

# COVID-19: THE IMPORTANCE WORKING PAPERLESSLY IN LAW FIRMS

Category: Commercial Law, Media and OTT, Privacy Law, Infosec, and POPIA, Technology Law  
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The spread of COVID-19 has negatively influenced the output of work at a global level. It has affected nearly every sector and has ultimately halted cross border trade. As the coronavirus unfolds across countries, many firms have adopted a policy which allows their employees to work remotely. However, considering the number of law firms that are wholly reliant on paper and face to face communication, many firms are now facing a serious challenge by having most of their workforce unable to work from home.

The South African workforce, never having been faced with a lockdown, now has to face the consequences of a restraint on their freedom of movement. The legal sector in particular will have to adapt to these circumstances if they hope to have any chance of earning revenue during the lockdown. Firms are realising how under prepared they are in these unique circumstances. This is where the digital transformation of law firms plays a vital role.

It is possible that the legal sector will experience a great shift towards digitisation. This shift, which would have normally taken years for a firm to incorporate and adapt their employees to, will have to happen in the next few months. Never before has the legal sector experienced such a seismic event which forces them to change and adapt to a new way of working.

The ability to work remotely will become a priority for many firms. In the legal sector, practitioners stuck with the traditional way of doing things. The coronavirus outbreak demands major change of firm policies to allow for employees to continue generating revenue without having to step foot outside. In order to foster competition and to be able to provide legal services, many other firms will adopt this approach to continue to assist their loyal clients without having to reduce their fees or stop work altogether. Employees have to undergo training to be able to utilise new technologies that firms incorporate.

The legal sector will be met with a challenge, one which they must face head on to avoid having to shut down their practices or become redundant. The firms that will benefit the most are those firms that have already implemented cloud-based technology. The pandemic will thin the competition among law firms and shape the industry post-coronavirus, as those who have adapted will become

increasingly more popular and relied on for the provision of legal services.