

# RDA LEGAL COMMUNIQUE...

ROBERT DENNEY Associates, Inc.

Management, Marketing, Strategic Planning

February, 2016

## WILL THE LEGAL PROFESSION SURVIVE OR ARE LAW FIRMS RISKING OBSOLESCENCE?

In view of all the changes and issues affecting the legal profession, I ended our “What’s Hot and What’s Not” report last December by asking “Will the legal profession survive?” and concluded by answering “Yes, I believe it will if . . .”

But a recent *New York Times* article on a report by the Center for the Study of the Legal Profession at the Georgetown University Law Center stated “the report found that the legal industry was ignoring recent transformations in its marketplace at its peril.” According to the *Times*, the “Report on the State of the Legal Market” compared the current situation in the profession to Eastman Kodak’s “refusal to face major changes in the photography industry” when Kodak “essentially chose to ignore the fundamental shifts in its market – until it was too late.”

Kodak failed to survive because it did not adapt to a single major change in its market – the rise of digital photography (although, ironically, the company was an early innovator in that technology). Today law firms are facing multiple changes in their market and the *Times* article goes on to state that, “Although law firms have embraced some new practices, including outsourcing of document searches, they have yet to adopt technology or modern accounting practices and overhaul firm governance.”

Legal is not the first profession to face changes in its market. Accounting was and, for the most part, continues to adapt to change. As a result, although the firms that did not accept and adapt to the changes sooner or later become obsolete, the profession has of course survived, stronger than ever. Will the legal profession survive, even if some firms become obsolete?

Only time will tell.

*Bob Denney*

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