

ZEN AND THE ART OF LEGAL NETWORKING

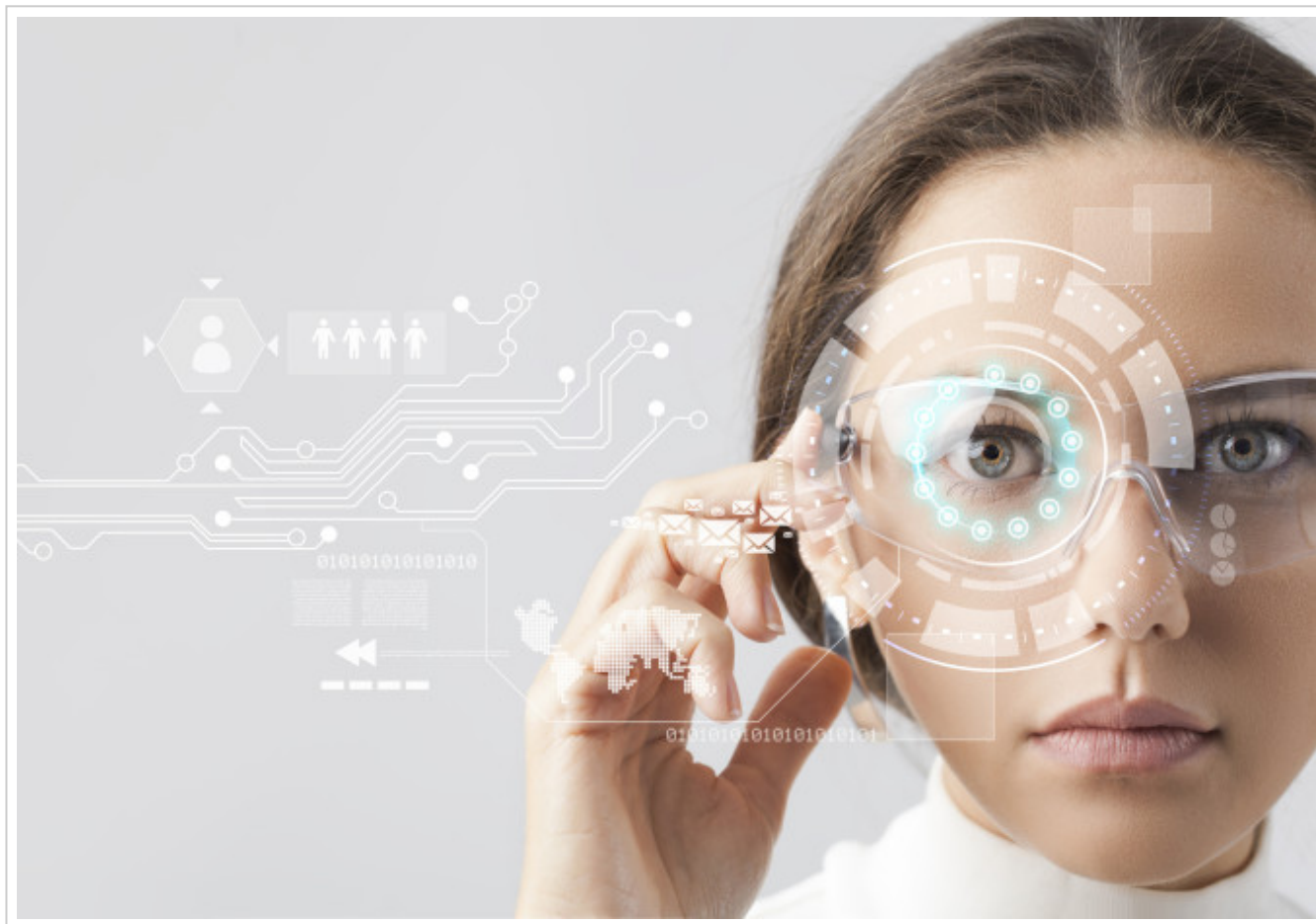
BY: LINDSAY GRIFFITHS OF THE ILN

INSIGHTS & COMMENTARY ON
*Relationship Building
within the International
Lawyers Network*

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Are You Ready for the Future of Legal Services?

BY LINDSAY GRIFFITHS ON AUGUST 2, 2016



A few months ago, I was contacted about [SmartLaw](#).

SmartLaw is the idea that there are three keys to a law firm's success – their clients, their culture and the intelligent use of technology (this is per HighQ, a technology company who provides enterprise collaboration,

file sharing & content publishing solutions to leading law firms, corporate legal teams, and banks). About SmartLaw, they said:

“

It's no longer news that the business of law is changing. Business structures, billing models, and even client expectations are very different than they were just a few short years ago.

The way firms compete and who they compete with; the staff they employ, or choose to outsource, and where in the world they're located; and the importance of business analytics and big data are all relatively new concerns in law.

No matter where your firm is at now, SmartLaw is about mastering the fundamentals to make sure you stay competitive in the future.”

We know that the business of law has been, and is changing – though there's still some disagreement about whether there's total “disruption” or just a gradual shift. But either way, most of us can agree that things are different today than they were 10 years ago. Even five years ago.

HighQ asked me to add my thoughts to an eBook they developed, answering the question: “What do you believe lawyers and law firms need to do to prepare for the future of legal services?” I'm including my response below, and invite you to [check out the full eBook](#) (which is free). I'm really flattered to be included among some great company.

The key trait that lawyers and law firms of the future will need is flexibility.

If there's anything that we learned from the economic downturn of 2008, it's that those firms that are most successful today are those that are flexible and responsive, and able to collaborate with their clients as business partners. That's not just true for today, but will be true for tomorrow too.

Flexibility translates to being open to market shifts, advances in technology, and adapting your partnership/business model to the needs of clients and the marketplace.

To prepare for that, firms and lawyers will have to stay on the cutting edge of industry trends – they may not need to adapt to them immediately, but they'll have to be aware of what they are, and engaged in the discussions around them.

To make the most of these, three things will be essential:

- Having strong strategic goals and plans in place that drive the firm and its lawyers, and are evaluated and modified on a regular and ongoing basis to quickly respond to changes in the marketplace.
- Engaging with industry thought leaders, both within the legal industry itself, and within their own specialty industries.
- Instituting a strong client feedback loop that allows for open communication with their clients to ensure that their needs are being met, and that the firm is adapting and growing with them.

The more flexible and adaptive firms can be, the more prepared they will be for whatever the future holds – whether that's big changes, or small ones.

What do you think? What is the key for lawyers and law firms to prepare for the future of legal services? Take a look at what some of the other contributors had to say, and see if you agree!