

# ELITE CASE STUDY WILLIAM FRY

ESTABLISHED ENTERPRISE FIRM UPGRADES  
TO SMARTER BUSINESS



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**ELITE®**

# WILLIAM FRY

## ESTABLISHED ENTERPRISE FIRM UPGRADES TO SMARTER BUSINESS

### CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF SMARTER BUSINESS

William Fry is one of Ireland's largest law Firms and ranked in the premier tier by Chambers Global and the Legal 500. Staffed by 270 lawyers and tax professionals and 110 support staff, William Fry offers services across the full breadth of the business sector. The Firm's reputation and its diversified practice areas were key factors that enabled the Firm to maintain the same level of business during the recent economic downturn.

William Fry recently celebrated its 10th anniversary of implementing Elite Enterprise. In the past decade, the Firm's Finance Department implemented a few key upgrades with improved features and functionality. Then, when Enterprise Version 3.8 was released, Finance and Operations Director Graham Dawson saw a good opportunity to not only enhance the system with the new release capabilities, but also to conduct a more in-depth business process review.

When the Firm was considering the upgrade to 3.8, Dawson and his team were also dealing with new and fundamental Value Added Tax (VAT) reporting requirements in Ireland and the rest of the European Union—which were not supported in their version of Enterprise. In addition, the Firm's WebView version had some issues with bill production.

"This was a good time to analyze how we could do things smarter," says Dawson. "Because of finance department attrition and new regulatory compliance mandates, we needed to do more with less. Through our business process review, we wanted to see where we could optimize Enterprise and our internal procedures. We started with the premise, 'if we were to implement Enterprise today, how would we do it?' It was a very enlightening experience."

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**Graham Dawson**  
Finance and Operations Director

### THE PATH TO IMPROVE INTERNAL PROCESSES

At the direction of Dave South, the Elite Consulting Services team led William Fry's Finance and Accounting team through a proprietary business process review that examined every process from cradle to grave conducted in these departments. Dawson was thrilled that the results were better than expected and was impressed with the team's comprehensive report that provided specific steps to enhance underperforming processes.

"We had worked with our Elite Consulting team in the past and established a good team dynamic, so we had confidence in the method and in the team to help implement the changes," shares Dawson.

The focus of the system optimization was to create efficiencies and enhance overall functionality. A few of the many highlights include:

**Improved company structure** – The business process analysis revealed that there should be more clearly defined general ledger structures within the Firm and how they are managed. By creating better segmentation between solicitor management services and administrative services, for example, the staff can provide more transparent compliance and better resource management.

### WILLIAM FRY

The Firm prides itself on the longevity of its client relationships, which includes leading Irish companies in all major sectors of the economy, government departments and agencies, and household names in the FTSE 100 and Fortune 500. Its 270 lawyers and 110 support staff have established a long-standing reputation for innovative advice and superior client service.

### GOAL

To enhance overall Firm efficiencies through a business process review, and to upgrade functionality to manage new tax reporting requirements.

### WHY UPGRADE?

Enhanced functionality improves overall speed and automation; resulting in managing more with less resources.

### BENEFITS

- Saves significant time on routine processes
- Eases regulatory reporting compliance
- Increases client service with better access to information

**Automated clearing of cost control accounts and write-offs** – Enterprise now automatically clears out cost control accounts. Previously staff manually cleared out each account entry by entry, which required about three days a month. Now with more precise masking of write-offs and the correct use of cost codes they spend only four hours a month on this process.

**Paperless check receipt advices** – The Firms' check receipt confirmation process has been optimized through the use of Elite® Extend. By reconstructing its manual process in Extend, staff now manage the process electronically, which saves time for staff getting confirmations around the office. "We were amazed how much time this process saved for the Accounts Department – up to two hours a day!" says Dawson who also noted that "in the past, lawyers didn't know on a timely basis when their clients made payments. At times, they would contact clients regarding an outstanding invoice not realizing the account had been cleared. Now everyone is more informed, which increases the efficiency of our team and enhances client service,"

The Enterprise 3.8 and WebView 3.5 upgrades were performed over a weekend. And despite having to resolve a problem with the servers, the team was still able to go live on Monday morning with no outstanding concerns. A by-product of the upgrade was the development of a robust test system. "We now have a testing environment that is as good as our live platform. It allows us to fully test new features before we roll them out and it can serve as training ground for new employees," says Frank Smith, Financial Accountant.

### EXPECTED AND UNEXPECTED BENEFITS

Dawson and his team praise an unexpected benefit that has made a huge difference for their department: speed. Generating month-end reports would take at least two hours. It now completes the job in under an hour. "We certainly didn't expect the system to be that much faster from upgrading the server. By saving time on more routine reports, we are able to analyze different perspectives of the business and better manage resources," says Dawson. "Plus, we get to go home earlier!"

One of the biggest success stories from the enhanced processing speed was the first year-end process. It would typically keep staff in the office until after midnight waiting for all the reports to generate and the databases checked and balanced. After 3.8 was installed, David Fearon, Finance Manager, completed the year-end process in one hour—and he was able to do it from home. "The ability to execute this process remotely and in such a short period of time is quite unheard of," says Fearon.

The newfound automation of the Firm's processes has ultimately benefited client service. "Staff has more access to real-time client information and notifications when things change in the system. When managing the financial side of the client relationship, information is power," says Dawson.

Finally, the upgrades position William Fry for future growth and the ability to handle new regulatory requirements. Dawson feels that the fallout from the banking crisis will only create more rules and reporting obligations, which could increase the cost of doing business. "The investments in this upgrade have certainly eased our reporting and tax compliance process. The course correction we've made now will help manage resources and costs in the long-term," says Dawson.

These all add up to the Finance Department being able to effectively handle an increased workload with reduced resources. "And we've only really rolled out a portion of the functionality still available in Enterprise and WebView. Technology has increasingly played a major role in enabling the highest quality client service and given us a competitive edge. We are certainly proud of how far we have progressed in the past 10 years," adds Dawson.

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For more information about the latest versions of Elite Enterprise and Elite Consulting Services, please call (323) 642-5200 or visit [elite.com](http://elite.com).

