

Startup Corner: Divorce Right in focus

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Divorce Right was founded in 2014 to make the divorce process easier, allowing parting couples to prepare and exchange documents online and keep up to date with their case. Winner of a place in the Janders Dean and LexisNexis [2016 Legal Innovation Index](http://jandersdean.com/2015/?p=755) [<http://jandersdean.com/2015/?p=755>](http://jandersdean.com/2015/?p=755), here, founder and lawyer Anne-Marie Cade describes how technology can help make a difference to the very human story behind it and how solicitors need to find news ways to solve old problems.

How would you describe your company to a friend?

I am the Divorce Right lawyer and I assist families to reach an out of court settlement by steering them away from conflict and towards a peaceful resolution. I do this through a process of mediation and collaboration, through my online platform which makes the process more efficient as much of the divorce process can be completed online.

And if you had to describe it to a techy?

Initial interaction with the client is through an online Intelligent Induction Questionnaire to convert more visitors into actual clients. User-friendly tools empower clients to assemble documents with confidence, and lawyers to exchange them instantaneously online. I have a client portal too. Paperwork associated with each step of the process is filed on the portal for easy reference, with clients also able to receive and send notifications and messages, view their case status, schedule conferences and pay bills online.

When were you founded?

2014

By who?

Myself Anne-Marie Cade, The idea for the platform came after watching families “tear themselves apart during the divorce process”. The court process and the traditional adversarial approach does little to help families through the healing process and sometimes makes their problems worse. No matter what the status of your relationship with your ex-partner, you will always be mum and dad which is why a different approach to divorce is so necessary. Divorce is not all about the paperwork. It’s about a major life transition and I want to make a difference in the way divorce is done. We now live in an age where a reorganisation is required towards new ways of problem solving – lawyers must think more intuitively and in an inclusive way to better serve client’s needs. This is especially so in the area of family law. When 46 per cent of all marriages end in divorce, it is important that the focus is on healing instead of legal wrangling so the children of these broken marriages are not subjected to conflict between the parents. DivorceRight removes the barriers people often face when looking to access legal services delivered via a traditional approach. People can feel intimidated working with lawyers. But modern ways of working create a more familiar environment for clients, and they are not intimidated at the thought of seeing a lawyer. This approach fosters a healthy client-lawyer relationship.

Who are your key managers/senior execs?

I am a sole practitioner and I outsource the IT work to IT professionals to assist me. I also have a panel of lawyers, mediators, accountants, financial planners, psychologists and child psychologists who I refer the clients to.

What is your growth strategy?

During 2017 I plan to consolidate and grow this market in Victoria and then around Australia. I would like to further develop the tech area in order to provide an even better customer experience.

Who are your target clients?

Couples who are separating or divorcing.

Have there been any key changes in direction since you were founded?

I keep developing the platform as I go along depending on the needs and requirements of clients. Initially I focussed on the digital functionality but now I focus more on the interaction with the clients and the client experience as I am dealing with clients who are going through a very vulnerable period in their

lives and they need a lot of hand holding along the way. The online approach facilitates this as I can be more accessible to the clients. I am making the process as simple as possible so clients can understand the concepts.

What are the key challenges you face in your market?

Much of the legal system is based on old values and concerns of the past. The procedures were designed by people who lived in a different era. The law is constantly looking backwards at precedents, so things don't change too fast. However, we are now in an age where a reorganisation is required towards new ways of problem solving – lawyers must think more intuitively and in an inclusive way to better serve client's needs. This is especially so in the area of family law. So it's a process of educating the clients that there is in fact a better way and also getting lawyers to think along these lines.

What are the most exciting developments you've seen in your market in the past year to 18 months?

I find people are becoming more receptive to accessing legal services online as they see the cost benefits that go with this approach. Costs of accessing family lawyers and delays in getting court dates impedes justice, and clients tend to whittle down their savings on legal fees. Clients are slowly coming to see that there is inherent value in what technology brings to the legal industry, and therefore these avenues must be explored. This will enable people to have better access to justice.

The transformation renders firms more flexible in their response to clients demands and allows them to deliver solutions to clients beyond the conventional way. There are new ways of working.

Tell us something that people don't already know about the company?

I adopt a holistic approach to divorce and treat it not just a legal problem but as an issue that has legal, emotional and financial implications, hence the reason I adopt a collaborative approach to the way I assist couples. I assist clients to make things "Right" again and in the process they save money and save their sanity.

Anne-Marie Cade is principal at *Daniel Lew Le Mercier & Co* <<http://dllm.com.au/>> in Victoria, Australia

Legal Tech Startup Directory

Company Name: Avvoka

Description: Contract creation, negotiation and analytics tool – “Google Docs for contracts”.

Founded: 2015.

Founders: David Howorth, director; Eliot Benzecrit, director.

Managers/senior execs: As above.

Growth Strategy: Sell direct to large corporates and high-growth startups. Explore strategic partnerships with complementary software companies within Avvoka's target verticals.

Investment: Yes, two rounds of funding to date. First seed round raised \$216.94k. Second round undisclosed.

Target clients: B2B companies with 100+ employees that contract on own standard terms.

Key challenges: Convincing users to move away from contracting in Microsoft Word and trading drafts back and forth over email.

Key market opportunities/developments: The adoption of artificial intelligence by law firms to aid contract due diligence.

What you probably didn't know: Avvoka is a play on the French word for lawyer – avocat.

Company Name: Briefed

Description: Mobile practice management system uniquely for barristers.

Founded: 2012.

Founders: Orlagh Kelly, CEO and a barrister.

Managers/senior execs: As above.

Growth Strategy: Integrating with key products that barristers already use to provide an even better customer experience.

Investment: Self-funded.

Target clients: Barristers and chambers.

Key challenges: Barristers lack of confidence in their own technical abilities.

Key market opportunities/developments: Barristers are more open to change and using technology in their home lives, so are more motivated to find tools to help them at work.

What you probably didn't know: Briefed has a successful spin out product, which is a Data Protection Compliance Bundle for barristers, designed specifically to help them understand and meet their own data protection regulatory requirements.

Company Name: ClauseMatch

Description: A cloud-based collaborative platform to negotiate contract agreements without the need for Word, PDFs or emails. Real time multi-tenant editor with granular permission settings.

Founded: 2014.

Founders: Evgeny Likhoded, CEO; Andrey Dokuchaev, COO.

Managers/senior execs: As above + Carl-Henrik Thorsen, head of sales.

Growth Strategy: Over the next 12 months aims to extend current platform capabilities and help build a more complete RegTech ecosystem, possibly in partnership with other technologies.

Investment: ClauseMatch has raised £1.25 million in seed funding since 2015.

Target clients: Large enterprises with extensive document workflow, primarily financial institutions but also law firms, insurance companies and municipalities.

Key challenges: Reluctance of firms to move to new working practices.

Key market opportunities/developments: Banks becoming more open to collaboration with smaller technology companies and embracing disruption.

What you probably didn't know: ClauseMatch is a multinational FinTech company. Every member of the team has diverse professional experience, speaks several languages, and is actively involved in hobbies from skiing to chess.

Company Name: Contractinabox.com

Description: e-Contracts marketplace and global lead-gen cloud-platform connecting users and providers of B2B deals.

Founded: Fourth quarter of 2016.

Founders: Heema Dawoonauth.

Managers/senior execs: As above.

Growth Strategy: Built to scale globally from day one. Already have members from different continents and about 20 countries.

Investment: Self-funded.

Target clients: a) Businesses that want to close international deals faster; b) Corporate services that want to be digitally enabled to trade worldwide.

Key challenges: Not every global law firm is happy to see a LegalTech startup succeed in a traditionally protected market. Problems with contracts and running contract litigation is big business. Not every country wants trade in services to be digitally enabled.

Key market opportunities/developments: The success of LegalTech entrepreneurs and involvement of large brands in the startup sector.

What you probably didn't know: Dawoonauth customised the front-end of Contractinabox.com without any previous coding background.

Company Name: DivorceRight

Description: Online platform to help divorcing couples exchange documents, review their case online, undertake mediation and achieve divorce outside of court.

Founded: 2014.

Founders: Anne-Marie Cade.

Managers/senior execs: As above.

Growth Strategy: During 2017 plans to consolidate and grow in Victoria, Australia and then further around Australia.

Investment: Self-funded.

Target clients: Couples who are separating or divorcing.

Key challenges: The legal system is based on old values and the procedures designed by people who lived a different era; they need to be updated and lawyers think more intuitively and in a more inclusive way.

Key market opportunities/developments: People are becoming more receptive to accessing legal services online as they see the cost benefits that go with this approach.

What you probably didn't know: Cade's priority is to make things 'right' again, in the divorce process, saving her clients money and their sanity.

