

Finding the Right Legal Practice Management Software

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Too often, legal practice management software over-promises and under-delivers, leaving attorneys to pick up the pieces when they drop the ball. Vague, too-good-to-be-true promises often lend themselves to disappointing results when profit takes precedence over clients' needs. In our ever-growing cyber-world, there is no shortage of options when it comes to practice management software for lawyers. However, quantity is not an indicator of quality, and it is all too easy to fall victim to appealing promises that ultimately fall short. That's why we've put together a short-list of the crucial elements to consider as you shop around in order to ensure that your legal practice management software does, in fact, put its money (and features!) where its mouth is.

Ease of use

The whole point of practice management software is that it's supposed to save attorneys time. In a field where an attorney's compensation is widely determined by the amount of time he or she dedicates to practicing law, every minute eaten up by redundant administrative work counts (or, rather, could have counted). That's why it's so crucial to search for a legal practice management software that you understand. Obviously, the ins and outs of an intricate software meant to organize your entire caseload may take some time to get down pat, but the process by which your software sets you up to explore and navigate it should be intuitive. Features should be clearly labeled, tutorials and help articles should be readily available, and the ways in which your work is organized should be self-explanatory. Attorneys shouldn't pay for a solution that promises to save them hours' worth of clerical work, only to drop hours' worth of learning curves on their laps.

That's why, when we tell you to try out our software, we're not basing our recommendation on a clunky interface masked by empty promises. We're doing it having bested the ultimate trial: the grandfather test. Exactly what it sounds like, this test consisted of our founders', David and Ori, asking their grandparents to try and navigate the software. Their limited knowledge of both technological solutions and the practice of law made this the ultimate test, and we're proud to report that our software passed with flying colors. Not only were they able to navigate PracticePanther, but they were also able to utilize all of the software's features completely on their own. When we say easy to use, we really mean it!

Dynamic, versatile software

Among the most important qualities that a legal practice management software can have is customizability. No two law firms, even those in the same practice area, are the same. Too many platforms attempt to glide over their customers' differences, expecting law firms of arrayed sizes, personnel, and areas of expertise to fit under the same clunky mold. This is why it's crucial that, in your vetting process, you pay close attention to not just the flashy features that are advertised, but to the ability of these features to be customized in order to fit the intricate qualities that make your firm unique. Although attorneys are the leading experts at (pardon our French) cutting the crap, it can be exceedingly difficult to distinguish the shiny features offered by a software from the ways in which that software will work to accommodate you (not the other way around). Here's what to look for:

-The ability to customize fields in your client and matter information, intake forms, and invoices.

-The ways in which new features are added to the software: companies that prioritize their clients above all else won't don't roll out batch updates once or twice a year, forcing their subscribers to invest months of their time and money in software that's not up to par with their needs. Instead, the most dynamic software will roll out features and integrations based on their clients' demand consistently throughout the year.

-Finally, the best software are the ones that recognize that they can't do it all. Rather, the best software will find ways to [integrate with the apps](#) that best serve attorneys instead of offering imperfect internal alternatives.

Customer Service

That's the cornerstone of any business, isn't it? Making sure that your clients know that they are the foundation of all you do, the inspiration behind your greatest developments, the human beings- not numerical figures- to whom you make promises. It's why extraneous charges, clunky phone correspondence, and unavailable support tend to boggle the mind when they become apparent in services that actively advertise their excellent customer service. Customer service is perhaps the most fundamental, essential feature any business may possess. The unfortunate coincidence is that, too often, it is also the feature that is most often revealed to be lacking when it's too late- when the purchase has been made, when the contract has been signed, and when the client has sacrificed money, time, or any combination of both only to find that it was this investment, and not the client themselves, in whom the service provider was interested.

How does one nip the potential investment in shoddy customer service providers in the bud, often before the imperfections have even made themselves clear? Of course, in the age of the Internet, reviews are the ultimate tool in any prospective consumer's arsenal. Various online platforms allow would-be buyers to experience the shortcomings of any goods or services vicariously, allowing their peers and co-consumers to take the metaphorical Bad Customer Service Bullet for them. Although there's no denying the importance of the role of reviews in pre-buying research, it's integral to remember that they are subjective in nature, and that one man's trash may just be another man's treasure (or, more importantly, the other way around). That's why it's also key to look for hints within your practice management software itself to determine whether its dedication to customer service is more than tagline-deep:

-Free trials and money-back guarantees are a must. They point at a platform that is not only generous but supremely confident in its ability to meet (or exceed) your expectations.

-The pre-sale and onboarding processes are essential. Too often, practice management software solutions seek to gain as many clients as possible at once, failing to ensure that each customer has an individualized, tailor-made experience with their platform from before the beginning of their subscription. For this reason, it is crucial to search for software that provides one-on-one demos, dedicated account managers, and unlimited training. These are all clear indicators that the needs of customers, even prospective ones, take precedence over the company's bottom line.

Promises are Made to be Kept

Our mission is simple: to make the lives of legal professionals easier. When the grandiose promises, shoddy follow-through, and lack of deliverability are replaced by a dedication to that overarching philosophy, great things happen. We hope this guide proves helpful in your search for the best practice management software for your firm.

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