

THOMSON REUTERS ELITE CASE STUDY HESKETH HENRY

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AGGRESSIVE BUSINESS GOALS



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PERFORMING AT A HIGHER LEVEL

Hesketh Henry, one of New Zealand's oldest law firms, has also been one of the country's leading law firms for more than a century. Headquartered in Auckland, the firm has around 100 staff members, including 55 lawyers, and practices corporate and commercial law, commercial property, litigation, and dispute resolution. While firmly focused on the Asia-Pacific market, the firm also has a growing international client base in Europe and the United States.

As the first firm in New Zealand to select 3E® for its financial and practice management system, Hesketh Henry knew it had to change because its legacy software platform was no longer going to be supported. Operating with 3E for nearly a year now, the firm is now able to constantly adapt to changes, such as international business standards and emerging client demands, while still maintaining high-quality client service.

According to Managing Partner Erich Bachmann, 3E is the state-of-the-art technology platform that enables the firm to perform at a much higher level. "As a firm, you obviously need to have the talent, reputation, and presence in the marketplace. Part and parcel with that is the infrastructure to back it all up. Leading-edge technology helps us more efficiently deliver services in a manner that clients expect these days."

ENHANCED PLATFORM TO HELP ACHIEVE AGGRESSIVE BUSINESS GOALS

When Bachmann and the management team learned that their legacy software was being phased out, they began making a list of key requirements for a new solution. First and foremost, the new platform had to easily support international business practices beyond New Zealand, which limited their options to just a few vendors.

3E jumped to the top of the list because, according to Bachmann, the solution has been developed "by a very reputable organization that has demonstrated significant commitment to the product." After a more in-depth review,

the team was impressed with 3E's embedded workflow functionality and integrated development environment (IDE) that provides firms with extreme flexibility to customize specific business processes.

With its legacy system, the majority of these processes were managed manually, resulting in duplication of effort and various workarounds. 3E's IDE enables the firm to easily add or modify screens, create new database tables or columns, and change business logic. With that structure in place, workflow capabilities allow the firm to build a series of process steps governed by business rules that automate processes, such as billing and reporting. All Hesketh Henry changes remain intact when they perform any type of system upgrades. In the initial rollout, the firm has been able to deploy six new workflows designed to improve the efficiency of approvals and authorizations.

"3E automates many of our day-to-day processes, which clearly makes us more efficient and helps deliver more consistent and comprehensive work products," says Bachmann. "Overall, we feel the firm is in a stronger competitive position to take on new business opportunities in our core areas of expertise."

"We see the deployment of 3E as only the beginning. More than anything, 3E gives us a capacity for rapid innovation that will allow us to meet emerging client demands in ways that simply are not possible with older, less flexible legacy systems. Operating with the most advanced financial and practice management system available today gives us a tremendous amount of confidence to achieve our aggressive business goals," adds Justin Cox, General Manager.

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Erich Bachmann
Managing Partner

HESKETH HENRY

Originally founded in 1865, Hesketh Henry is a full-service commercial law firm representing some of New Zealand's best-known companies, as well as a number of well-known multi-nationals. It employs specialists across almost all aspects of commercial law, including mergers and acquisitions, foreign investment, commercial property, employment, and telecommunications. The firm has more than 100 staff, including 55 lawyers in its Auckland office.

MISSION

To transition to a more sophisticated software platform that supported international business practices and provided financial intelligence to make more informed decisions.

WHY 3E?

3E, developed by a long standing industry leader, is a next-generation platform that can be customized to fit firm workflow, billing, and reporting needs and provide competitive differentiation.

BENEFITS

- Automates day-to-day processes for higher efficiency
- More easily meets international business standards
- Provides real-time data to make more informed decisions communications

3E PARTNERSHIP: SMOOTH IMPLEMENTATION

For the implementation, the firm formed a strong internal project team of four to five people who were heavily involved in the entire process and worked closely with the 3E Consulting Team. They frequently interacted and consulted with the users of the system, making necessary customizations and adapting some existing protocols to create a comfort level with 3E.

The implementation process took approximately nine months for the standard 3E package of time recording, billing, and reporting. The go-live process included five days for data conversion where the team continued to process essential transactions under the old system. During this conversion period, the team had to re-enter these old transactions into 3E, which provided extensive, hands-on training of the new system with live data.

On the sixth business day, the entire firm went live and was processing transactions in a normal manner. "The key for us was to use real data for user training and experience in at least three trial runs before we went live," says Bachmann. "I think it was great to go live on day six with no hitches. It went totally according to plan."

Bachmann also felt their 3E Consulting Team provided solid support when they needed it to answer questions and ensure things are working properly. "We had a very good experience with the going-live phase. It's all part of the cumulative advantage that 3E gives us," he continues.

DESCRIPTIVE TIME CAPTURE BENEFITS

The initial focus was to get all staff proficiently using the time recording features. Because 3E Time Entry is intuitive, it was easy for the staff to get up to speed on the system. Plus it provides far more functionality than the old system and allows unlimited description of specific activities.

"With more detailed information, someone who may not have been previously involved in every single aspect of the file is able to tell at a glance what work was accomplished and easily figure out what the fee should be if necessary," explains Bachmann. "Time capture has worked out quite well."

Additionally, more sophisticated time capture capabilities help meet international billing demands. For example, the billing department is able to summarize the multitude of time entries for a client based on specific needs, such as by day or by fee earner, before they are posted. The resulting invoices are now more detailed, keeping clients—and the firm—more informed.

"The dashboards provide more detailed information without inundating the lawyers with too much data."

Erich Bachmann

POWER OF REAL-TIME INFORMATION ACROSS THE FIRM

In its initial rollout, Hesketh Henry developed a series of user-specific dashboards and real-time reports that provide relevant information at lawyers' fingertips, focused on increasing productivity and enhancing client partnerships.

Before 3E, the firm only had basic statistics on time spent on a matter, which were shared after system backups and updates. Now, its lawyers can access comprehensive information at a much more sophisticated level, according to Bachmann. "The dashboards provide more detailed information without inundating the lawyers with too much data." Because the dashboard reports are drillable, lawyers have the option to find what's behind certain statistics. These numbers become more powerful when available on a real-time basis in 3E.

The firm is also able to enhance the information available through its secure client portal. The team is able to customize the information the client wants, such as documentation and discovery status and limited financial data. They are still developing this component to make it more robust based on client requests.

The benefits of 3E also extend to Henry Hesketh managers. "With 3E, we have information that is more accessible and more easily understood at the partner and management level, so that has been quite good," according to Bachmann. "3E helps us stay agile in today's market."

SOLID FOUNDATION FOR COMPETITIVE EDGE

Staying agile is paramount for Hesketh Henry to respond to client demands and global requirements. "While 3E is not necessarily going to enhance our reputation, it can enhance our credibility of providing innovative and leading-edge services. 3E helps us deliver services that help the firm stand out from the competition," concludes Bachmann.

To learn more about 3E or for a global list of office locations, visit elite.com.

