OSLER

White paper: Hacking Big Law – Putting a legal hackathon to the test

JULY 11, 2016 2 MIN READ

Related Expertise

- Professional Services

Author: Mara Nickerson

Insights and key takeaways from our experience in running a legal hackathon

Big Law is facing big changes. Just as with other professional services businesses, the connection between those who provide a service and those who purchase it has transformed, creating demand for a more collaborative and open relationship. This evolution has spawned new law firms, new solution providers and innovative new ways to market and deliver legal services. It has also pushed firms of all sizes to realize that to stay competitive, they must change too.

At Osler, we have been working on some of Big Law's critical challenges for more than five years through our Practice Management and Innovation initiative (PMI). Through PMI we have gained tremendous insights into our clients' needs and expectations as they relate to service delivery, our approach to matter management and even the process of innovation itself – including the need to find inventive ways for exploring where change is most needed and how to make it happen. It was through this need to find a new way to uncover what needs to change that we looked to an entirely different industry for inspiration and discovered the hackathon.

Our white paper, *Hacking Big Law – Putting a legal hackathon to the test,* explores our experience of running our first legal hackathon, which was held on February 3, 2016, in collaboration with Ryerson University's Legal Innovation Zone, as the centrepiece of a month-long legal innovation program at Osler. Our main objectives were to engage in a dialogue on how to tackle some of the critical challenges Big Law is currently facing and identify areas for change. The session was hosted by Steve Gedeon, Associate Professor at Ryerson University's Ted Rogers School of Management, and participants included firm members, representatives from client companies and others involved in the legal industry, including thought leader Jordan Furlong.

The paper provides our insights on the event and its results, including the following:

- an overview of the steps it took to host the hackathon, from gaining organizational support to creating our hackathon "team"

- highlights from the hackathon process as it happened, including methods used in the session and the solutions that were generated

- key takeaways that resonated most with participants

DOWNLOAD PDF: White paper: Hacking Big Law