



Lessons
in Leadership:

An Interview
with
Jessica Lockett

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Jessica Lockett

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- *Tell us a bit about yourself and how you came to be in (or a customer of) the legal business services field?*

I am a lawyer by training. Having completed both an undergraduate and graduate degree in Criminology prior to law school, I initially thought I should take the logical step and become a criminal lawyer; I even spent one semester working with a legal aid clinic through my school's Criminal Law Clinic. However, I took a sharp turn from initial intentions and ended up in working with a large transactional law firm in Toronto, and then practiced for a few years in the wealth management arena as counsel for one of Canada's largest banks. I made another turn about five years ago, when I entered the world of eDiscovery and legal document review to manage and oversee complex review projects for litigation and regulatory matters for law firms, corporations, and government agencies.

- *What do you do for a living right now?*

I am the Director, Legal Solutions for Commonwealth Legal, a division of Ricoh Canada, where I am responsible for the strategic leadership and design of our unique, analytics-

based Intelligent Review solutions. The main goal of Intelligent Review is to customize, design, and carry out the most effective, defensible, and cost-efficient review possible.

- *What has been your greatest triumph/success in the legal services field and what did you learn from it?*

So far, my greatest triumph/success in my career has been developing and implementing Intelligent Review – an analytics-based review solution that is truly unique for a legal outsource review provider... and successfully getting clients on board to try something new! When working through legal review projects and workflows in the past, I would often ask myself: “*there must be a more efficient way to do this?*” – and now I have the opportunity to take some action and bring real efficiency to the review process.

What I have discovered is that if you align yourself with people you can learn from, who are also creative, supportive, and share your vision, so much can be accomplished.

- *Do you think the legal industry is headed in the right direction, the wrong direction - or which direction?*

My interpretation of the “right” direction, is one toward resourcefulness, efficiency, client-centeredness, and cost-effectiveness. In my view, the legal services industry (including those in the legal profession) is moving in this direction. Clients are also driving the adoption of technology because they are more sophisticated and knowledgeable, and demand these qualities in their legal service providers.

- *Who - or what - inspires you - and why?*

Creative solutions inspire me and efficiency drives me. I am motivated to find answers to questions such as, how can we do this not only better, but quicker and cheaper? How can we use the tools at our fingertips in ways that we have not yet applied?

Success to me is collaborating to develop efficient and creative review workflows and processes. I am constantly inspired by my amazing colleagues who bring so much creativity and energy to the table.

- *What advice would you give to the younger generation contemplating law as a career?*

Be competent with technology. You don't need to be an expert by any means, but you must understand the power it can bring to the legal profession and to clients, so be prepared to align yourself with experts who can guide and support you. Learn to speak the language and be comfortable asking questions and asking for help. No area of law

can escape the power and presence of technology. Also, try to shadow some lawyers (practicing and non-practicing) prior to entering law school. 'Being a lawyer is exactly what I thought it was going to be', said no lawyer, ever. Law as a career holds an array of opportunity – keep your mind open to the possibilities.

- *How ready for change do you think the legal industry is?*

Ready or not, change is inevitable. Some industries, and people within them, adapt easier than others. The key for an easier transition into a “different” (read, more efficient) way of practicing law, is to ensure that those just starting their careers are provided hands-on experience with legal technology, very early-on starting in school. Only when law schools can adapt to the changing nature of the profession and provide students with practical tools, will the industry be fully ready.

- *Is more - or different - leadership required? In what ways?*

I think more different leadership is required to help the industry adapt to the inevitable changes brought about by the rapid and disruptive nature of technology. There are some “different”, less top-down, leadership styles that have emerged in the legal landscape; Leaders that embrace and foster innovation and promote entrepreneurialism. I think a lot of this is influenced by Millennials' influx into, and Baby Boomers' exit from, providing and consuming legal services. There is a demand for fewer constraints and increased flexibility, for innovation and cost-effectiveness. Technology has been a large part of this changing landscape and we need more of the “different” leaders who can embrace it.

- *How deep do you think will be the inroads of technology in the industry?*

Very deep. As deep as inroads of technology has been on all of us personally (remember the days that we used to have to mail handwritten letters to stay in touch with loved ones out of town? Yeah, me neither), is how deep they will be on the legal services industry. It cannot be avoided. The players who embrace technological innovation will advance, and those that do not will fall back. This is true for both providers and consumers of legal services.

- *In ten years, do you see the legal services industry much as it is - or do you see new players, new technology and an altered state?*

It is no question that we will see new players and new technologies in the future of the legal services industry – it's how it has been over the last 10 years, and how it will continue to be going forward – it cannot be avoided. But with new players comes competition, which brings about further innovation – so it is exciting to see where we go!

- *Are consultants and lawyers looking increasingly similar? Should the distinction continue?*

All lawyers are consultants but not all consultants are lawyers. The legal consultants I hire to complete our document review projects are experienced, technology-savvy lawyers. The nature of the legal profession is changing, just as it is with every other profession and occupation. Many lawyers are rejecting the late-night office culture and partnership track, and availing themselves to different ways of providing their services – as independent contractors, limited-term contract lawyers, legal consultants, etc. I think this is something to be embraced.

- *What's the one most significant factor that will drive change in your view?*

While there are many forces at play driving change in the legal services industry, I think the most significant one now is client demand for cost-efficiency. In the eDiscovery industry, legal document review accounts for upwards of 70% of all related costs. As I have mentioned before, doesn't that beg the question: are we really doing this in the most efficient way possible? As clients are becoming more in-tune with the industry and more adept with legal technology, they are beginning to ask the same question and choosing providers who can answer with an affirmative "yes". Those who can't answer so confidently will need to innovate and embrace new technologies to stay competitive.

- *Are we seeing the demise of the "profession" and the real emergence of the "business" of law?*

The business of law has always existed, perhaps just in a different way. Law firms are a business; sole practitioners run a business. However, we have seen significant growth in legal technology companies whose services assist those in the profession. Together, I see the two sides as comprising the legal services industry and are becoming more connected over time. I do not believe that the emergence of one means the demise of the other. In fact, it may be quite the opposite!

- *What do you see as the greatest opportunity for the sector looking forward?*

I see partnerships as one of the greatest opportunities to ensure success. We have seen law firms try to "do it all" and fail. A law firm's business is the practice of law, not in providing legal technology or other related services. However, the two go together. You can't do it all, but you also can't pass the buck. Your client will suffer. As such, partnering with experts is crucial.

- *Who do you think are the greatest influencers on the legal services industry these days?*

Innovators, entrepreneurs, risk-takers. These are the people who do and will continue to drive change in the industry.

- *In the legal space, we see growing emphasis on the issue of innovation: eDiscovery has sometimes been associated with “throwing lots of people at cases” - often in a big hurry. How has “people strategy” evolved? What’s happening in terms of “people innovation”?*

Outsourced document review has been associated with bringing together large numbers of lawyers to review documents for weeks, months, even years. And many of the documents reviewed are not even relevant to the matter at hand. That billable hour certainly adds up! With the evolution of legal review technology, clients are becoming unwilling to pay for lawyers to review such large amounts of non-relevant materials – and nor should they. An effective people strategy to deal with document review in the eDiscovery arena is to align with those that offer expertise with review technologies and analytics-based workflows. eDiscovery review lawyers are now emerging as a specialty area. The right partner can dedicate 2-3 experienced eDiscovery review lawyers to your matter who will leverage technology to do the work that was once (and sometimes still is) done by 25, 35, even 50 lawyers.

- *We also see growing expectations on the part of buyers, as informed buyers – not just on services pricing but in terms of the “experience”:*

While price still seems to be a major driving factor, clients are also looking to partner and work with legal service providers who are engaged, dedicated, innovative, and invested experts. The adage still rings true: you get what you pay for. When assessing hourly rates, it may appear to cost more upfront to go with a service provider who offers all the above, but I can guarantee it will cost more in the long run to “fix” errors made by people who are not experts, and/or re-do work completed by people who were not focused on ensuring the best possible outcome for you and for your client.

- *Aside from pricing, what are the drivers you’re seeing in client behavior towards selecting and engaging providers?*

While price still seems to be a major driving factor, clients are also looking to partner and work with legal service providers who are engaged, dedicated, innovative, and invested experts. The old adage still rings true: you get what you pay for. When assessing hourly rates, it may appear to cost more upfront to go with a service provider who offers all the

above, but I can guarantee it will cost more in the end to “fix” errors made by people who are not experts and or re-do work completed by people who were not focused ensuring the best possible outcome for you and for your client.

- *How important is the issue of “relationship” in client decisions?*

I think relationships are very important when clients are making decisions on service providers. Clients need to trust that their providers have their interests at the forefront. And providers want to earn your trust and keep your business.

As the marketplace for legal services becomes more crowded, the issue of differentiation becomes ever more important. Differentiation may be reflected in many ways:

- *As a professional, what do you feel makes you different? What is the quality or attribute that you feel has been most helpful in advancing your clients’ interests – and for which you would like to be known? Feel free to share an example!*

What makes me different is my honesty. I am not going to convince you to use an advanced tool such as technology-assisted review (TAR) if it is not the right tool to meet your objectives. I will inform you of our collective knowledge and expertise, and work with you to formulate strategic, efficient, and cost-effective review workflows based on reality, not a fantasy “easy button”. I am driven by efficiencies – to a scary degree! If there is another way to do something that will save you and your client time and money, we will work to find it. If our clients trust that, they will come back.

- *Similarly, how would you describe the way(s) in which Commonwealth differentiates itself and “stands out from the pack”?*

From experience, I say with confidence that Commonwealth Legal's team are some of the most knowledgeable, supportive, collaborative colleagues I have ever worked with. The depth of expertise and dedication is incomparable. A strong “people, process, and technology” focus drives our client-centred approach.

From a document review perspective, what makes Commonwealth Legal unique is the collaboration not only with our clients, but internally. Typically, review teams enter the picture at the last stage in the process. This can lead to issues such as a lack of understanding of procedure and a lack of investment in outcomes. However, our review team sits side-by-side our technology experts, working together to develop effective approaches, creative problem-solve, and ensure the most effective review possible; this is unique in the industry.

And finally... a little fun - the Wildcard questions:

- *If you weren't doing this, what would you be doing?*
Real estate agent and/or house flipper extraordinaire.
- *What would you like to be known for?*
Being honest. And hopefully for having a good sense of humour.
- *What would surprise everyone if they knew (they may now).*
I have travelled to 25 countries and counting.
- *What's your favorite hobby or activity outside of law?*
Reading and fantasizing about where to travel to next.
- *What's your favorite sports team?*
Toronto Blue Jays – it's a family trait.
- *What's your favorite city?*
Just one? Toronto.
- *What's your favorite food?*
French fries.
- *What's your nickname - and why?*
I have many, but JLo is one that I think speaks for itself.



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