomorrow's lawyers**

**Advertise with us.**

# Past editions



If you would like to have a read of our previous editions please click on the links below:

- [May/June 2018 Issue](#)
- [October 2018 Issue](#)
- [January 2019 Issue](#)
- [March 2019 Issue](#)
- [June 2019 Issue](#)

# Next edition



Next edition will be out in August 2019.