

LawyersWeekly Legal ops unlocked 2025:

Get future-ready or fall behind

In 2025, legal operations sit at the centre of a transformed industry, with tech, data, and strategic support driving efficiency, agility, and measurable value.



AI assistants / Business management / Cyber security / Document automation / Optimisation / Practice management software /
Step change / Workflow / XAI

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STEP CHANGE

For law firms and legal departments navigating rapid growth and rising client expectations, embracing change is no longer optional; it's essential to remain competitive.



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IN AN increasingly competitive and fast-evolving business world, step change represents a bold, strategic transformation – one that goes beyond incremental improvements to unlock significant, sustainable gains in efficiency, performance, and profitability.

Business transformation specialist Harriss Wagner is focused on developing strategies for step change – improving the efficiency of legal operations through process transformation and implementing productivity-boosting business systems well. Harriss Wagner consultants drive both step change and incremental change to modernise practices and increase productivity.

“Unleashing potential to drive and create critical improvements,” according to Harriss Wagner partner Amanda Harriss, can be especially beneficial for progressive businesses that are keen to embrace legal tech (including AI and machine learning solutions) to future-proof their operations and achieve sustainable success.

“Many private law firms, patent attorneys, in-house counsel teams within major corporations, public prosecution and legal government agencies started with modest foundations. With a critical rise in risk-based practices, legal services across the globe are in demand, providing substantial growth to the industry,” she says.

“Many of these legal businesses find it challenging to adapt their operations to meet the demands at a similar pace of growth, resulting in frenetic medium-tier businesses rather than sophisticated top-tier businesses. Crucial to the growth plan is creating visibility for change to everyone included in the journey and seeking assistance to help shift the mindset of leaders and managers to the required new paradigm.”

While many Australian businesses are now implementing some form of emerging tech, the “propensity to continue manual practices” is something Harriss still sees across legal operations – and is the most common inefficiency, resulting in wasted resources, costs, and missed opportunities.



**EXAMINING AND
INTRODUCING A DATA
HYGIENE REGIME REQUIRED
TO EFFECTIVELY MANAGE
MATTERS AND CREATE
VELOCITY WILL SUPPORT
GROWTH TRAJECTORIES.**

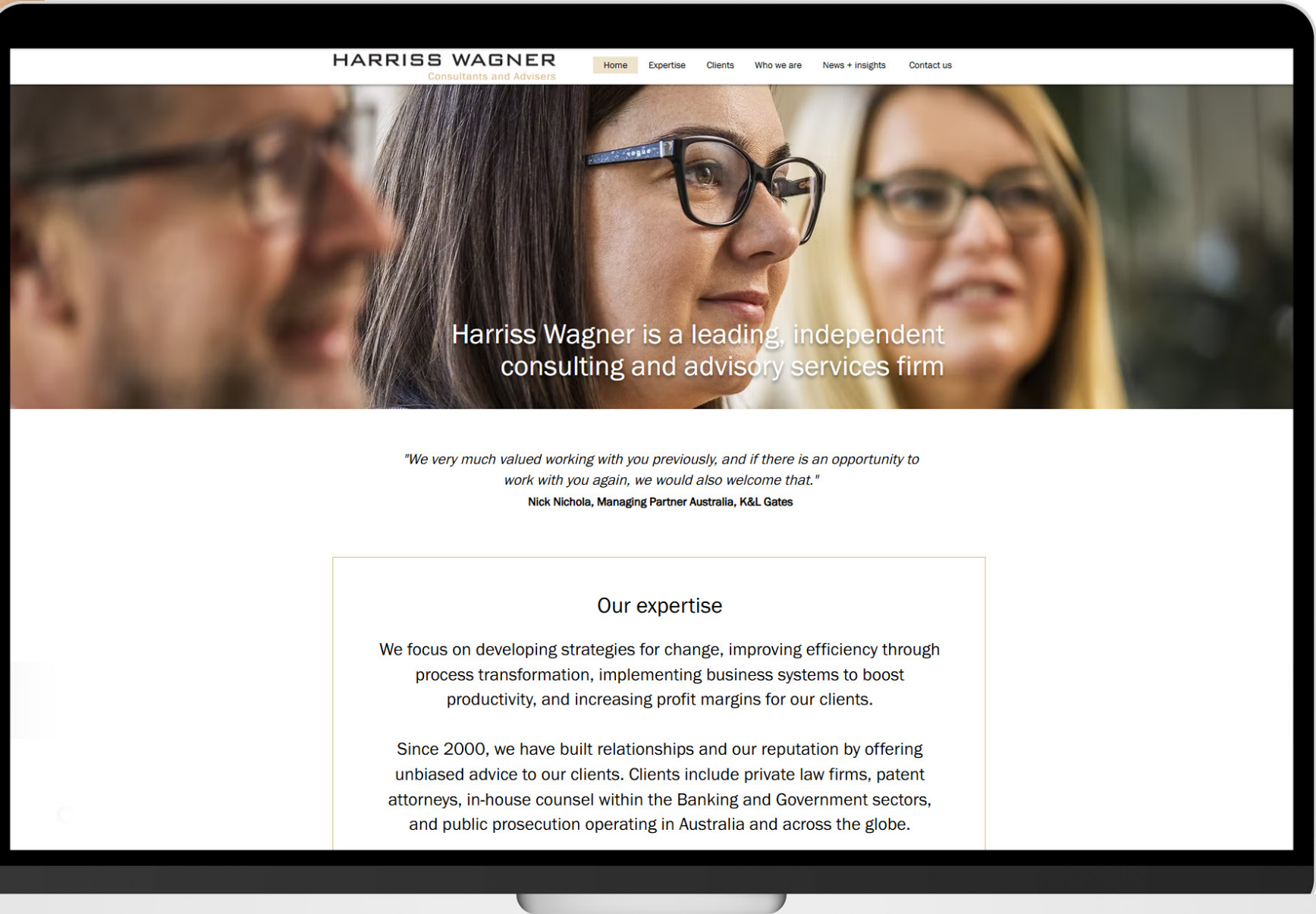
Amanda Harriss
Partner, Harriss Wagner



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“Too often we find ourselves providing simple recommendations to a legal business that includes ceasing to pay for systems and technologies in the ecosystem that are not being used or to invest wisely and effectively implement the systems and technologies purchased to achieve the desired benefits promised to the business,” she says.

“Equally, examining and introducing a data hygiene regime required to effectively manage matters and create velocity will support growth trajectories. Everyone believes their data is clean until it is examined! The legacies here are again the consequences of growth – transforming deficiencies in systems management, integration, and data hygiene regimes are paramount regardless of the size of the teams employed to manage such controls.”

With the looming need to introduce anti-money laundering (AML) and related practices for client onboarding in 2026, this change will be easier for legal businesses to adopt when data deduplication and integrity are the norm.

Contemporary business strategies and key tips for step change

Modernising business strategies and implementing step change initiatives are essential for legal teams seeking to stay agile, competitive, and aligned with the demands of a rapidly shifting legal landscape.

Key step change strategies include:

- Diagnosing the root causes of problems and building a business case for change, in conjunction with designing a transformation program to modernise operations to meet planned growth and demand.
- Continuous evaluation of the top 20 clients by revenue, by matter volumes, by profitability and making the hard decisions to ensure the business leans into the clients of the future to avoid attracting unnecessary costs.
- Driving a change program that effectively moves everyone required through a journey focused on financial discipline, winning business, good citizenship, positive mindset towards future practices, and leading by example.

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“Legal businesses have overlooked investing wisely in change management disciplines to ensure staff adoption, improved service delivery, and a rise in performance, notwithstanding the represented benefits. Shareholder satisfaction is often interpreted internally as minimising cost, rather than maximising value,” Harriss says.

“While it is true that some shareholders prefer minimised costs, it is without doubt that a pragmatic return on investment (ROI) plan representing value, wins satisfaction. A pragmatic ROI plan includes a change management investment.”

Modernising strategies, structures, and practices is vital in the current market – and seeking external expertise can help legal businesses future-proof their operations.

Harriss Wagner transforms processes and introduces new ways of working, as well as automating time-consuming legal and administrative tasks, enabling lawyers to focus more on their clients and the legal solutions required by their clients.

“Brand profile (visual elements, voice, overall personality), expertise, methodology, and fee arrangements need continuous examination and refinement. These elements are key to improving the effectiveness of productivity effort and profit margins, especially where high-volume, low-fee arrangements are within the portfolio of services,” Harriss says.

“Looking ahead, partnering with an impartial and experienced team provides fresh perspectives, ensures alignment with best practice, and introduces sustainable changes that strengthen resilience, adaptability, and long-term success in a rapidly evolving legal landscape.” ●

ABOUT HARRISS WAGNER

harrisswagner.com

Harriss Wagner is a leading independent consulting and advisory firm with over 25 years of experience transforming the legal industry across Australasia, Asia, Europe, and North America.

The firm partners with legal businesses to drive strategic change – streamlining processes, integrating business systems, and introducing modern, tech-enabled ways of working. By automating routine tasks and enhancing mobility, Harriss Wagner helps lawyers reclaim their time and focus on delivering high-quality legal outcomes.

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