

New Orleans CITYBUSINESS

Lawyers launch tech startup

By: Maria Clark, Reporter October 2, 2014 0

Attorneys Jade Brown-Russell and Michelle Craig are jumping into new territory with the launch of what they describe as the first legal technology startup in the region.

Their full-service law firm, Transcendent Legal, will provide clients with real-time access to documents, budgets, invoices and project milestones through a platform designed specifically for the firm. Each client will have their own password that will give them access exclusively to their documents. The platform was developed by Federal Computing, a software development firm based out of Little Rock, A.R. and New Orleans.

The launch of the new practice is a big step for both attorneys. Craig has about 12 years of legal experience having spent the last five years practicing labor and employment law at Adams and Reese in New Orleans. Brown-Russell was the New Orleans-based general counsel of regional operations for Caesars Entertainment Corp. since 2010. She previously practiced at Adams and Reese where she worked with Craig.

The attorneys have worked closely on their concept with the founders of the PowerMoves.NOLA program, which provides business consultation, training and marketing opportunities for minority entrepreneurs.

"You grow in the practice of law," Craig said. "Adams and Reese has been supportive of all the things I wanted to do. Having been part of the startup world in the city, I saw the great opportunity and need in the profession for a concept like this. I truly believe in it and think it will change the game."

Transcendent Legal will offer alternative fee arrangements as well billable hour options to clients. They are currently looking for office space and plan on hiring more attorneys as the business continues to grow.

"We will grow as the business grows, which I think is the most efficient way," Brown-Russell said. "We want to be able to hire attorneys who we will engage on a project by project basis and will learn and grow from deals that are as sophisticated as we hope to handle."

Educating future clients and employees on how to use their platform and ensuring that their information is secure and protected will also be a challenge Brown-Russell and Craig will tackle. As the business gets off the ground they intend to hire a full-time employee who will provide clients and their attorneys with training on how to use the cloud-based platform.

"We come with a great deal of experience, but it is not necessarily comfortable to be in the place of an entrepreneur," Brown-Russell said.

"This is new for us but the legal market suggests that collaborative services are the wave of the future," Craig said.

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