



# CAMMINO DIRITTO

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## LAW FIRMS INCREASINGLY “DIGITAL” AND “CLOUD”

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*Innovation and Communication, for any organization, profit and no profit, PMI or Big Company, are two fundamental assets in terms of consensus and reputation, and two valuable tools of costs rationalization.*

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According to the Professional Monitoring Centre and Digital Innovations, of the Milan School of Management, the investments of professional studies in new technologies and new communication languages, after touching 1.1 billion in 2015, will grow again in 2016 with an expected +8%. What do we talk about? Software for the management of electronic documents, CRM, digital archives, portals for sharing tasks, management control of the workflow and business intelligence, consultancy in digital communication, web reputation, social networks, in other words a window on a world which in many cases is still unexplored.

The market and its disintermediate logics, demands to communicate inside and outside the organizational contexts, more and better, through different but consistent tools, like the brand reputation. Through the continuous listening of the thermometer of consensus, it becomes much easier to focus on customer needs and to respond with authority and promptness to their expectations. Therefore, communication helps to enhance the core business and at the same time, adopting a strategy of engagement of stakeholders and opinion leaders, that increases the value of the brand, and hence encourages to start new professional relationships.

Sharing experiences, case histories, professionalism and professionals, achievements, history and the vision of a law firm is strategically convenient as much as investing in new technologies and new business models. We should think at the cloud computing, as an opportunity to run businesses conducted through an IT infrastructure that enables the storage and process data remotely, by focusing on the concepts of dematerialization, transparency, cost rationalization, contraction of the transmission time and reply. Legal services have always been considered, both by professionals and by customers, as traditional services, that are based on relationships and standardized management. The relationship between firms and customers is still running through consolidated rails, such as trust and authority, reputation, expertise, visibility, business and *networking* capabilities. With the arrival of the internet it has been discussed, not just the specific weight of each professional or technical-judicial value of each study, but also the approach that they are able to transmit to the users through the use of technologies and innovations, being capable of modifying the process of communication between lawyer and client.

The cloud computing can help in many ways the work of the lawyer, dematerializing documents, allowing the lawyer itself to share with other professionals and with the same client the computer screen, giving remote access to work tools and *files* of the study. However, critical factors still exist for a real development of *cloud computing* within law firms: on one side, there is, especially by lawyers, a very traditionalist approach for the profession, which puts the theme of change and overcome of certain operating *standards* of the category on hold. This kind of approach still exists today and it hampers the development of new *business* models. On the other side, there is the issue of security and protection of data that has to be guaranteed to the maximum. Clients' biggest fear is to lose their data or, even worse, to see them made accessible by outsiders. In this sense it should be pointed out that the very nature of *cloud computing* is much more secure and stable than many other technological solutions currently in use in legal firms. Besides, who decides to adopt this business model must necessarily associate it with the technology of legal instruments, which are capable of ensuring data protection *standards* comparable to those of the community. Making the choice of using the cloud, even lawyers can then develop relationships and manage their services by embracing new technologies, in this way it creates a more streamlined for the management processes and dealing with litigation, a faster communication with clients and third parties and less burdensome rates.

This article was created in collaboration with the Lawyer Iacopo Destri, from the International Law Firm C-Lex.