Trial, Fail, Better: Improving Legal Tech Adoption in Law Firms

Legal Technology Solutions Team | January 2024

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Problem statement: Many of our licensed software and homegrown projects fail to meet our adoption expectations, despite our best efforts. What are we doing wrong?

Target audience: Law firm legal technology change agents

Possible ~~reasons~~ excuses

Lawyers are resistant to change.

[Enter your reason/excuse here]

Our lawyers are too busy to adopt to new technology.

Pressure to bill time is preventing our attorneys from engaging with tech.

Our firm's culture is not hospitable to change.

Things we have tried and failed

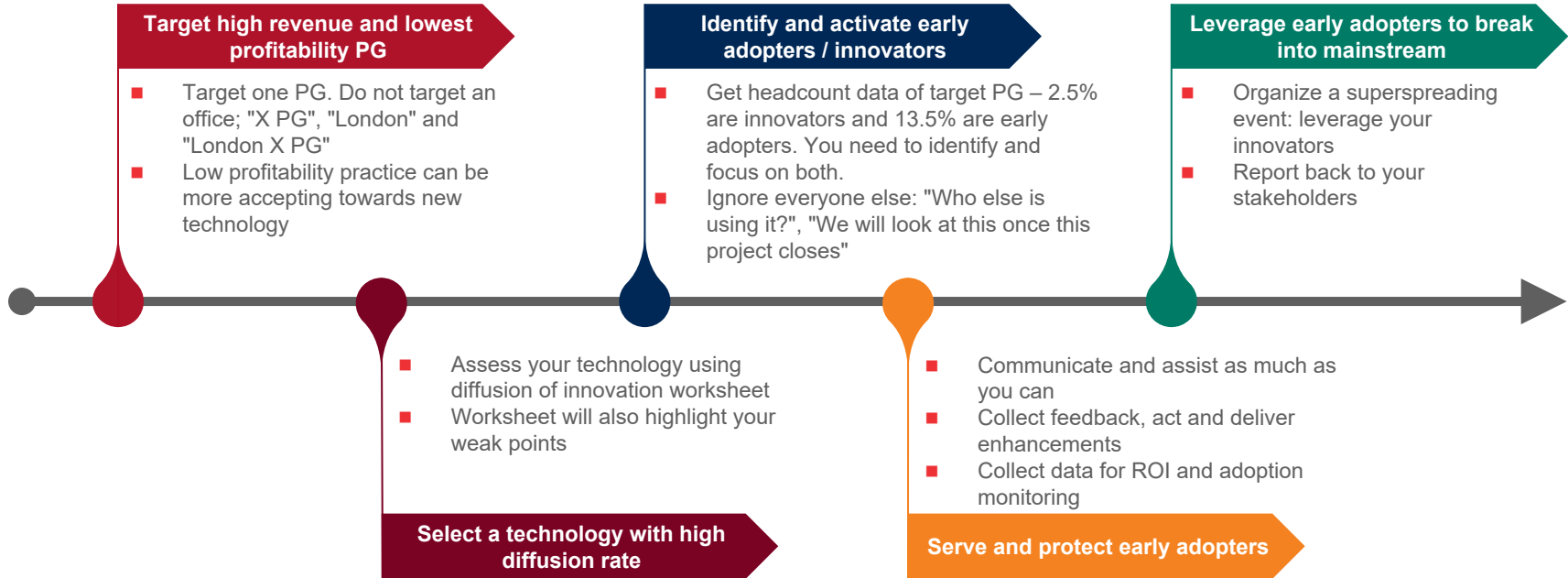| Principle	What did we try?	Why did it fail?
Increase urgency	Kicking down doors and saying the end is near.	Incremental new tech developments do not create urgency (GenAI an exception – threatens core)
Communicate for buy-in	Tea-time diplomacy; communicating ideas and cultivating consensus.	Lack of targeting and prioritization wastes time and resources.
Build the guiding team	Senior partner approval – tone from the top.	There is a large chasm between a managing partner saying "that's good, do it" and a CEO committing and personally leading change.
Create short-term wins	Creating success stories and advertising with them.	People do not read untargeted communications. Good for exposure, not for adoption.
Communicate for buy-in	Attending regional meetings to set up innovation bars for attendees to learn more about our legal technology portfolio.	Vast majority of the population will not adopt based on an interaction with you (non-attorney tech). Good for exposure, not for adoption.

Leading Change by John P. Kotter

The Heart of Change: Real-Life Stories of How People Change Their Organizations by John P. Kotter

Making Sense of Change Management by Esther Cameron and Mike Green

Change (the) Management: Why We as Leaders Must Change for the Change to Last by Al Comeaux

Our Iceberg is Melting by John P. Kotter

What worked for us?

Target high revenue and lowest profitability PG
- Target one PG. Do not target an office; "X PG", "London" and "London X PG"
- Low profitability practice can be more accepting towards new technology

Identify and activate early adopters / innovators
- Get headcount data of target PG – 2.5% are innovators and 13.5% are early adopters. You need to identify and focus on both.
- Ignore everyone else: "Who else is using it?", "We will look at this once this project closes"

Leverage early adopters to break into mainstream
- Organize a superspreading event: leverage your innovators
- Report back to your stakeholders

Select a technology with high diffusion rate
- Assess your technology using diffusion of innovation worksheet
- Worksheet will also highlight your weak points

Serve and protect early adopters
- Communicate and assist as much as you can
- Collect feedback, act and deliver enhancements
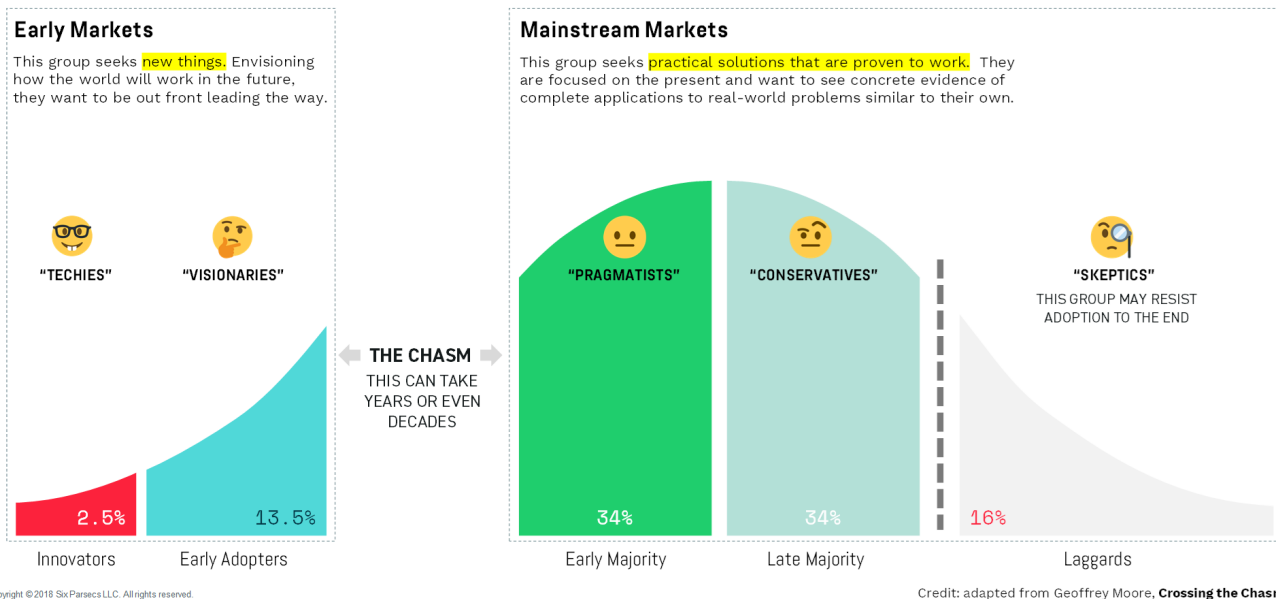- Collect data for ROI and adoption monitoring

Henderson, W. (2023, March 13). Scoring your innovation. Legal Evolution.

Rogers, Everett M. Diffusion of Innovations. New York, 1962. Moore, Geoffrey A. Crossing the Chasm. Capstone Publishing, 1999.

Ellis, S., & Brown, M. (2017). Hacking Growth: How today's fastest-growing companies drive breakout success. Currency.

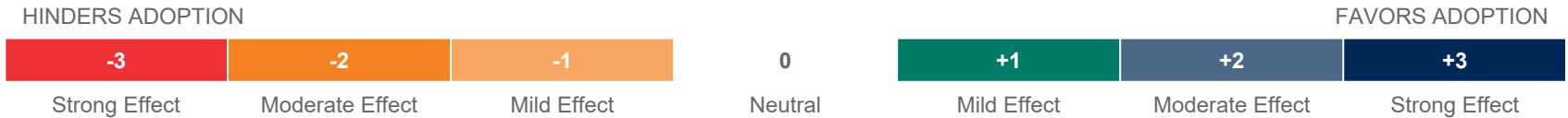# Why do we focus only on innovators and early adopters?

Early Markets

This group seeks new things. Envisioning how the world will work in the future, they want to be out front leading the way.

"TECHIES"   "VISIONARIES"

THE CHASM
THIS CAN TAKE YEARS OR EVEN DECADES

2.5%   13.5%

Innovators   Early Adopters

Mainstream Markets

This group seeks practical solutions that are proven to work. They are focused on the present and want to see concrete evidence of complete applications to real-world problems similar to their own.

"PRAGMATISTS"   "CONSERVATIVES"   "SKEPTICS"
THIS GROUP MAY RESIST ADOPTION TO THE END

34%   34%   16%

Early Majority   Late Majority   Laggards

Credit: adapted from Geoffrey Moore, **Crossing the Chasm**

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Moore, Geoffrey A. Crossing the Chasm. Capstone Publishing, 1999.

How to assess your product?

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HINDERS ADOPTION				FAVORS ADOPTION		
-3	**-2**	**-1**	0	**+1**	**+2**	**+3**
Strong Effect	Moderate Effect	Mild Effect	Neutral	Mild Effect	Moderate Effect	Strong Effect

Attribute	Possible Score	Description
Relative Advantage		How much improvement does this method offer compared to the previous one? (x1, x2, x3)
Compatibility		Is this in line with lawyers' usual practices?
Complexity		How complex is it to use this product?
Trialability		What does it take to trial the product and get to the "Aha!" moment?
Observability		How long does it take to observe the benefits of the technology?
Total		

What can you do differently tomorrow?

	📅 Now	📅→ Tomorrow
Target audience	Everyone	Specific targeting of high revenue and low profitability PGs.
Product	Use cases, pain points	Also think about its diffusion potential
Pushing adoption	Broad adoption focus	1. Early targeting of innovators, 2. Leveraging innovators, 3. Peer-to-peer adoption recommendations for breaking into the mainstream.

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Questions

What does literature on change management say?

Increase urgency
Create a sense of urgency and a compelling reason for change.

Communicate for buy-in
Communicate the vision and the change strategy to all stakeholders and address their concerns and questions.

Make change stick
Reinforce the change by aligning the structures, processes, and values with the new vision and behaviors.

Build the guiding team
Assemble a group of influential and credible people who can lead the change effort.

Create short-term wins
Celebrate and reward early successes and use them to build momentum and confidence.

Leading Change by John P. Kotter

The Heart of Change: Real-Life Stories of How People Change Their Organizations by John P. Kotter

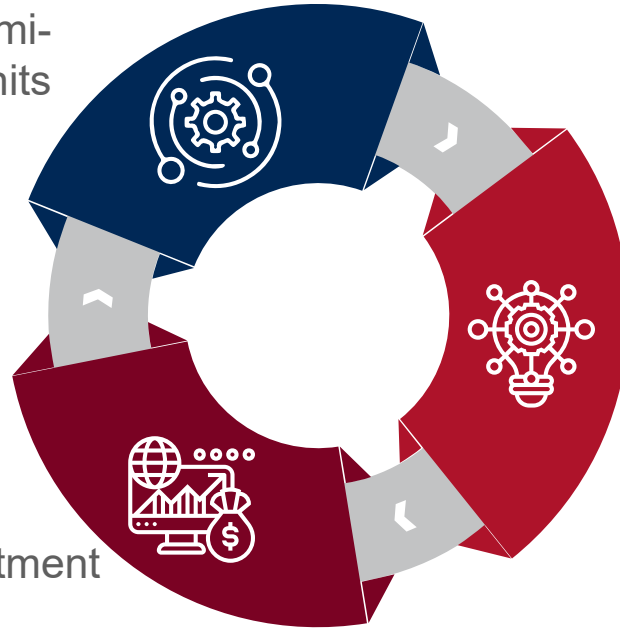**Making Sense of Change Management** by Esther Cameron and Mike Green

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Why does literature's recommendations do not work on law firms?

Chain of command vs semi-autonomous business units

Innovation decision is voluntary opt-in

Continued vision and investment

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