

ELITE CASE STUDY

DWF LLP

3E PROVIDES A CLEAR WINDOW FOR LEADING UK LAW FIRM



THOMSON REUTERS™

ELITE®

DWF LLP

3E PROVIDES A CLEAR WINDOW FOR LEADING UK LAW FIRM

3E SUPPORTS LONG-TERM GOALS WITH FLEXIBILITY AND NEXT-GENERATION PLATFORM

DWF LLP continues to be one of the fastest growing law firms in the United Kingdom. In the past four years, the firm has completed a successful merger and more than doubled in size and revenue. By delivering exceptional legal expertise and client service, the Firm's management has set their sights on becoming a Top 30 UK law firm. One of the firm's key initiatives to support this growth trajectory is implementing best-of-breed technology solutions.

Replacing the firm's financial operating system was a top priority. As a result of the merger, the firm was operating four different financial management systems which was obviously problematic, time-consuming and prone to human error. Management wanted to define a new set of business processes and procedures and to consolidate all financial data into one system.

"ELITE 3E was the best solution on the market to support the firm well into the future."

Andrea Brian
Head of Program Management

"We offer a full suite of legal services from procedural work to niche transactions, which require distinct workflows, billing arrangements and work product. As a firm, we have to be extremely flexible so our tools have to be flexible too. ELITE® 3E was the best solution on the market to support the firm well into the future," explains Andrea Brian, Head of Program Management at DWF.

The combination of 3E's innovative configuration capabilities and advanced platform development set it apart from the competition. "Other systems we evaluated were either built on old technology, which could only provide a short-term solution, or featured rigid infrastructures that required

procedures to be set in stone. We liked the 3E out-of-the-box Web services and flexible development environment, which we feel provided a future-proofed solution for the firm," she continues.

IMMEDIATE BENEFITS OF A CONSOLIDATED PLATFORM

Because of the complex nature of the system consolidation, Andrea and her team developed a phased approach to 3E. With Phase I, the team implemented the base 3E platform to achieve two basic outcomes: centralized financial data and a more automated billing process—without disrupting the flow of business. The firm benefited from the data transparency immediately.

"Prior to 3E, we had to look at DWF through four muddy windows. Now we have one clean window to view and analyze the financial health of the firm. It is a very significant improvement," shares Andrea.

Substantial Reporting Improvements

Internal reporting was the first process to get a makeover. The team set up Dashboards that provide access to key performance metrics for all time recorders based on their role in the firm. Lawyers are now able to monitor personal targets, and managers can analyze metrics across a team or practice group. Staff have real-time data points on key performance indicators where they can drill down for more detailed information.

Previously, the firm had to generate all standard and ad-hoc report requests by consolidating data in spreadsheets, which was a problematic on many levels. It was also difficult to get an accurate, firm-wide view of the metrics. By distributing reports via the Dashboard from a single database, the finance staff are free to generate reports on the financial health of the firm.

"Having information at our fingertips allows our staff to react and make adjustments more quickly to improve performance numbers," says Andrea.

DWF LLP

As one of the fastest growing law firms in the UK, DWF has more than 1,000 employees based in five offices. The firm provides a range of services, including corporate, finance and restructuring, litigation, real estate, people, insurance and private client. DWF is an ISO 9001-2000 registered company.

CHALLENGE

To consolidate four separate financial systems into a single database giving enhanced transparency and to enable integration with existing firm applications.

WHY ELITE 3E?

3E offered flexible, state-of-the-art platform that can easily adapt and grow with the firm.

BENEFITS

- Enhanced performance management information from increased transparency of financial data
- Streamlined reporting and billing processes for quicker response times
- Enhanced self-management with Information Management Dashboard

Better Visibility into the Billing Process

The first workflow Andrea and her team tackled with the finance department was invoicing. It was imperative to streamline this process due to the lack of visibility and length of time it took with the previous paper-based system.

"It took significant effort to know where we were with our performance targets. With 3E, we are now able to run reports that tell us exactly where an invoice is in the process, such as if the proforma has been generated or where the invoice is sitting in the queue. More importantly, we know the value of that invoice. Our Finance Director and Partners can better manage the process in order to achieve our targets," explains Andrea.

With the initial success of the revamped billing process, the team is working on additional enhancements to increase efficiencies, such as adding authorities in the workflow process to shorten the entire approval procedure. The new process in 3E is in stark contrast to the previous paper-driven billing process.

"We were really pleased how easily 3E integrated with our existing case management system for increased transparency."

Andrea Brian

BEST-OF-BREED DEVELOPMENT PLATFORM

3E's flexibility and integrated development environment (IDE) make it easy to accommodate DWF's best-of-breed approach to technology. Within Phase I, the team has been able to integrate 3E with its Visualfiles® case management system, an integral step in order to populate client extranets with comprehensive data. "We were really pleased how easily 3E integrated with our existing case management system for increased transparency," says Andrea.

Additional applications that will be integrated in subsequent roll-out phases include InterAction®, the customer relationship management system; the firm's HR system, and Microsoft Sharepoint™ technology, which is a very important delivery layer for users to gain access to the integrated information. "3E is the financial engine behind our technology strategy," explains Andrea.

"We know the system will grow with us and ultimately help the firm continue to exceed its ambitions."

Andrea Brian

FUTURE-PROOFING WITH 3E

Andrea and her team are most excited about what they have not yet implemented in 3E. On the list for Phase II are more self-service options for staff, such as more automated workflows and specific reports for WIP evaluations.

"We know there are continued improvements we can make across our business processes. The 3E framework is so flexible that we know we can combine the best practice of our Finance and Technology teams with its framework to produce the best of breed platform fundamental to our strategy and client service," Andrea shares. "We know the system will grow with us and ultimately help the firm continue to exceed its ambitions."

For more information about ELITE 3E,
please call (323) 642-5200 or visit elite.com.



THOMSON REUTERS™

ELITE®