

OCTOBER 2019

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Process apping

How SME law firms are preparing for future client demands by getting their own systems in order

NURTURING ENVIRONMENTS



James Temple, chief operating officer at Seddons, says partnering with CTS means improved staff performance, flexibility and cost savings

Seddons is an SME law firm based in London's west end. It advises UK and international clients on a range of specialisms including residential and commercial real estate, family law, corporate law and immigration, among others. The firm hopes to further build on its practice areas in the coming years, improving both its service delivery and profitability.

Like many other SME firms in recent years, Seddons aims to streamline its processes using technology. To achieve this, says Seddons' COO James Temple, the firm chose to – following an extensive selection process – partner with cloud and managed services provider CTS.

“What made CTS stand out above other vendors was its legal sector expertise. As our partnership continues to strengthen, CTS supports us with a detailed knowledge of our firm environment and application suite. CTS fully understands our business, and proactively monitors and supports our infrastructure.”

A HEAD OF STRATEGY

Temple says quite a lot has changed over the years. “At the end of 2018, we created a three-year strategy that focuses on growth and improving efficiency, while driving down cost.”

To support these goals, the firm appointed a new head of marketing and business development who helps drive new business and develops the firm's brand. For Temple, a particular focus is cost reduction.

But these aren't the only areas of interest for the firm's strategy. “Improving efficiency and streamlining processes are important goals for the firm. To achieve these goals, we plan to implement an agile environment for all our staff. People, technology and processes are at the heart of that, but of course, we also need to keep an eye on costs.”

Prior to looking at an infrastructure revamp, Seddons was already benefiting from cloud-based services such as Office and Exchange 365, as well as backup and disaster-recovery solutions.

“Moving to an infrastructure-as-a-service model was an obvious choice for us because we were already comfortable with, and benefiting from, using cloud services.

“We knew we'd struggle to replicate the level of performance, scalability, security and reliability that we could get from a specialist managed service provider, without incurring significant costs.”

CTS enables Seddons to reduce its capital expenditure and improve the performance, availability and flexibility of its technology capabilities, he says.

“Our new model removes the burden of managing infrastructure in-house. Historically, we had dedicated resources focused on keeping the lights on. Going down this route means that we can allocate those resources elsewhere, to more important tasks that add real value to the business.”

CTS provides service from the base layer of infrastructure, up to operating level and patching, which leaves staff free to focus on the application layer, Temple explains.

“Therefore, our focus has moved away from maintaining infrastructure and towards driving change. Leveraging the service from CTS allows us to ingrain ourselves better in the business – spending more time analysing how people work and finding appropriate solutions to drive efficiency and improve our processes.”



In addition to bringing previous experience delivering legal applications, CTS spent a lot of time with the firm to understand us as a business and where we're going

LPM FIRM FACTS

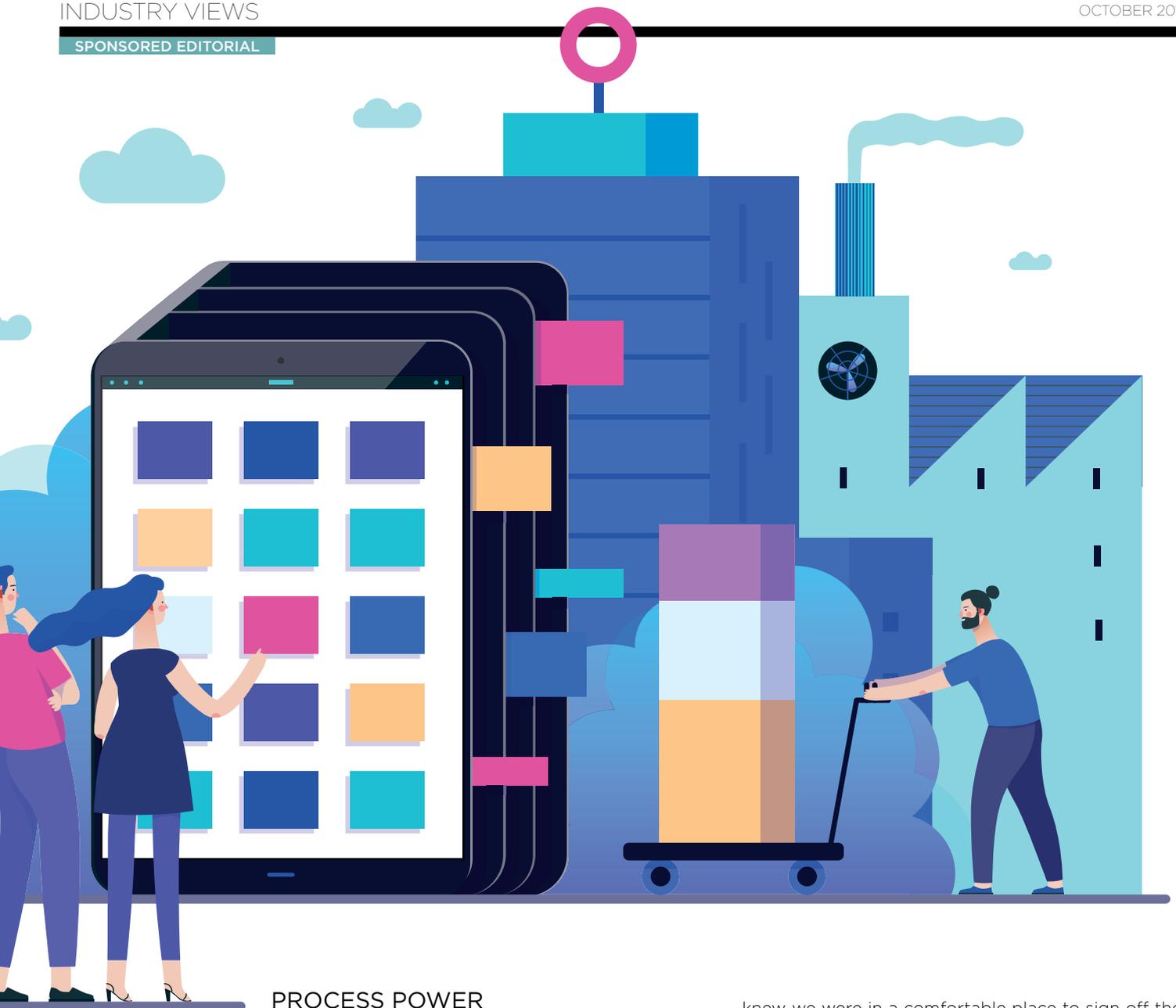
Seddons

Revenue: £14m

Corporate status: LLP

75 fee earners, 115 total staff

Office: London



PROCESS POWER

Temple says Seddons needed a solution that was flexible and scalable, which could expand with the firm's growth plans - CTS was that provider.

"Expanding the scope of services with CTS is at predefined rates, so there are no surprises. If the firm wanted to very quickly spin up a server, we know what it would cost. We can test it for a month, turn it off, and stop being charged for it," Temple says.

The key to delivering the firm's strategy around agile working is greater flexibility of technology and people, while ensuring that staff have access to its systems anytime, anywhere.

"As part of our migration to CTS, we moved to a new Citrix desktop, which is not only faster than the thick client it replaced, but also offers a consistent experience wherever you are in the world. This comes with less burden on the firm from a support and maintenance perspective."

The migration process itself was relatively simple and only took four months to complete, he says. "We had representatives from nearly every department testing the new desktop."

"We built a set of benchmark statistics taken from our old environment, which was mainly focused on functionality and performance. This provided a set of acceptance criteria on which to base our testing. Once the new environment met these criteria, we

knew we were in a comfortable place to sign off the live deployment."

Once greenlit, he says migrating itself was straightforward. The only component on which the staff needed to be trained was the slightly different process for logging on.

Seddons has seen a lot of positive feedback from staff since moving to CTS. Following the benchmarking for the project, the firm has seen both performance and productivity improve.

"The biggest factor in partnering with CTS was finding a provider that understood our technology stack. In addition to their extensive experience delivering legal applications, including our practice management system Eclipse Proclaim, CTS spent a lot of time with the firm to understand us as business and where we're going," he says.

Seddons wasn't just looking for somebody to build its infrastructure: it was looking for a partner for a long-term relationship. "We needed to make sure that we entered into a relationship with a company that we knew would evolve as technology advances and offer us a platform on which we can grow."

The firm is now server-free on-premises and wholly cloud-based for all IT services. Temple says that partnering with CTS has placed Seddons in an excellent position to implement its planned strategy over the next few years, and beyond. **LPM**

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CTS provides law firms with mission-critical managed cloud services, including IaaS, hosting, business continuity and security services.

www.cts.co.uk

