

IT project acceleration for law firms: How to re-ignite delivery to achieve benefits faster

Technology is a strategic priority

IT and Operations leaders in the larger UK law firms have done a great job at influencing their partners and getting technology onto the strategic agenda. 80% of managing partners and senior partners of larger law firms now point to technology as the factor most likely to have the greatest impact on their firm and 94% see technology as a strategic priority^[1].

Technology is set to have the greatest impact on law firms over the next five years. That impact spans upgrading IT infrastructure to achieve world-class basics, ensuring teams have IT that 'just works', and innovating to implement new technologies which maximise the benefits of digital transformation and drive efficiencies.

Significant project investment

IT and Operations leaders have significant investment in IT change. And their situation is getting more challenging as changes come more rapidly and have longer-term impacts. IT organisations are typically managing a complex portfolio comprising hundreds of programmes and projects – often alongside a larger firm-wide transformation.

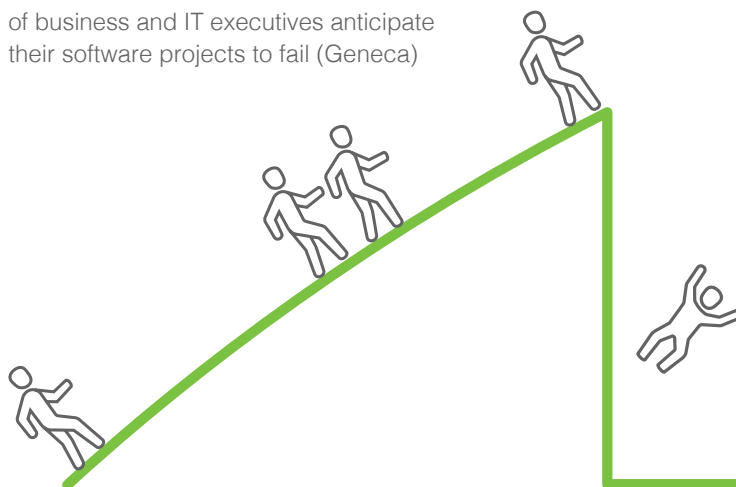
Yet statistics show that the vast majority of organisational change initiatives underperform, or even fail to produce their intended value.

IT leaders are all too familiar with managing multiple projects, often with conflicting priorities. They are also often hampered by a lack of resources and project delivery expertise. Sadly, many carry the scars of project failures, delays and over-runs – resulting in projects stalling, costs mounting and low confidence.

Managing large, complex IT transformations is tough and risky

75%

of business and IT executives anticipate their software projects to fail (Geneca)



Project Success



80%

of project management executives don't know how their projects align with their company's strategy (Changepoint)

57%

of projects fail due to breakdown in communications (IT Cortex)

Project Failure

Success brings value*

Improvements	Savings
25% cross selling ratio	£600k efficiencies
£14m contract win	£1.5m project cost
£2m sales opportunities generated	£1m supplier costs
£8.5m new business won	22% staff costs

*Examples from Nine Feet Tall clients

Stuck in a rut? It doesn't have to be that way...

Re-igniting stalled projects and accelerating delivery enables IT leaders to demonstrate value, realise the benefits faster, and move on. At Nine Feet Tall, we encourage our clients to consider what they can do differently to increase the momentum of their projects.

^[1] Law Firm Leadership Survey, BDO, 2017

Six steps to igniting your project

1. **Prioritise your portfolio**
2. **Phase to deliver early benefits**
3. **Take a hard look at your team and suppliers**
4. **Build a business case based around flexible resourcing**
5. **Apply 'just the right amount of governance'**
6. **Ready the firm for swift adoption**

1

Prioritise your portfolio

Do all of the projects in your portfolio align with your business strategy? Which of them maximise the benefits realised from the firm's investment in change? Review your change portfolio to prioritise and quantify against these two criteria. Put projects that don't meet the criteria on the back-burner.

2

Phase to deliver early benefits

Are you confident you know which phase your project or programme is in? Can you report to your leadership team progress against milestones for each phase? Whichever project methodology your firm favours, make sure you have clearly defined phases with defined outputs for each. This drives good project management discipline and accountability within the delivery team. It also provides a common language for communicating progress across the firm.

3

Take a hard look at your team and suppliers

Do you have the right capacity and capability in your and your supplier's team to handle each project phase? Can they deliver the optimum technical, business-ready and business engagement result? Look at your internal resources and those of your software provider. Relying on your solution provider's project manager to plan your project timescales will rarely be sufficient. Consider where and crucially when you need to flex, add capability or swap resources out.

4

Build a business case around flexible resourcing

Does your business case flat line a set number of resources across the project or does it take account of the ebbs and flows of work volume and the differing skills needed across the lifecycle? Think about how you can flex your resources and expertise by looking at options to pull in specialist capability in short bursts, using part-time or interim models. This not only changes the business case investment profile often for the better, but also enables you to deliver rapidly, with greater focus.

5

Apply 'just the right amount of governance'

Is programme governance impeding delivery pace? Think about what 'just the right amount of governance' looks like for your firm and consider not delaying key decisions due to fixed Programme Board meeting dates. You may also need to shake up traditional governance structures and operate within a more flexible, adaptable framework. Set appropriate tolerances for time, cost and quality, so that the Board is used for decision making, direction setting and escalations, rather than for updating.

6

Ready the firm for swift adoption

Business readiness planning should start at the same time as technical planning. Arguably the most critical phase, consider whether your resources have experience of not just marrying up IT processes with working practices, but also of understanding, engaging with and speaking the same language as your business users. A well executed, multi-layered business readiness workstream including communications, engagement, process and ways of working reviews, and training enhances user adoption rates and accelerates time to acceptance.

Nine Feet Tall – your trusted project acceleration partner

At Nine Feet Tall, we manage and deliver complex IT system implementations for law firms. Our project acceleration service is swift, pragmatic and impactful.

Based on a methodology that has been road tested with multiple clients experiencing very different challenges, Project Acceleration enables IT and Operations leaders to rescue stalling initiatives, inject pace into flagging schedules, and get projects delivered faster. We work as a partner with in-house teams to support them to excel. We help to challenge the status quo, remove complexities and engage with your business users to embed lasting impact.

Our project success speaks for itself. If that's not enough, we:

- Guarantee to find a minimum of 10% process efficiencies
- Can link our fees to the delivery of the project outcomes
- Can commit to scale within 2 weeks



Tiggy leads a Nine Feet Tall team of legal sector specialists. Skilled in project delivery, an expert culture and change manager, she has led technology, efficiency and post-acquisition programmes for some of the UK's leading law firms.

Tiggy Robinson, Partner

Get in touch

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