

Whitepaper for law firms: Practice Area app

Improve client communications and revenue opportunities

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Introduction

Practice area apps are currently the most created app type at Fliplet for law firms. This type of app is broad and can take on almost any form that will enhance a practice area with a firm. It provides more value for your client's legal spend and promotes your skills, expertise and unique service offering to your client. It acts as a conduit between yourselves and your client, bringing your services to them in a convenient and innovative way. Being able to offer clients an app as part of your services to them is also an opportunity to upsell and continually engage clients.

Fliplet's extensive experience working with the legal industry has found that for practice area communication, law firms that do not have a mobile app, fall into these 5 categories:

1. Printed materials are posted or handed to clients
2. PDFs are emailed to clients
3. They have a website or microsite that is not designed for mobile devices (ie, they are not responsive and they are not legible on a small screen)
4. They have a client portal (website) that is not designed for mobile
5. They have a mobile optimized internal news website

Fundamentally, a practice area app keeps everyone informed of your products and services, partner experience and successes from your practice area. With Fliplet, it's easy to create the apps that your target market want. For example, crisis response, tax rates, and calculators, reference libraries and guides, cyber assist, product recall guide, corporate liability handbook, antitrust 101, M&A, employment, pension/401K plans, and the list goes on.

Delving into these examples a little, a crisis response app ensures that your client is prepared for any relevant crisis, with easy access to emergency protocols, one tap for emergency contacts (email, call, chat, SMS), step-by-step guides, checklists, training documents, knowledge quizzes, and FAQs. An employment app gives clients an easy reference point for all employment-related content and could include checklists and guides, reference materials, compensation calculators, useful links, case studies, useful facts and figures, plus a handy contact us button.

In the following whitepaper, we detail some of the common limitations of existing practice area communication solutions and the benefits of using a solution like Fliplet to create mobile apps. We've also included a simple 6 step guide on how you can create and deploy a practice area app in under 6 weeks.

Why create a practice area app?

1. Generate additional income for your firm by creating a bespoke practice area app for your client
2. Gain a competitive advantage in the market. The big 4 have been producing apps for their different departments for a long time. View our app store report¹ to find out more
3. Improve engagement with clients, by creating individual practice area apps ensuring that information is easily accessible and highly functional (for example, checklists and one tap to connect)
4. Offer the best possible advice to clients through highly relevant and up to date content. Using Fliplet, the app update can be sent to each user's device immediately after changes are published
5. According to Comscore, almost 90% of a mobile users time on their device is spent in apps², therefore clients could consume content in their preferred manner

What are common practice area communication solutions and their limitations?

If they don't have a mobile app, the practice areas in law firms usually have some of the following solutions for communicating with clients. This can result in a number of limitations or frustrations for practice area teams, leading to limited benefits for clients. We assessed the most common solutions and their limitations.

Printed materials posted or handed to clients

Limitations:

- Printing and environmental costs, which hits the firm's bottom line as well as it's ecological reputation
- No functionality offered by a static piece of content, therefore clients can't interact with the information
- No visibility on how the materials are being consumed, no understanding if it's being referenced daily or not
- Limited to using static images only, no video or audio components available to enhance the material
- Unable to change content after it's been printed, so there a risk of the material becoming outdated quickly
- No analytics to understand which sessions were most valuable, any data received is likely to be anecdotal
- Feedback can only be gained via paper or emails, and would then take a considerable amount of time to collate and analyze

PDF emailed to clients

Limitations:

- Could potentially go out of date quickly, so clients would need to be notified by email that there is an updated version available
- No control, or record, of whom the document has been forwarded on to, visibility is lost once the PDF is sent to your client

- No functionality offered by a static piece of content, therefore clients can't interact with the information
- Limited to using static images only, no video or audio components available to enhance the material
- No visibility on how the materials are being consumed, no understanding if it's being referenced daily or not

Website or Microsite not designed for mobile

Limitations:

- Limited access to relevant company materials out of the office, restricting specific tasks to the office or VPN connection
- Poor or intermittent mobile access will mean that productivity is reduced to only when staff are at their desk
- Limited analytics detail, restricted information about how individual users consume or engage with internal news
- Limited feedback or quantitative data, lack of understanding of users opinions through surveys and polls

Client portal (website) not designed for mobile

Limitations:

- Poor user experience on mobile as it's not mobile responsive, meaning it will be difficult to read on a small screen
- Some security concerns for the law firm. They require a high level of security, but this does risk complicating access for clients
- Limited analytics detail and restricted information about how individuals use the portal
- Limited feedback or quantitative data, lack of understanding of users opinions through surveys and polls

Mobile optimized website

Limitations:

- No editable checklists, therefore no simple way to ensure necessary tasks are completed
- Not available offline which could be a risk to the client if they experience a crisis incident and have poor mobile reception
- The website could be optimized for 'viewing' on mobiles but not necessarily for 'use' on mobiles
- Notifications not available via a website, therefore important information delivery is delayed
- Mobile access fails to meet IT security standards, often limiting access to practice area communications on mobile or leaving information vulnerable to security breaches

“We previously used a very outdated approach to sharing our knowledge and expertise with our clients, often giving printed or emailed PDFs as takeaways after meetings. Fliplet's helped us move into the 21st century, with an impressive and functional [practice area] app that has delivered beyond our expectations”

What are the benefits of a practice area app?

By using a solution like Fliplet to create a practice area app, you can expect the following benefits:

Improved usability

- Create bespoke versions to have **tailored apps for each client**. Include relevant and customized content so each client has their own app
- **Make processes easy to follow** by offering calculators, checklists, and workflows within the app
- Our apps **automatically cache content for reliable offline access**, therefore users have uninterrupted access to the app regardless of their internet access
- **Easily update the app** to reduce the chance clients will have access to out of date information. Individuals and teams within your law firm can manage content updates without interrupting IT resource
- **Give clients peace of mind** knowing that the app is always with them, wherever they are

Improved communication

- Include **alerts and news feeds on time-sensitive subjects** direct to users device and prompt them to find out more from the app
- **Collate valuable market feedback** through surveys and polls. Understand how your client is consuming and referencing the app and optimize accordingly
- Make it easy for clients to contact you with key contact information details and **one tap to chat, SMS, email or phone**
- Create a **central repository for documents** and materials, available online and offline. Give clients access to all necessary guides, handbooks and other information pertinent to the practice area

Improved analytics

- Understand your users with **data-driven analytics** to track screen views, popular posts, active users, tasks completed and more. Improve the effectiveness of communications through optimization of popular content and ensure key information is surfaced in the app
- **Understand each individual user** to optimize the app. Ensure users get the most out of the app, streamline processes and deliver cost efficiency and time savings

Improved security and distribution

- Fliplet offers **Apple and Android apps for smartphone and tablet**, plus web apps
- Conforms to **IT security standards, encrypts data** in transit and at rest, plus offers SSO. IT departments don't need to make any special dispensations for using Fliplet to create a practice area app, as it can meet already established security protocols
- **Integrates with SQL databases or APIs** via an easy to configure on-premise tool. No additional tools or systems required for IT teams to acquire, reducing the unknowns and ensuring a smooth transition to using Fliplet apps

“We’re really happy with our [practice area] app. It’s had over 7,000 downloads and has multiple 5-star reviews on public app stores. The app has also proven to be a very powerful alternative to email campaigns due to the high engagement rates with the app”

How to create a practice area app

Fliplet’s practice area app can be integrated, secured, tested and deployed in under 6 weeks and with minimal IT resources.

1. Gather your app content
The content can come from an existing website, PDF or be created in word or spreadsheet format
2. Generate interactive capabilities
Using Fliplet’s checklist, forms, quiz, assessment, search or decision tree features, the content can be made into a tool that can be used to add value to users and generate additional content from users that can be used by the firm.
3. Apply your brand colors and fonts to the app.
Fliplet’s app templates can be rapidly branded to ensure the app looks like it was built for you. This typically takes about 15 minutes.
4. Deploy your app.
Fliplet apps can be deployed via MDM, private app stores or public apps stores. For internal apps, we recommend MDM or private app store.
5. Analyze your app’s usage.
Using Fliplet’s built in analytics you can confirm the app’s usage and what users find useful
6. Training and app optimization
Fliplet will train your team to modify and optimize the app.

Any questions? Get in touch hello@Fliplet.com