

# In-Demand Legal Marketplaces Aim to Entice Attorneys With Free Tech, Services

As legal marketplaces proliferate, they're leaning on free tech platforms and services to stand out with more holistic offerings.

By [Victoria Hudgins](#) December 16, 2020 at 11:00 AM



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As more consumers [embrace remote legal services](#), new legal marketplaces are proliferating in a bid to connect attorneys with potential clients. But sticking out in a crowded market requires understanding that lawyers' needs go beyond finding clients. To that end, some lawyer marketplaces are

rolling out free tech tools and services to entice attorneys to join their platform.

Earlier this month, Xira Connect Inc. announced it expanded its platform from finding, booking and meeting attorneys in virtual meeting rooms to also providing Gavel, a free practice management tool for participating attorneys.

Gavel was developed to remove barriers that prevent new solo practitioners or formerly inactive attorneys returning to practicing law from joining the marketplace, said Xira CEO and founder Reza Ghaffari.

He added that the practice management tool also helps separate Xira's legal marketplace from other competitors. "There has to be a value add for that attorney for them to pick a particular tool or marketplace. Certainly with Gavel we are providing that advantage."

Ghaffari noted that other legal marketplaces should also look into providing back-end free software to address attorneys practice management challenges. "We certainly hope we will have all the vendors look at their model again."

To be sure, some legal marketplaces already are. UpCounsel, for example, provides a free document management and e-signature and online payment portal for its freelance attorneys counseling corporate clients. Erling Andersen, CEO of Norway-based legal marketplace Advocatguiden, said his company is eyeing expanding from listing lawyers and their preferred practice area to also providing website building and case management tools.

"The marketplaces, we move fast and have personal connections with the lawyers that sign up for these platforms," Andersen said. "We constantly

ask them what they need, what are their requirements. And there's often similarities."

Andersen noted that other legal marketplaces targeting boutiques and solo practitioners will likely expand their initial offerings to appeal to a market that has tech needs with a limited budget. "Solo practitioners and smaller firms are typically more agile and are looking for solutions that fit them well without the enterprise stuff associated with it. They opt for more cheaper and flexible solutions we can offer," he said.

But not all legal marketplaces' perks are software-based. Hire An Esquire Inc. CEO and founder Julia Shapiro said her lawyer and paralegal marketplace's insurance benefits help it differentiate itself from other legal marketplaces. "You can give people free software and discounts on legal research, which is important, but people need health insurance and professional liability insurance," Shapiro said.

To be sure, Hire An Esquire also provides discounted access to legal research platform Casetext and other software, Shapiro noted. However, she said legal marketplaces' longevity isn't solely determined by the technology they provide. Instead, it's their ability to understand the practice of law and legal services.

"You can't just spin off a faceless platform and try to do that Silicon Valley playbook," she said. "Us realizing from day one, doing this with more humanity and [understanding] how people are really working, is why we are working and other platforms have pivoted to something very different."