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Bryan Cave *embraces unique extranet technology to support its clients and lawyers.*

Law firms never have been symbols of technological innovation. Most calculate shifts in policy on cost-intensive matters such as infrastructure development based on market trends, rather than inherent needs or strategic focus. And then there are firms like international firm Bryan Cave.

A *bona fide* “big” firm, it has a diversified national and international practice focusing on corporate, transactional and litigation matters in 15 offices around the world, from its home office in St. Louis to Shanghai. It represents a wide variety of institutional and individual clients of all sizes. Its Web site boasts a “360 degree vision,” addressing issues from both a business and a legal perspective. Despite the firm’s size and diversity, it purports a “one firm” philosophy.

When it comes to technology, a firm of this size has two choices, follow or lead. A few years ago, Bryan Cave chose to do the latter and has not had time to look back. Too busy building a global technology platform promoting reliability, connectivity and availability, the firm leveraged its advancements to benefit its clients and bolster its bottom line.

According to Partner John I. Alber, who is responsible for setting technology strategy and managing the Client Technology Group, the reputation of law firms as slow adopters of technology is changing with the emergence of global firms. He cites recent industry-wide investments in Voice over Internet Protocol technology, business intelligence and infrastructure development as evidence of the change.

