7 guidelines for selecting the appropriate digital platform for your brand protection team

Recent studies have shown that many brand protection teams still rely on generic tools such as Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Outlook, Microsoft Teams, Google Drive, OneDrive, or generic case management tools as their sole digital platform for brand protection management.

While these tools are undoubtedly valuable in a general context, they are likely to hinder your team's ability to achieve optimal objectives and productivity in brand protection management. Today, specialized digital platforms are being designed for specific industries and functions, offering superior intelligence and efficiency compared to generic tools. These platforms are purpose-built to streamline collaboration and communication, manage cases and tasks, conduct investigations and identifications, handle budget and finance matters, and provide insights and analytics tailored for the modern brand protection team.

Here are seven tips to help you choose the right digital platform for your brand protection team.

1. Outline your workflow and procedures

When considering a digital tool for your brand protection team, the initial step is to outline your workflow. Identify the key processes in place and determine which aspects of your work can benefit from a modern digital platform. These processes may encompass case registration, case prioritization, task assignment, product identification, test purchasing, litigation, case matching, target connections, and more.
While delving into the intricacies of your processes, it's important to remain cautious, as people often tend to overly complicate workflows when a simpler approach is available. The primary focus should be on the overall workflow and the intended outcome. With your end goal in mind, pinpoint any inefficiencies in your workflow that may be impeding productivity or results.

2. Evaluate your current tools

The next phase involves evaluating the digital tools you are presently utilizing. Ask yourself the following questions: To what extent do your current digital tools align with your requirements? Are they facilitating your team's performance and assisting in achieving the desired outcomes? Compile a list of the digital tools currently in use and align them with your existing workflows.

3. Prioritize essential features

A valuable lesson from the IT industry is that simplicity often reigns supreme. Rather than compiling an extensive checklist of features and

capabilities, concentrate on the core requirements essential for achieving your desired objectives. Recognize administrative tasks that consume time, and explore options for automating manual processes, allowing your team to focus on tasks that truly drive results. Boosting team productivity is best achieved by using software that offers necessary features without becoming overly complex or feature-heavy.

4. Prioritize user-friendliness

Always consider the end-users, as they will be the ones using the platform daily. It's not just about functionality but also usability.
Historically, studies have revealed that business applications tend to have more usability issues compared to consumer software. This is partly due to the complexity of business software, which often contains intricate functionality. Complexity and security can be significant obstacles when trying to create user-friendly systems with hundreds of pages and a seemingly endless array of user scenarios.
Nonetheless, the trend of consumerizing enterprise software, coupled with shifts in workplace culture and ideology, necessitates a move towards more user-friendly software.

5. Think about scalability

As your team evolves, grows, expands into new regions, or forms partnerships with local law firms and investigators, scalability becomes a key concern. However, scalability isn't solely about the system's ability to accommodate more users; it also encompasses handling new locations and managing the exponential growth in transaction volume, workload, and data. Assess how your chosen platform aligns with the latest technology trends and how it can adapt to your future business requirements. Does it offer global capabilities and a scalable infrastructure?

6. Seek integration and customization

The ability to integrate various brand protection platforms into a unified ecosystem can be highly advantageous, especially for sharing target data related to IP infringement between online and offline domains. Integrations enhance the speed of information transfer and reduce operational expenses. Integrating systems brings about enhanced productivity and operational quality within a company. It allows for seamless coexistence, preventing issues such as redundant data entry and maintaining a single source of truth.

7. Successful onboarding

Involving your team members in the process of adopting a new platform is crucial from the beginning. A consistent message should be delivered to encourage open-mindedness towards the new technology. Buy-in from the end-users is essential for realizing the full potential of the platform. Success in managing change across the organization's domains of people, processes, and technology is key.
While most brand protection teams excel in areas like IP rights, IP enforcement processes, case management, and connecting dots, they often lack expertise in IT project management. Therefore, it's vital that your

platform supplier has the necessary onboarding processes, along with
experience and knowledge to customize the project to your specific
requirements and digital maturity level.