

ELITE CASE STUDY

SEMPLER FRASER

FIRST SCOTTISH FIRM PURCHASES
ELITE 3E 'STEP CHANGE' SOLUTION



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SEMPLER FRASER

Specialist commercial law firm Semple Fraser has become the first Scottish firm to purchase Elite's sophisticated business optimisation platform, ELITE® 3E™.

Released in 2006, ELITE 3E is a new software application suite that offers powerful core financial and practice management features, and built-in application development capabilities, all seamlessly integrated into one high-performance system.

Semple Fraser managing partner Alister Fraser describes the decision to become one of the first firms in the world to purchase 3E as "extremely exciting for the firm and one that fits us perfectly".

"What Elite have achieved with the development of 3E is a 'step change' product, says Fraser. "They have developed a single, unified solution in which powerful functionality is neatly interfaced across the whole product.

"Semple Fraser has always been committed to developments in technology that enhance the service we deliver to our clients. By investing in 3E at an early stage we are once again embracing an industry-leading business solution to transform our business processes and move our firm forward."

"Our aim was to free up scarce management and fee-earner time and readily share information across the firm to further improve both client transaction processes and our own internal procedures."

Alister Fraser
Managing Partner

REDUCE ADMINISTRATION EFFORT, INCREASE FEE-EARNER PRODUCTIVITY

Fraser says the software development capabilities included in the 3E solution will allow the firm to configure specific applications to match its business needs, as and when they develop.

Based in Scotland, Semple Fraser is a multi-national practice with offices in Glasgow and Edinburgh, that operates across the UK. It also advises clients and organisations in other parts of the European community.

The firm has grown rapidly since it was established in 1990, and currently has over 90 fee-earners, including 24 partners. In the last three years its turnover has grown by 20% plus each year.

"Having successfully taken on new work, we knew it was particularly important for us to develop an improved client-centric view of our business, to improve service and provide support for future business strategies."

The firm also wanted to reduce the administrative effort it was expending on processing transactions and producing management information.

"Our aim was to free up scarce management and fee-earner time and readily share information across the firm to further improve both client transaction processes and our own internal procedures," Fraser says.

A SINGLE BUSINESS-WIDE SOLUTION

Semple Fraser was motivated to look for new software because its current system could not accurately categorise clients and their inter-relationships, a situation that was limiting its ability to make informed business decisions.

"The existing system was implemented around eight years ago and while it was a leading time and billing system in its day it has not developed significantly since then. Over time we have developed a series of electronic forms to handle key transactions, such as new client, matter / fees and cash movement, and we were keen to interface these to the financial system but this proved to be very difficult.

CLIENT OVERVIEW

Semple Fraser is a leading commercial law specialist. It is a multi-national practice advising clients throughout the UK from offices in Glasgow and Edinburgh. The firm has grown rapidly since it was established over 15 years ago. It currently has 24 partners and over 160 staff and has achieved turnover growth in excess of 20 per cent for the past four years.

Visit www.semplefraser.co.uk for more information.

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“These concerns, coupled with an increased appetite for greater analysis to improve the understanding of our business data, led us to consider an alternative to the current solution.”

Fraser says the firm selected ELITE 3E due to its rich functionality, strong collaborative features, and rapid development environment.

“We were impressed by the packaging of these features in a single businesswide solution. We also considered Elite’s profile as market leader and satisfied ourselves that their investment in 3E was significant. It is clearly their product for the future and one that has a confident development roadmap.”

Semple Fraser financial director, Andrew Hastings, says from a financial perspective the new system provides a huge opportunity to empower fee earners by presenting information in a way that is digestible and actionable.

“Providing them with online transaction information about clients and matters as well as summary information about unbilled time, debtors, disbursements and other relevant financial information will allow them to analyse data efficiently and deal with any issues that arise.”

Hastings says because the information presented to fee-earners will always be up-to-date, it should enable key processes to be streamlined.

“If you take credit management as an example, the fact that you have a single version of the ‘truth’ across the firm is incredibly powerful. If the fee-earner is looking at the same data as the finance department both parties can collaborate effectively.

STABLE PERFORMANCE AND DOWNSTREAM BENEFITS

During the selection process Semple Fraser visited Lovells, the UK firm who is beta testing the ELITE 3E application, and Fraser says they were particularly keen to hear about Lovells’ experience to date with the product.

“That visit gave us a sufficient level of comfort that it really did have the functionality and development features described and demonstrated to us, and that its level of performance and stability is more than satisfactory.

“We also gained a good insight into the type of benefits we anticipate 3E bringing to the business.”

“The quality of decision-making increases when it can be done quicker and more reliably. In the 3E context it will make a significant difference to our financial decision-making and our financial performance. “

Alister Fraser
Managing Partner

These benefits include a reduction in administration effort through improved integration between business functions, and a significant reduction in work-in-progress and debtor days, which will generate cash and provide an early payback on Semple Fraser’s 3E investment.

“This will be achieved by the provision of better and near real-time information to fee-earners’ desktops. Furthermore, we will gain improved management information on clients, pricing, conversions and margins that will aid our decision-making.”

For further information, please contact the Elite International Marketing Department on **+44 (0) 20 7369 7360** or email us at elite.enquiries@thomson.com.

