PacerPro

Enterprise Rollout

Worried about getting to the finish line?
PacerPro has you covered.
Featuring a Q&A with PacerPro's Chief Operating Officer.

Anna McGrane; a lawyer, raised by lawyers. JD at NYU Law and an LLM from Peking University. Practiced in Moscow and Beijing. Speaks five languages, though generally not all at the same time.

What do you do at PacerPro?

My title is COO, but my job is really a catch all for whatever seems to need doing. The majority of my time is spent with customers and making sure we execute.

Did you have any previous experience with tech companies prior to PacerPro?

After college, I worked at a Voice Over Internet Protocol startup in Argentina. It was an interesting experience. I was hired to do sales, and admittedly was pretty excited about knocking on doors in Buenos Aires. But when I started, I began to hear rumours that none of our current subscribers were actually using our phones.

I started to poke around, created a standardized Quality Control protocol, and found out that technical issues made communication via our service basically impossible about 80% of the time (callers compared the service to a 90s cell phone with bad reception). I ended up focused on product and acted as a liaison between our English speaking developers and our Spanish speaking customers to make sure we were delivering something people could (and would) use.

What's the most important thing you do?

I spend as much time as possible talking and listening to clients about PacerPro, their general workflow, other tools they use, and what their pain points are. Successful change management techniques for their firm's culture. Internal structures and hierarchies in their office/practice group, who makes the decisions, what's important to them, and how they like to be approached.

Why did you complete coding bootcamp at Fullstack?

With my current role, I'm thinking and talking about tech constantly. I'm explaining our service, I'm explaining other services, I'm feeding information back to our product team about what clients are doing and what they want us to do. I could do that at a "high level" without a coding background, but I couldn't visualize the actual programming infrastructure, so it was hard to think creatively about improvements or potential collaborations, and if clients asked any novel questions, I didn't have the necessary knowledge base to really engage and think through a logical answer. I didn't like that. So I hit the books, and recently completed what's supposed to be the most competitive coding bootcamp in the country.

What does it take to make a sale to BIG LAW?

The first step is to understand the firm's workflow. There are some things we know: i.e., at every firm, documents have to get from the courts to the attorneys, and later into the document management system. We know it is a largely manual process (some firms will have hacked an automated approach to some steps in the process; the hack is usually expensive to maintain and never cradle to graves the workflow). But the groups responsible for the actual work varies by region and practice area.

The second step is to identify the right people within the particular organization to talk to. Then you have to really hustle to get a meeting. The good news is once you engage with the folks on the front line, i.e., managing attorneys, secretaries, docketing managers, etc., it doesn't take much to explain the value proposition.

Often times, the third step is to communicate our ROI to procurement. Given the substantial resources firms have to invest in their manual workflow solutions for managing litigation (not to mention redundant PACER fees) we are able to present a compelling by-the-numbers story.

The final step is to conduct a small pilot. These tend to go smoothly because our most popular feature, PDF2Go, does not require any staff time to get setup; lawyers and their respective case teams simply start receiving all their federal case filings in real time.

What does a firmwide rollout look like?

So, I hate software. I particularly hate changing software — even if I know the new version is better. I hate it because it's boring, and distracting from work I actually like, and because I know I'm likely to make a mistake and I don't know how bad it'll be.

But I don't want our customers to feel that way about PacerPro. So I try to make the introduction as easy as possible: we create hierarchical associations so that notifications push to both attorneys and assigned staff. I transfer over existing distribution lists so that new users have a template to work from. I've created a series of image based handouts and feature specific YouTube tutorials for quick reference. Finally, every welcome email has my cell phone number so new users can contact me directly or via our support channel.

What does staff training look like?

Before we start training, I like to do a quick call with the office or practice group managers to find out which one of 3 basic workflow models their group falls into *vis-a-vis* case management.

Then I set up our service so that the default settings mimic current workflow. Then I schedule a 20 minute training so that I can explain the settings and show end users how they can adjust the defaults. I like to swing back by with additional trainings 3 to 6 months after to show some of our advanced features, and then annually after that.

Do lawyers need to train?

No. We've designed our service to mimic the current workflow: i.e., staff supply lawyers with their case documents and other PACER needs. With us, they're getting what they're accustomed to but faster and more predictably.