

Outsourced Legal Administration Case Study

Pinsent Masons and Exigent overhaul internal and external support structures to boost operational efficiencies

Executive summary

Pinsent Masons is recognised for its innovation and adopting smart technology to drive efficiency – reflected in the firm's profit growth of 60% over the past five years. One facet helping to drive this growth is high levels of efficiency in its operational and support functions. However, following an in-depth review, the law firm understood that a new model was required. Tasks were not being assigned to the right resources or the right skillsets, causing a drain on business value.

Pinsent Masons decided to remodel the administrative and support structure using a combination of people, processes and technology. The law firm developed a support structure that consisted of PAs, Administrators and Document Specialists, internally and externally. Exigent supported the changes and ensured its external support team was available, trained, primed and ready to further support the law firm. This united approach helped to maximise efficiencies, driving value back to the business and creating a world-class support function for the lawyers.

Challenge

Voted Law Firm of the Year in 2018, Pinsent Masons understands the pressure and highly competitive nature of the legal sector. Maintaining efficient administrative support and ensuring that all resources are properly utilised is vital to safeguard continued growth in a challenging market. Following a thorough internal review of its operating models, Pinsent Masons became aware of the need to overhaul its administration and legal support functions. The opaque nature of the existing structure meant that there was little visibility of all the tasks and the where, when and how tasks were allocated to them. The review also demonstrated that resources were under-utilised and many PAs did not feel that they had sufficient opportunity to apply their skills with many routinely undertaking low value-tasks.

Having worked alongside the law firm for more than 10 years, Exigent recognised that for maximum benefits to be realised from the review process, changes would also be required for the Exigent team. As part of Exigent's 'Good to Great' initiative, the Exigent team prepared themselves to make greater resources available.

Solution

After conducting a workflow analysis, Pinsent Masons remodelled its support and operational structure internally to deploy resources where they would create the most value and efficiency. Exigent worked alongside the law firm to ensure any growth impact on their requirements could be undertaken quickly and smoothly. Internal workshops were attended for Exigent's senior team members; SLAs were reviewed thoroughly to fit the new needs of the business, and lawyers were interviewed to discover exactly what a Great service would look like for them, and to ensure that their needs were properly met.

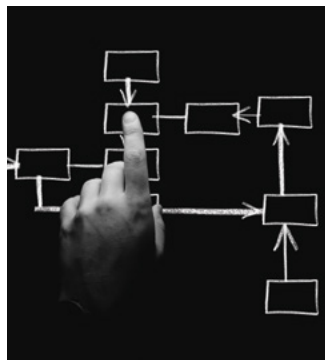
A new administrative support structure was introduced that included the creation of a layer of Team Administrators (TA) supporting the PAs and all overseen by a team of PA Services Managers. The role of the TAs absorbs some of the more administrative tasks such as scanning, filing, and printing, releasing the PAs to focus on added-value work that leverages both client knowledge and legal experience. The Exigent team doubled in size to 44, with all new members becoming fully trained and integrated within eight weeks and working under a newly-appointed dedicated team trainer.

A critical element of the new structure is that specific document production work types are now automatically routed through Exigent, supported by a small in-house document production team. As part of the administration and support remodelling, a workflow tool was introduced which routes all tasks through the workflow function to allow absolute transparency on where resources are applied, when and for whom. This ensures that Pinsent Masons apportions the right task to the right person at the right time, delivering greater value back to the business.

The new structure has had an immediate impact on the quality and efficiency of how work is produced.

“ Having worked with Exigent for such a long period of time, they have become an essential part of our team. With our restructure we are utilising them far more effectively for both manuscript amendments and typing. This helps us operate more efficiently and effectively. ”

- Kirsty Russell, Workflow Product Owner, Pinsent Masons



Results and future plans

Within two months of the remodelled operational and support structure, the number of tasks distributed to Exigent increased from 700 per month to 1,200 per month - an increase of 70%. While the level of dictation has remained constant, the increase has been in the number of manuscript pages per month, completing an average of 35,000 pages in the past six months. Routing more work through Exigent and the newly appointed TAs, ensures maximum efficiencies are gained and skills are properly utilised.

There have been additional softer benefits gained during the transition. The Exigent team now feel more integrated within the Pinsent Masons structure, which ensures that both teams have a relationship and understand the skills and areas of specialism within each unit.

Additionally, robust governance and strong mutual SLAs ensure that both Exigent and Pinsent Masons are striving for continuous improvement and making decisions based on clear factual knowledge. The number one priority is ensuring the lawyers have the support team they need.