

CROWELL & MORING LAUNCHES 'DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION' PRACTICE TO AID CORPORATE INNOVATION

The practice, led by a steering committee of 11 lawyers, focuses on helping in-house attorneys support their company's innovation efforts.

BY RHYS DIPSHAN

Law firm **Crowell & Moring** has announced the launch of a broad “Digital Transformation” practice that looks to serve clients in technology- and innovation-related industries, including privacy and cybersecurity, artificial intelligence and robotics, the Internet of Things, blockchain, drones, and autonomous vehicles.

In addition to external technologists and consultants, the new practice will encompass a cross-disciplinary team led by a steering committee of 11 lawyers from Crowell & Moring's privacy and cybersecurity, regulatory, intellectual property, litigation, and transactional services practices.



Crowell & Moring offices in Washington, D.C., Jan. 14, 2016. Photo by Diego M. Radzinski/THE NATIONAL LAW JOURNAL.

Cheryl Falvey, a partner at Crowell & Moring, noted the new practice was launched to better serve the needs of the firm's corporate clients. “It

really was in-house lawyers who were critical to making us move in this direction,” she said.

She explained that corporate lawyers “are being required to

drive innovation and not slow their business down, so we are working side-by-side with them to help them be a part of the innovation life cycle.”

A large focus of the new collaborative practice will be on “speed to market,” which entails helping corporate clients quickly launch new innovative products or internal processes. “They are under incredible pressure to get those innovations forward before their competitors do, and by sharing knowledge among our practitioners, we can help them see around the corner” to anticipate new opportunities and challenges, Falvey said.

Toward this goal, the practice group will strive to increase clients’ awareness of new technologies that can aid their products or operations, and of regulatory trends that may be shaping the technology sector.

As an example, Falvey said, “So perhaps their product is not regulated with regards to inter-

connectivity, but we see guidance from National Highway Traffic Safety Administration or the Food and Drug Administration about medical devices, and we can pull the lessons we are learning from those regulatory initiatives and apply it to a place where a client is not yet regulated.”

The launch of the Digital Transformation practice will not mean the end for the firm’s other tech-related practices. “We look at this as completely additive. Our existing privacy and cyber, transactional, and product liability practices are still going to exist,” she noted.

Indeed, the new Digital Transformation practice group was made possible in part because of the firm’s **recent lawyer expansions**. “We’ve added a number of different lawyers over the past year with this in mind,” Falvey said, adding that the practice group combines “both our existing talent with new lateral talent.”

To be sure, Crowell & Moring is far from the only firm with tech-focused practice areas. Many firms, for example have **cybersecurity and privacy** groups, while some law firms also focus on emerging technologies such as **3-D printing, autonomous vehicles, and industry specific-technology** within existing practice groups as well.

While Falvey noted there are “wonderful law firms in the market that serve” the same industries as Crowell & Moring’s Digital Transformation practice, “what makes us distinct is our focus on the full life cycle of technology innovation.”

CT-born, New York-based legal tech reporter covering everything from in-house technology disruption to privacy trends, blockchain, AI, cybersecurity, and ghosts-in-the-machine. Continually waiting for law to catch up with tech. (It’s like waiting for Godot, but without the clowns)

