

New Littler ‘On Demand’ App Has a Human Side: Shift Lawyers

The labor and employment giant says combining technology with lawyers on demand will address client “pain points” and create a new career category within the firm.

By Dan Packel
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Labor and employment specialist Littler Mendelson wants its new technology-based platform, Littler onDemand, to give clients an alternative to increasing the size of their in-house legal departments.

The platform, to be unveiled Thursday, will use both technology and a team of dedicated “on demand” counsel to give clients real-time answers to their pressing legal questions.

Littler shareholder Scott Forman, who founded the platform, said it was developed in response to clients who identified the expense of dedicating resources to handle day-to-day human resources expertise as one of their biggest “pain points.”

The announcement follows Littler’s 2019 **Employer Survey**, released this week, which shows that 64% of general counsel and in-house lawyers expect their legal service providers to leverage technology to increase operational efficiency.

“It’s right on point with what the market is asking for,” Forman said: “The desire to have more efficient legal services and the desire to not have inconsistent advice.”



Scott Forman

Clients will use the service by submitting questions on a newly built app, either via mobile or desktop. If the question has already been asked in an organization, it will elicit previous attorney responses. And for new inquiries, on-call Littler “on-demand” attorneys—who have an average of 15 years of experience and will work a set shift—will work to generate real-time answers. They can either respond directly or collaborate with Littler attorneys with more specialized knowledge on particularly complex questions.

Fees will range from traditional hourly rates, blended rates or any other arrangements sought by clients. Regardless, Forman said that the expense for clients would be less than the cost of salary and benefits for new in-house counsel.

Clients will also have access to a dashboard that shows what other questions are being asked, in order to gain a picture of other issues or concerns that they should have on their radar. Forman gave the example of a wage and hour question that might alert a client to a compliance issue or stimulate an opportunity for further training.

The new platform also relies on a recognition that the traditional law firm career progression does not work for everyone.

“For years, you would come in as a lawyer and then be on the partnership track or no longer at a firm,” Forman said. “We’re very cognizant that today’s lawyers are looking for different things.”

He added that many lawyers who moved in-house seeking greater certainty about their hours

were encountering some of the same expectations they faced at firms.

“This delivers what most people mistakenly believe the in-house position offers: a set schedule, working on interesting legal issues for important clients,” Forman said of the “on demand” lawyers, who essentially work as an extension of the client’s legal team.

Forman said that the firm hired a handful of on-demand lawyers Wednesday and that it had a pipeline of others that it was interested in, as it is actively looking to add to the team.

A number of clients are also already on board, having signed up while the platform was in beta in 2018.

“There are some clients and attorneys that have reached out to us based on hearing about it, and we think this is going to be a real game changer for us and the legal market,” Forman said.

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For more information, visit www.littler.com/service-solutions/littler-ondemand

