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In common with any commercial organisation in the 21st century, a firm of solicitors or a barristersâ€™ chambers need the latest software packages if they are to be able to operate at maximum efficiency and offer their clients a first-class service. Whether companies take advantage of the benefits that hosted IT solutions, otherwise known as cloud computing, have to offer or plump for traditional applications that need to be installed on each userâ€™s machine, it is important to make sure that each software suite is kept up to date. Regular evaluations completed by members of staff can help to identify applications that are not meeting their needs.

Larger practices may well have their own IT manager who is responsible for ensuring that the right programs are chosen but even these organisations can benefit from the help and advice that specialist providers are able to offer. It is important to ensure that costs are kept under control when choosing new applications as it is easy to get carried away and purchase more legal software than is strictly necessary for the smooth running of your firm. Consulting with individual employees as well as outside suppliers is one way to avoid buying packages that are not needed.

Any solicitor or barrister will tell you that the most important administrative function they need to take care of is billing the hours that they work to the clients for whom they are working. Failure to do so will result in clients being undercharged, which could have serious consequences for the future profitability of an organisation. Applications that make it easy to bill hours to various different cases throughout the day enable lawyers and their assistants to keep accurate records and to ensure that everybody is charged the correct amount.

Legal firms need to use word processing software, spreadsheet applications and presentation programs in much the same way as other commercial entities do. For this reason, it is important to ensure that any cloud computing solutions that are being considered include access to such applications. Many companies prefer hosted packages as the provider takes responsibility for ensuring that all applications are updated as and when needed but it is vital to make sure the right programs are included in such packages.

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