

**ELITE CASE STUDY**

# CRIPPS HARRIES HALL LLP

ELITE BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE HELPS  
BUILD CORPORATE BUSINESS PLATFORM



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**ELITE®**



# CRIPPS HARRIES HALL LLP

“ELITE ENTERPRISE GAVE US WIDER ACCESS TO RELEVANT PRACTICE INFORMATION FOR STAFF, BUT BI CLOSES THE LOOP, CREATING A COMPLETE PICTURE OF WHAT IS HAPPENING AT THE FIRM AND PROVIDING US WITH ACCURATE REALISATION INFORMATION”

MIKE BURTON, HEAD OF I.T.

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND LAW FIRM CRIPPS HARRIES HALL LLP SAYS IMPLEMENTING ELITE’S BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE (BI) SOLUTION HAS ASSISTED IN BRINGING ABOUT A “SIGNIFICANT CULTURAL SHIFT” AT THE FIRM, AND CREATED A PLATFORM ON WHICH TO RUN ITS PRACTICE IN A NO-NONSENSE COMMERCIAL MANNER.**

The firm, which has over 260 staff, runs an unusually broad practice – servicing both private and corporate clients and maintaining specialist corporate litigation teams.

Cripps Harries Hall, Head of IT, Mike Burton, says when the firm made the decision to replace its incumbent accounting system in 2004, its immediate aims were clear.

“Our legacy system was adversely affecting the firm’s ability to function efficiently. We needed a new solution that had integrated time and billing systems and one that could provide meaningful information to internal and external clients.”

After an exhaustive 18-month selection process, which involved a thorough internal review of business requirements and analysis of vendor options, Cripps Harries Hall chose to implement Elite® Enterprise.

“Our most urgent needs were relatively simple. We wanted a product that could handle all the key financial functions, together with multi-currency features to service the UK legal work we do for French clients.”

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**Mike Burton**  
Head of IT

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## **A Catalyst for Business Change**

But what the firm rapidly grasped from the products it was assessing, and in particular the Elite software, was that it had the opportunity to create a system that provided insight to the firm about more than just the state of accounts.

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Burton says the firm wanted to place its operations on a more comprehensive business footing, but its incumbent accounts system was holding it back from achieving a corporate overview of operations.

“We knew that the way we had been running the business previously was quite insular, with each partner overseeing their fee earner teams. Information such as client realisation statistics simply wasn’t available and as a result we did not have a great overall picture of efficiently the practice was operating.”

“Once we deployed the Elite solution, we knew we could achieve this. For example, we could accurately mine key performance indicator (KPI) information from our financial system and make that information much more available within the firm using the Elite WebView dashboard.”

After being live with the core Elite system for around a year, and impressed by the high visibility of the information available, in March 2006 the firm realised that Elite Business Intelligence could help it leverage the visibility of that information at a deeper analytical level. Burton says the firm wanted to create a “virtuous circle” using the information BI extracted to set goals, motivate fee earner action and change business practices.

"Elite Enterprise gave us wider access to relevant practice information for staff, but BI closes the loop, creating a complete picture of what is happening at the firm and providing us with accurate realisation information. It breaks down our key billing, WIP and profitability metrics and gives us the ability to fine-tune how we go about the business of law – from time reporting through to credit control."

Burton says Elite Business Intelligence has created a platform from which the firm can present critical, salient client-related information in a much more meaningful manner than it could have achieved with standard out-of-the-box business intelligence products.

"We are choosing the key performance indicators and changing the business practices to pay attention to those KPIs. We have taken the time to explain to our lawyers how they can influence those KPIs and it has led to some very real benefits for both ourselves and our clients."

*"We can look at the structure of the work we are doing across multiple matters and put that into a concise monetary sense and show ourselves internally how efficient we are being in terms of our use of time and the cost of how we structure work."*

**Mike Burton**  
Head of IT

#### **Delivering Better Information to the Desktop**

A little over one year later Cripps Harries Hall has seven different categories of BI reports covering time, work in progress, billing, credit control, matter statistics and profitability. Not only is the firm delivering much better information to the fee earner desktop, it also provides it to its clients as well.

"Our time reports for corporate litigation work accurately detail the efforts we are spending on the clients' behalf and are akin to an attendance note. We can key in information on a timeline by timeline basis so the effort expended is immediately obvious to the client. This of course helps when it comes to the crunch point of trying to realise the costs of that work."

Burton says the firm's realisation reports have enabled them to analyse exactly what work it is doing for clients much more succinctly.

"We can look at the structure of the work we are doing across multiple matters and put that into a concise monetary sense and show ourselves internally how efficient we are being in terms of our use of time and the cost of how we structure work.

"It allows us to ask key business questions: Is the work allocation balanced correctly between partners, associates and fee earners? Or are we charging the client too much by focusing on partners, when we could de-skill some of the work to fee earners and be more cost effective for the client?"

Elite's Business Intelligence solution is based on technology from Business Objects, the world's leading BI software company. The Elite BI solution integrates query, reporting and analysis tools from Business Objects to offer a stable and scalable BI solution for professional services firms. The companies have worked closely together to develop a data warehouse and reporting solution that delivers faster reporting, sophisticated analytics and drill-down capabilities, and to provide law firms with the tools and flexibility to customise the information developed to suit the unique demands of each firm.

Having made the decision to open up its business practices, Burton says the implementation of Elite Business Intelligence helped enormously in effecting the cultural change.

"The two have gone hand-in-hand. We made a conscious decision to move away from the single practitioner mindset to a more business savvy approach. The BI reports support that and help management make much more informed judgements about the direction of the firm."

#### **CLIENT OVERVIEW**

Cripps Harries Hall LLP is a leading law firm based in the South East providing a wide range of legal services. The firm advises many high-profile clients including plcs, financial institutions, private companies, local and national government, charities and individuals. Its simple and effective strategy of concentrating resources in a single regional centre of excellence has enabled it to provide the maximum benefit to clients. A high-quality service in terms of breadth and depth is ensured by a long-term commitment to recruitment and it consistently attracts high-profile solicitors from leading City firms.

#### **CRIPPS HARRIES HALL LLP**

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[www.crippslaw.com](http://www.crippslaw.com)

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

