Service Marketplaces: Revolutionizing Cross-Border Legal Services

Technology, Privacy, and eCommerce

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The legal service industry is undergoing a profound transformation driven by technology and shifting client and lawyer preferences. In the next 10 to 20 years, we anticipate revolutionary changes that will reshape the legal landscape. This article delves into the challenges faced by businesses, in-house counsel, lawyers, and law firms in the realm of cross-border legal services. It also explores the pivotal role that service marketplaces, exemplified by Trustiics, will play in this evolving landscape.

Challenges in cross-border legal services

Challenges for businesses and in-house counsel

Accessibility: How can businesses quickly access quality legal services in foreign countries?

In a globalized business world, companies often operate in foreign markets where they lack established connections with local attorneys. Urgent legal issues can arise at any moment,

necessitating immediate attention. Rapid access to reliable legal services is becoming a “must-have” for seamless operations in foreign markets.

Affordability: How can the cost of international legal services be controlled?

The cost of legal services can deter small and medium-sized businesses. Transparency in legal budgeting remains a challenge when engaging law firms. The trend of international law firms closing overseas offices further limits options and affordability.

Efficiency: How can legal issues in overseas markets be managed efficiently?

Simplifying the service process is crucial for efficient cross-border legal issue management. This involves identifying legal experts in different jurisdictions swiftly, establishing predefined budgets, defining clear scopes of service, controlling expenses, maintaining visibility of service status, and facilitating real-time communication and collaboration with and among service providers.

- Latham & Watkins closed their Shanghai office in 2023;
    - Dentons closed the Barcelona office and ceased its China partnership in 2023;
    - Herbert Smith Freehills decided to close their Korea office in 2023;
    - Kennedys closed its Bangkok office in 2023;
    - Hogan Lovells closed its Perth, Australia office in 2023; and
    - Brown Rudnick closed its Paris office in 2023.

This trend extends beyond these examples, with many other firms, such as Vinson & Elkins, Orrick, McDermott, Osborne Clarke, Proskauer Rose, and Baker Botts, reducing the number of their international offices in the past several years.

Simplifying the service process is crucial for efficient cross-border legal issue management.

Challenges for lawyers and law firms

Accessibility: How can lawyers become visible and accessible to clients beyond traditional networks?

The digital age has shifted marketing and legal services online. Lawyers must adapt to connect with clients beyond traditional boundaries.

Lawyers must find innovative ways to connect with clients and conduct online legal services. KingVector / *Shutterstock.com*

Affordability: How can lawyers stay competitive while meeting client demands for cost control?

Clients seek transparent fee structures and flexible service models, challenging traditional hourly billing. Balancing client demands with rising operating costs is a significant challenge.

Efficiency: How can legal practices be managed efficiently and sustainably?

Clients seek increased responsiveness and accessibility, preferring online communication channels, rapid responses to inquiries, and effortless access to legal documents. Lawyers must adapt their communication methods and responsiveness to align with these evolving client expectations.

Lawyers must keep their communication methods current in order to satisfy client needs and expectations. Irina Strelnikova / *Shutterstock.com*

Simultaneously, younger lawyers are emphasizing work-life balance, gravitating toward flexible work arrangements, including remote work options. The importance of collaboration tools cannot be overstated.

Service marketplaces as solutions and opportunities

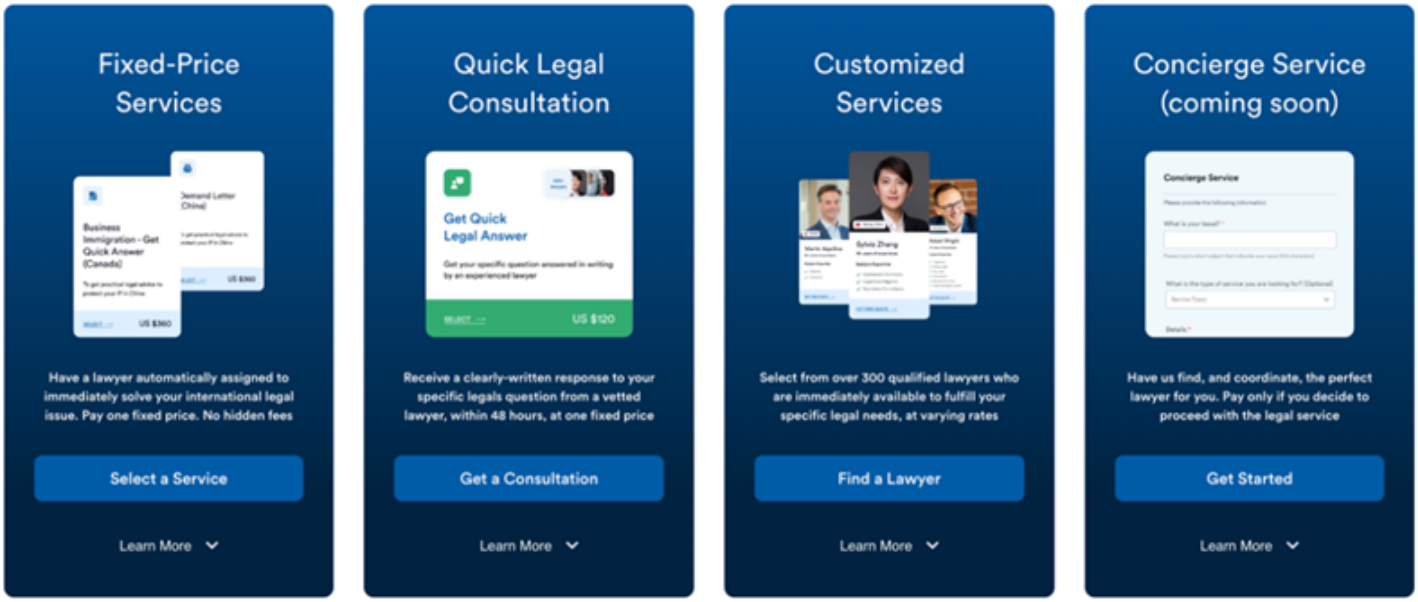
Service marketplaces, now at the 5.0 generation, offer solutions to the “Accessibility,” “Affordability,” and “Efficiency” challenges for both legal service buyers and sellers.

Opportunities for businesses

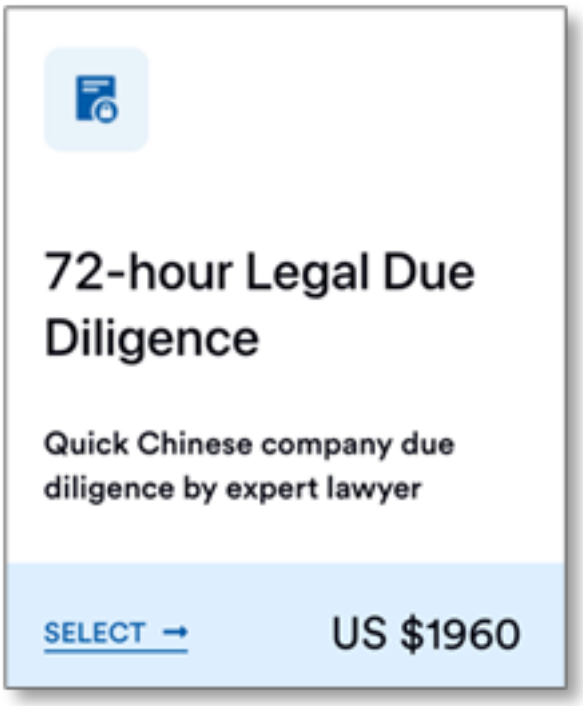
Trustiics.com is an example. Trustiics is a Canada-based legal service marketplace on the list of **Qualified Service Providers of the Canada Trade Commissioner Service**. With a focus on cross-border legal issues, Trustiics covers all business-related legal matters in China and started expanding to Canada, the United States, Brazil, and India earlier this year.

- **Accessibility:**

Service marketplaces standardize vetting and onboarding processes, making legal expertise from various jurisdictions readily available. SMEs can efficiently hire legal professionals and access standardized solutions, reducing time and effort.



For instance, you can have an experienced Chinese lawyer conduct due diligence on a potential supplier or importer in China within three days for less than US$2,000, all without leaving your desk.



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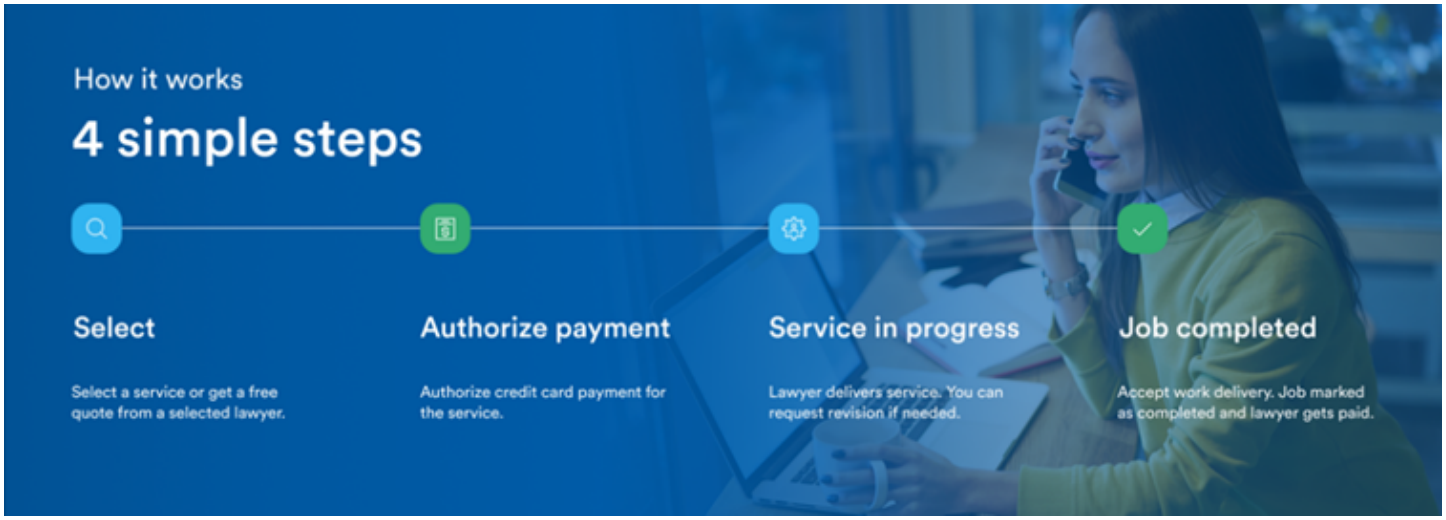
- **Efficiency:**

Service marketplaces like Trustiics have streamlined the service process to resemble eCommerce products, from lawyer vetting to service proposal, from service purchase to payment, and after-service reviews. With clear displays of legal service fees, scope of service, and deliverables, and empowered with eCommerce-type online payment available, ordering a legal service in a foreign country becomes as straightforward as ordering food delivery.

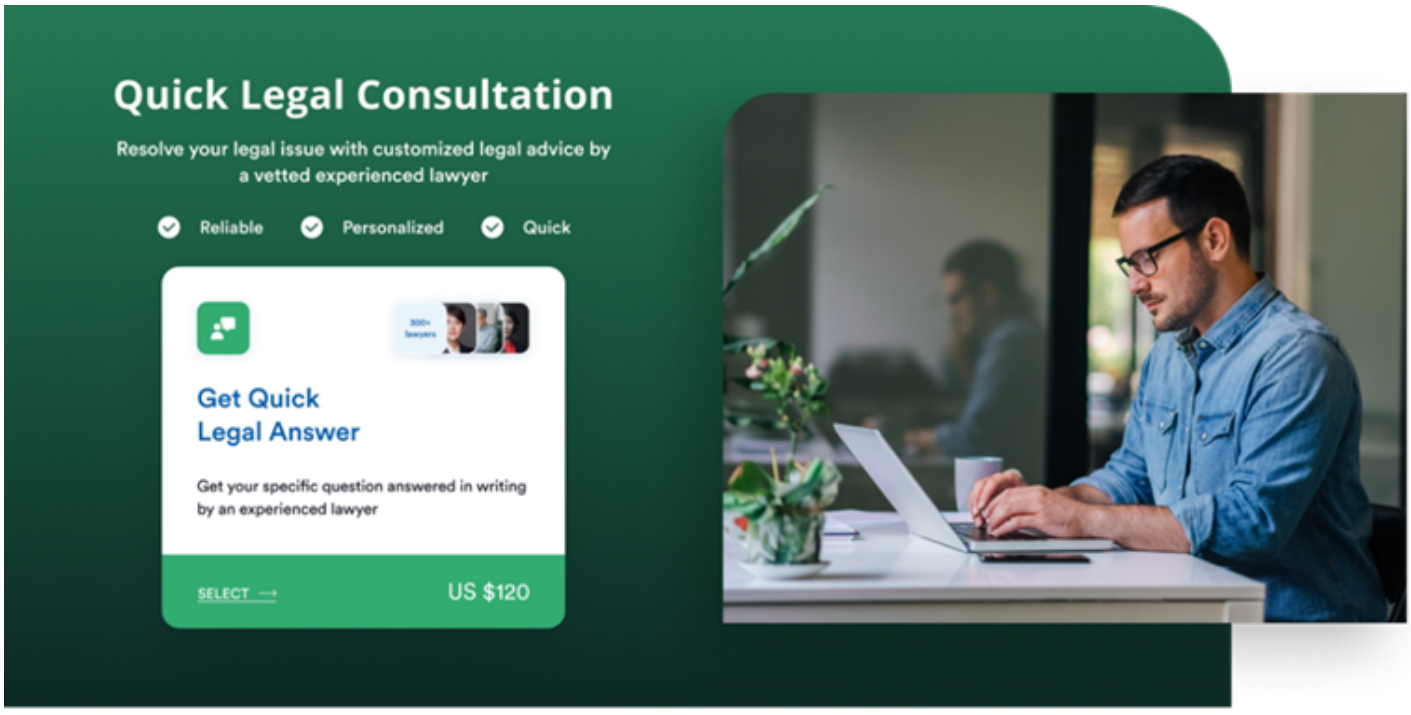


For example, when your company’s trademark or patent is infringed in China, it will only take you less than 10 minutes to order a bilingual customized IP Infringement Cease & Desist Letter on Trustiics. An experienced IP lawyer will draft the letter, deliver it to the infringing party, and reach out to the infringing party on your behalf, all within a week for just US$2,360, without you going through your network asking for referrals.

- **Affordability:**

Many service marketplaces, including Trustiics, have adopted the pay-as-you-go model and flat fee pricing approach.

For example, when you have a legal issue concerning a contract's governing law clause and its impact on contract enforceability in countries like Brazil, India, or China, you can simply send a request for Quick Legal Consultation on Trustiics and expect to receive a written legal answer from an experienced lawyer within the next 48 hours for just US$120.



You can also choose a lawyer based on their location and expertise and then submit a request for a free quote directly to the selected lawyer. There are no charges on either side until the service has been completed.

Opportunities for lawyers

Service marketplaces have the advantage of adopting and integrating new tech tools and solutions, benefiting lawyers who leverage service marketplaces as their virtual offices of practice.

- **Global reach enabled**

Service marketplaces bring global opportunities for lawyers. Service providers can expand their client base beyond geographical boundaries without the need of mastering Google SEO or opening overseas offices.

- **Efficient workflow streamlined**

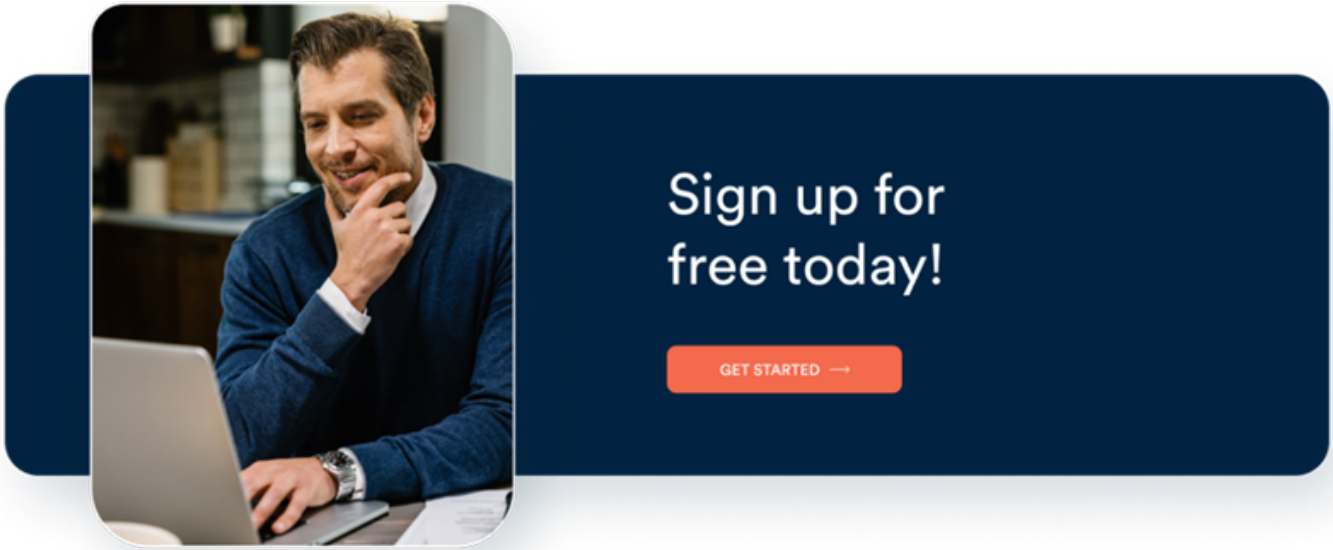
Service marketplaces enhance lawyers’ efficiency, benefiting their practice. These platforms streamline client acquisition, communication, and payment processes, enabling lawyers to focus on their core legal work.

Lawyers, although paid only after delivering the service, do not worry about non-payment or late payment because clients have already made online payments, which will be released to the lawyers’ account from escrow upon service completion.

Service marketplaces enhance lawyers' efficiency, benefiting their practice.

- **Flexible practice models**

Service marketplaces offer lawyers the flexibility to practice on their terms, including remote work options. Lawyers can adapt to changing work dynamics and enjoy more work-life balance.



Tomorrow’s legal solutions

In the next 10 to 20 years, the legal service industry will experience transformative changes. Legal service marketplaces will act as vital bridges, connecting legal professionals, clients, and the challenges of tomorrow. They will usher in a new era of accessibility, efficiency, and innovation in legal services.

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Terry Tianpeng Wang

Founder and CEO

Trustiics

Terry Tianpeng Wang, founder and CEO of Trustiics, is a seasoned cross-border M&A and PE lawyer with 15 years of legal practice. His experience includes roles at prestigious international law firms such as Linklaters, Clifford Chance, and Morrison & Foerster, as well as a leading Chinese firm, Jingtian & Gongcheng. Wang holds a J.D. degree from the Louis D. Brandeis School of Law at the University of Louisville and is qualified in the State of New York and China.

In 2019, he embarked on a mission to enhance accessibility to international legal services by founding Trustiics in Ottawa, Canada. Prior to this, Wang spent three years as a partner at an early-stage VC firm based in Ottawa, further enriching his entrepreneurial perspective.