3 Technologies to Enhance Solo and Small Law Firm Management
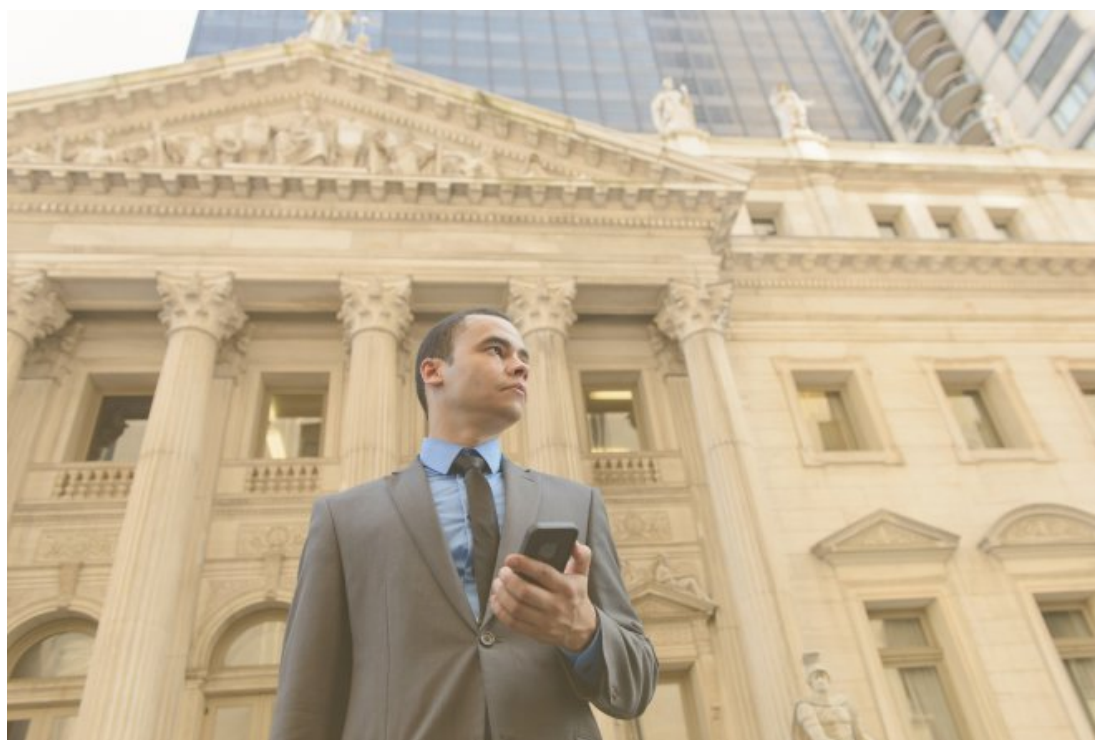
By GWYNNE MONAHAN - Contributor

Perhaps unsurprisingly, solo and small law firms make up the majority of lawyers in the United States. In fact, the American Bar Association's 2018 Legal Technology Survey Report notes that 30 percent of those surveyed were solo practitioners, while 29 percent worked in firms with between two and nine attorneys.

UCaaS, virtual receptionist, and call logs can all help a solo or small practice improve its law firm management.

Despite making up the majority, solo and small firm lawyers often struggle in terms of law firm management. Keeping on top of client matters can be hard enough, and it can be even more difficult when growing a practice. As a solo or small firm lawyer, you're also an accountant, a marketer, a billing and collections agent, and an administrator and receptionist. While larger firms have distinct departments and teams to specialize in each of these areas, solo or small firms often have to juggle these areas with minimal assistance.

To balance the many roles these lawyers occupy, these firms need to have the right tools in place. Here are three cloud technologies that can help solo and small firm lawyers improve law firm management and better serve their clients.

UCaaS 101: Building a UCaaS Practice

Here are the key drivers for why customers are adopting video conferencing, how to improve adoption and utilization, features of certain video conferencing applications, and more!

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1. Unified Communications

Internal and external communications are often pain points of small law firms who have to manage communication channels, collaborate with remote clients and colleagues, and protect data as it passes from one person to the next. While some law firms may have receptionists dedicated to facilitating communications, solo and small law firms don't always have that luxury.

With a unified communications-as-a-service (UCaaS) platform, firms can connect their channels of communication through one central hub to help manage all firm communications and increase productivity. UCaaS enables lawyers to communicate with clients and colleagues through SMS messaging, chat apps, video conferencing, and voice calls, and the platform allows lawyers to seamlessly switch from their mobile device to their business phone for streamlined communications.

Lawyers can access the platform from any device and through the same interface. In other words, their firm communications remain at their fingertips no matter where or when they talk with clients or colleagues. For solo lawyers and small firms, this type of centralization is critical, as it affords them more time to focus on trial preparation and legal proceedings without worrying about their communications infrastructure or network maintenance costs.

With the right technology tools in place, solo and small law firms can effectively communicate with clients and colleagues — and keep pace with larger firms in the process.

2. Virtual Receptionist

In any firm, there's often that sense of falling behind, of missing that one phone call that could lead to a big case or settlement. Solo and small firm lawyers aren't always able to answer every phone call, and they may not have the budget for a full-time receptionist.

Here's where virtual receptionists can help. A virtual receptionist is an automated, customizable attendant that can monitor incoming calls and route them to the best firm employee equipped to handle the inquiry. What's more, a virtual receptionist can scale with your firm during busy seasons or as the practice expands.

This kind of communications tool puts firm leaders in control of their clients' and potential clients' experience. From the initial greeting to the on-hold music to directing the caller to the right lawyer, a virtual receptionist ensures not only that all calls are handled appropriately, but also that clients and potential clients are able to reach the right person at the right time.

3. Call Logs

Even with a virtual receptionist in place, though, organizing call data can be a challenge for some firms. Practice management systems can be useful for collecting incoming and outgoing call data, but for solo and small firm lawyers, these systems can be more overwhelming than helpful. Without a team of IT professionals or data analysts, it can all seem like too much.

With the right cloud-based phone system, however, call stats become a means to assess productivity. A cloud-based phone system lets you monitor call volume, call activity, and the duration of each call. A lawyer can see what calls are the most fruitful for bringing in business and can access an organized log of data through their platform, making solo practices more productive. Call logs also help lawyers track the ebb and flow of their business, gauge their busy hours, and better prepare for staffing needs.

In short, call logging systems help solo and small law firms manage their practice without a lot of overhead, helping them stay competitive.

In this era of technological disruption and high client expectations, managing a small law firm can seem like a herculean task. With the right technology tools in place, however, solo and small law firms can effectively communicate with clients and colleagues — and keep pace with larger firms in the process.