

## Malbek's Colin Levy On Atty Social Media Mistakes

By **Steven Lerner**

*Law360 (February 9, 2022, 10:53 AM EST)* -- Lawyer Colin Levy joined contract management software company Malbek a few months ago as its "director of legal and evangelist."

A rising star in the legal technology community, Levy has amassed a large social media audience. He has over 15,000 followers on LinkedIn and 8,800 on Twitter as of February 2021.

Here, Law360 Pulse talks to Levy about mistakes that lawyers make on social media, the rise of evangelist roles in legal tech to advocate for and inspire others to embrace new technology and the current state of the contract software space.



Colin Levy

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

### **How did your background as an attorney and in-house counsel help you out as you entered the legal tech field?**

Starting in high school, I had been intrigued by technology and its implications for society at large, having joined some friends to create a website consulting business. I had always wanted to focus my legal career on working in-house and never wanted to work for a firm. I always had a "business" mindset, meaning I wanted to ensure that my work was aligned with the needs of whomever I was performing services for.

Subsequently, in college and then while working for a prominent New York law firm as a paralegal creating e-discovery databases, I increasingly viewed technology as a means to help legal professionals be more productive and more valuable workers.

I also saw it as a necessary means of changing the legal function and culture of law — changing it and its culture to be one that is more data-driven and more aligned with those seeking out its services, as has been the case with technology in other industries like finance and health care. I see technology as automating those things that are routine and standardized, as well as freeing up time to spend on more value-adding work.

When you work in-house, working any other way is not a viable option because of your closeness with

the business and the variety of demands placed on you.

As for performing legal work, my early days as an attorney consisted mainly of doing a few things the same way repeatedly. These things included finding a previously used clause for a contract or responding to a frequently asked question.

It just struck me as odd that I was spending the limited time that I had each day repeating tasks. It didn't feel right to me. I was frustrated because I wanted to show my value to the business, and reinventing the wheel was not the way I would be able to do that.

**In the past few years, several legal tech companies have hired lawyers — such as yourself — as evangelists. What does an evangelist do exactly, and why are legal tech companies rushing to hire one?**

Being an evangelist in the legal tech space to me means several things:

First, sharing insights, sharing stories of successes and failures and sharing lessons learned along the journey of life. In the context of legal tech, this means writing and speaking on things such as the benefits of using technology and a pragmatic framework through which to view the use of technology.

Second, advocating for a specific goal and inspiring others to join you to achieve that goal. Applied to legal tech, this means advocating for greater adoption of legal tech, inspiring others to learn more about legal tech and joining the community of individuals seeking to expand the use of technology within the legal industry.

Third, contributing to efforts to engage with and excite others about specific ideas and/or certain products and services.

I think that legal tech companies find value in those who can speak directly about the problems and issues that these companies seek to resolve with their products and services. As many know or have learned, lawyers tend to listen the most to fellow lawyers or ex-lawyers who can directly relate to the issues and problems that they face.

Legal tech companies often encounter challenges in connecting with lawyers and other legal professionals, so more and more of them are turning to folks, like myself, to connect with potential new users of their products and services.

In my case, as a lawyer who has been practicing corporate law for over a decade, I've lived and breathed and tried to resolve on my own all the contracting issues that Malbek seeks to address.

**You must interact with a lot of lawyers online. What are the biggest mistakes that lawyers make with social media?**

Social media is too often seen as risky by many lawyers. That view strikes me as being myopic. Like any other thing, social media can be used for both good and for nefarious purposes. The good news, though, is that the number of people and companies using social media for good continues to rise and inspire others to do the same.

The biggest mistake I see a lawyer making with social media is not using it. Social media can be a

powerful tool in one's tool belt when it comes to making connections, learning new things and growing a supportive community around yourself and what you do.

Social media is critical when it comes to branding — whether it is building a business brand or a personal brand. Businesses recognize the reality that the majority of us have a social media presence to learn and engage with others through social media.

Similarly, individuals have also learned that social media can be a powerful means to establish our own personal brands, be known for certain things, certain views, or certain types of content. This can be to your advantage as a lawyer seeking to make your mark, grow your business, and/or communicate with both current and potential new clients.

Another big mistake I see lawyers make with social media is simply posting news about their firm closing a big deal or promoting someone to partner with. While these things are worthy of celebration, they do not garner much more than a thumbs up or a brief comment of support.

These are news items, and social media tends to not reward news items as much as in the past, partly because social media websites want you to stay on their platforms for as long as possible. This can work to your advantage when you post content that is aimed at informing and inspiring others.

Lastly, another mistake I see lawyers take is adopting the same approach to each social media platform. Each platform works differently and each one treats types of content differently. For example, Twitter favors short statements, especially those that may be controversial or provocative. LinkedIn favors longer posts that are inspiring or informative.

I adapt what I write and how I write to align with each platform's style.

Ultimately, I believe that social media is at its best when it generates thoughtful discussion and relationship building. As far-fetched as this may sound to some, I have made countless instrumental connections through social media using this approach. I am eager to help others succeed as I have.

### **You've worn many hats in your legal career. What has been your favorite so far?**

Each hat I have worn has contributed to my success in my next role and has provided me with invaluable experience and lessons. I have taken these experiences and lessons to heart as I have approached different responsibilities with different companies.

I can honestly say that, though, my current hat as the legal leader and legal tech inspirer for Malbek is my favorite role thus far. This is for two reasons — I can work for a company that embraces technology and believes in its power to positively reform the legal industry, and I am able to do what I love — being a lawyer as well as being a content creator.

As much as I continue to speak out about technology and its relationship with the legal industry, I continue to take pride in being a lawyer and in providing legal services. I have always loved helping people.

### **As you're now working for a contract management startup, how would you describe the current state of the contract software space? Do you feel like it might be a bit saturated?**

That is a big question. The contract software space is growing and evolving. The space has changed from one where the focus was on simply storing and searching larger and larger numbers of contractual documents to one focused on automating more and more steps within the lifecycle of a contract.

There is also a greater (and much needed if you ask me) focus on collecting data from contracts and using that data to drive more strategic decision-making regarding both contract management and business development and growth.

The beauty of there being many companies in the space is that each company and the individuals at each company continue to learn from one another and support one another. The space is not lacking in the number of companies, but the size of the space is emblematic of the size of the problem that they seek to resolve: making contracting faster, easier and more data-driven.

As someone who has lived and breathed contracting for some time as in-house counsel for a variety of companies, it is exciting to see the problems I have spent many hours trying to both manage and resolve being addressed in ways both big and small by contract life cycle management companies.

### **What's the most exciting part about being in legal tech in 2022?**

The growth of the community of people devoted to seeking to align legal services with those most in need of legal services. One key purpose I see for legal tech is lowering the barriers to entry for those seeking to be a part of the legal industry and making legal services more accessible for those needing them.

I have often believed that legal tech is not just about technology, but about people and culture coming together to support a new paradigm for the legal industry to adhere to.

--Editing by Alyssa Miller.