

## Ep 65 – Legal Upheaval

APRIL 8, 2019 / PODCAST / LAW FIRM MANAGEMENT, LAW FIRM TECHNOLOGY

Buzzword-laden legal tech articles that miss the point, and a chat with Michele Destefano that hits every point! What does it take to innovate, understand, and upheave the legal services industry?



Legal Upheaval: with Michele Destefano

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### Is Your Law Firm On The Blockchain Yet?

There are two articles we discuss in today's *Hot Take*, both dealing with the idea of "new tech" for law firms:

<https://www.lawtechnologytoday.org/2018/07/3-technologies-transforming-legal/>

Three Technologies Transforming the Legal Field By Bruce Orcutt – Is your law firm using analytics, OCR, or blockchain yet? A fine leap from text analysis of PDFs to blockchain – which is confused here with automation of smart contracts....Bruce is a product marketer for ABBYY, which is a legal tech vendor.

<https://www.lawtechnologytoday.org/2018/07/the-future-of-the-legal-services-industry/>

NewLaw New Rules: A Conversation About the Future of the Legal Services Industry By Brett Chalmers – talking about this new law lingo – but he is ALSO a product marketer for a company that does data management for law firms.

The thought here is – and it echos Paul's thoughts about ABA TechShow in February, which is that there are a lot of people making things that not many people need or will use. We're not getting down on legal tech or the ABA or anything, but the very real issue is that if you make a product that serves few people, you will cap your market and that's it. Or as Greg Garman from LawClerkLegal said on our show – "more folks on a small slice of a pie that needs big, fundamental change"

Unfortunately the fallout from a lot of this misguided dev work, earnest or well intentioned as some of it may be – is these tech vendors who just barnacle themselves onto existing paradigms, and aren't pushing for a full change, or even any change at all beyond "help us move a couple more units." You can see it at these software companies, none of which do ANYTHING with blockchain, or at least, we can't see that touted on their site.... as we discuss later with Michelle, innovation isn't a quick fix otr a one-size-fits-all solution. Not saying it has to be difficult and drawn out in every situation, but there is a difference between pushing for breakthroughs as opposed to trying to force the latest shiny object on your office staff.

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Her new bestselling book, [Legal Upheaval](#) – focuses on collaboration and innovation in the law – and it's this book and her amazing work on social media and within legal tech that brought her to the attention of the show, and we couldn't be more honored to have Michele on LAWSome today.

<http://www.movelaw.com>

“There may be no “i” in team, but there’s two “i’s” in innovation.”

*In this excerpt from the [podcast](#) Jake and Paul talk with Michele about having an “aha moment” and how learning how to find problems is more important in some cases than learning how to solve problems, which most lawyers are already good at:*

Jake: ...I'm curious, when you say that the law firm owners or the practicing lawyers were the ones that got the most out of it, meaning in a business sense or a problem-solving sense or just like a different way? You know, we talked about an “aha moment” before. I mean, can you see like a light bulb go on over these people and, you know, they suddenly realize there's a different way to think about practicing law or...? I'm just interested what you were leaning towards there?

Michele: Yeah, so probably, I would say two things. First, it's not about problem solving. Because we teach lawyers how to problem solve, and research shows that lawyers are off the charts great at complex problem solving. What we aren't as strong at is problems finding. So Tina Seelig and Daniel Pink, both authors who I admire and read everything they write, both of them talk about how the best problem solvers are the best problem finders. And what problem finders do is they spend more time on the problem up front, so that they don't end up solving a symptom or rushing to solve and missing the mark. So they ask more questions. And it's not that lawyers aren't inquisitive. But in LawWithoutWalls, you learn how to do the 5 Whys, and you learn how to sit back and problem find for a lot longer, almost so long that you're uncomfortable. And that is the difference.

Lots and lots of law firm partners will say to me at the end of it, that their team back at their firm, not the LawWithoutWalls team they're working with, but their team back at the firm will say, “Oh, my gosh, what have you done with Craig?” Meaning, not “I've disappeared with this team,” but, “I approach meetings differently. I approach how I lead differently. I approach teaming and collaboration differently. And most importantly, I approach collaborative problem solving differently.” And it's that, yeah, different approach that makes the difference and is the aha moment.

Jake: I'm having a little bit more of an aha moment, maybe a side dish, to the aha entrée. The Promethean kind of idea of going and getting the fire and bringing the fire of knowledge back to your tribe. You know, there is this egoic plucking of the string that doesn't really comport with the actual work that needs to get done. And, I think, a lot of people quest for self-betterment and mastery to make themselves better and not a law firm and not a model and not for their people.

And it seems like this project is helping because there's people who are hustling, Gary Vaynerchuk, Tony Robbins, you know, all these people, you know, “You gotta hustle. You gotta lead. You know, you gotta be a general,” you know, and all these things. But it's actually not that. The real work, the real innovation is not this leading military strategic thing. It's actually this collaborative, working together, finding problems. And I just think for some people who are questing for mastery, how do you help break their ego from it...do you deal with that?

Michelle: Yes.

Jake: Is this ancillary aha thing or what?

Michele: Well, I mean, so Chris Avery wrote this book years ago, 15 years ago. And I mean, the title, it's one of those situations where, “Yes, it's a great book. Yet the title says it all. And his title is, “Teamwork is An Individual Skill.” And this is something that people often forget. And we have to work on ourselves first. So we talk a lot in LawWithoutWalls about the fact that there may be no “i” in team, but there's two “i's” in innovation.

And those two “i's” are one, the identity of the lawyer as a lawyer. And how immediately when we put our little lawyer robe on, we act a little bit differently and perform to that role. I mean, granted, it's true. Oftentimes, lawyers are the most educated

candy bar company, although I'm sure they don't want to be called the candy bar company, because they do a lot more candy bars.

Jake: Sure, sure, sure.

Michele: Anyway, he talks about this as well. And he talks about how this other "I" is the individual. Look, we're all born to only focus on ourselves, right? If you've ever played with any three-year-olds or four-year-olds, it's, "Me, me, me, me, me." And so you take the combination of the lawyer identity and our role and that individual intrinsic motivation that's just natural to self-preservation, and we've got some problems. And so we actually, everybody at our kickoff, we talk about the lawyer's mindset, the lawyer's temperament, and the lawyer's training and how that, actually, creates two crutches for us and prevents us from being collaborative. And so we try to break down that I at the same time recognizing that if you're not gonna commit as an individual to working on your own issues with collaboration, we're not going to get anywhere.

So we try really hard to strip that ego down. So I mean, and there's tons of...if you think about training programs, where you go to them to become a better leader or become a better mentor, or whatever it may be, and it's a week and you get inspired, and maybe you leave home with a couple things. But after another week goes by, and then another week goes by, another week goes by, how much do you really keep a hold of in terms of change?

## Get More Information About Innovation for Law Firms

Be sure to listen to the entire podcast episode for more information and conversation about innovation for law firms, finding and solving problems and more. If you want more [LAWsome](#) subscribe to the show on your favorite podcast platform, and for the latest in legal marketing insights and information be sure to subscribe to the [Consultwebs Newsletter here](#) – [>SUBSCRIBE<](#)–



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