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## Be the change: From Document Production to Document Innovation

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DEG members in the UK have long expressed concerns about recruitment and retention of people with specialist document skills. As DEG went global last year welcoming members from the US, it has become clear this is the case 'over the pond' too.

The ever-growing complexity of legal work means more, longer documents and more that can go wrong. Lawyers wanting to do more DIY on their documents and the universal drive for greater speed and efficiency all mean there is a need for more rather than less document expertise.

There are some common ways in which this problem has been tackled:

- **Training** document production skills widely across an organisation
- **Restructuring** teams to put your best people in a document production role
- **Outsourcing** the work to specialist third parties

A magic circle firm we have worked with has combined these approaches by both outsourcing some work, but also recruiting then training staff to work in document specialist roles. You will have seen other successes, but no doubt know of a fair number of failures too. But to truly bridge the skills gap we need to consider changing the tools to do the job and even the job itself.

### Technology

Not the 'robots coming to take our jobs' kind of tech hyped up over recent years, but more of the expert tools that are available today. Tools that can automate laborious tasks, save time and increase document consistency and reliability. Technology designed not to replace you but to help you deliver more value to colleagues and clients.

Technology has created a fast-changing world and the Covid 19 pandemic is accelerating this change in economies and people's lives. This means we need to go beyond incremental change and look at transforming document production roles to something broader and more attractive.

### Transformation and Innovation

Document specialists should move beyond traditional 'document production' roles to become productivity experts and problem solvers with a broad set of innovation skills centred around **people, processes** and **technology**.

True innovation is done by and with people. The 'soft' people skills involved in collaboration along with service oriented and problem-solving mindsets are key strengths document specialists can bring to innovation.

Document professionals often play key roles in workflows and understand many **processes** in their firms. Developing the ability to identify, design and test improvements to processes will broaden the scope and influence of document production roles.

Being able to identify the right **technology** to solve the right problem will be a key skill for the document professional of the future. So too will be the ability to produce solutions as 'citizen developers' working with 'low-code' or 'no-code' platforms like the Microsoft Power Platform.

The DEG membership can be the catalyst to help bring about this transformation in document specialism. Work with software vendors to design new automated tools. Develop your innovation skills, learn about the new technologies out there and as Ghandi is often quoted: '**Be the change you want to see in the world**'.

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