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Avoiding Extinction: Reimagining Legal Services for the 21st Century

Mitchell Kowalski

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*"An original, provocative, and entertaining narrative."
— Prof. Richard Susskind, author of The End of Lawyers?*

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I read this book when it was first published and found it incredibly thought provoking. I'm not a fan of the novel style of business book, but it makes for an easy and illustrative discussion of key points in client service and satisfaction that would otherwise be pretty dry. I've recommended it to my clients (I consult with lawyers concerning business development) repeatedly, and I continue to reference it in conversation with clients. The single review as of the date on which I'm writing envisions business books in a single mold, which is pretty ironic considering that the book address the risk of extinction from following a single mold of client service. Highly recommended.
1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Look into the future of legal services: How can it be done
By SHS
This industry needs an overhaul; run law firms like businesses! This is the message of Mitch Kowalski's book *Avoiding Extinction: Reimagining Legal Services for the 21st Century*. Different from the dozens of books on law firm management in the market, Kowalski packages his message (and the how-to) in a work of fiction. I had received the book from a friend in London and couldn't put it down until the plane touched down in New York. The book showcases a new model law firm from three different perspectives: The GC of a large corporation, a lateral attorney starting at the firm, and a new member of the firm's board of directors. The firm does lots of things right. It delivers high quality legal services in an efficient way, using knowledge management, project management, process improvement, leveraging technology, and all the other good stuff. And it makes people want to work there. The bloggers at 3 Geeks and a Law Blog called the firm to be what Google would be if they practiced law. I guess we will see if (when?) that happens. If you're looking for an inspiring summer read, add this one to your list.
7 of 14 people found the following review helpful. Beware - written as if it's fiction
By RubyW
This book is written as if it was a novel. "As Maria swiveled her chair to pull a thick file folder from her briefcase, she heard a loud shout from her kids" is a snippet from the first page. If you want a serious book on the topic of the changing legal services market, don't buy this book. We purchased a copy, read a few pages and then packed it up and immediately shipped it back.

Mitch Kowalski has translated his considerable understanding of tomorrow's legal profession into an original, provocative and entertaining narrative. Professor Richard Susskind, author of *The End of Lawyers?* This is the most innovative law practice management book I've ever seen. Mitch has deftly combined an engaging novel about the lives of working lawyers with an illuminating treatise on how law firms must respond to extraordinary change in the legal marketplace. *Avoiding Extinction* is as entertaining as it is instructive -- and it couldn't be more timely. Jordan Furlong, Partner, Edge International This is a must read for managing partners, and for all lawyers under the age of 50. Written as a parable, once you pick it up it's difficult to put down. And it literally screams relevance to the lives of those lawyers today who worry about the sustainability of the current model of legal practice. Big firm or small. City or rural no matter, this book is for you. Can the law be both a profession and a business? Is it possible to escape the tyranny of the billable hour? Is it realistic to imagine being a truly happy lawyer in private practice in the twenty-first century? You bet and Mitch Kowalski shows us how! Ian Holloway QC, Dean of Law, The University of Calgary *Avoiding Extinction* is the most original, far-thinking and innovative book on transforming the way that law is practised that I have ever read. Mitch has taken the traditional law firm and turned it upside down. In the process he has reworked the law firm model and given us an insight into how a firm could be structured and run. If you are looking for a creative vision into what a new, truly different law firm could look like, then this book is manna from heaven. David J. Bilinsky, Practice Management Advisor, lawyer and writer on law practice management and technology. Creator of the law blog, Thoughtful Legal Management.

About the Author Mitchell Kowalski is a lawyer and the principal consultant at Cross Pollen Advisory where he advises in-house legal departments and law firms on the redesign of legal service delivery. Mitch was recognized as a Fastcase 50 Global Legal Innovator in 2012, and before that he served as a partner at one of the world's largest international law firms, and as in-house legal counsel. He writes for a variety of publications, including a monthly column on legal innovation for *The National Post*, a national Canadian newspaper, and he is often asked for comment in national and international news media. Mitch also speaks at conferences and client-gatherings around the world. As a visiting professor at the University of Calgary Law School, he researches and teaches innovation in the global legal services market.