

THOMSON REUTERS ELITE CASE STUDY AL TAMIMI & COMPANY

3E SUPPORTS COMPLEX NEEDS OF GROWING FIRM



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EARLY ADOPTERS MORE RESPONSIVE TO MARKET CHANGES

Established in 1989, Al Tamimi & Company is the largest law firm in the Middle East region today. The firm employs more than 360 staff, with offices throughout the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Sharjah as well as offices in Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and Qatar.

Over the last several years, Al Tamimi has grown significantly with more fee earners, new offices, and new territories. After working with a consultant, the firm's management concluded that the current IT systems needed an overhaul in order to support rapid regional and international expansion.

3E®, the next-generation financial and practice management software platform, was selected because of its full multi-currency and inter-company functionality and the fact that it has been designed to accommodate international financial management standards. To level the playing field with other multinational firms and support expansion, this was the type of platform the firm needed.

According to General Manager Kevin Hall, "We have a diverse international client base and therefore require a sophisticated business management solution to accommodate our growing international commercial operations, and support day-to-day financial management. The implementation of 3E has equipped us to realize our strategic ambitions and cope with further growth."

Going live in September 2008, Al Tamimi was one of the early adopters of 3E. They had one main overarching goal for the technology: To provide simple access to firm and client data for finance staff, fee earners, secretaries, and administrative staff alike.

"Any software solution needs to facilitate knowledge about your business—it has to be accurate, reliable, and safe," continues Hall. "With 3E, we now have a state-of-the-art

industry solution that can handle sophisticated transactions and reporting, while providing better insight into different business segments. 3E is a major improvement from our previous system."

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Kevin Hall
General Manager

STREAMLINING KEY PROCESSES

Billing

Billing was very much a centralized process for Al Tamimi. The firm's previous system was quite cumbersome and generating the bills for the lawyers to review and edit narratives was time-consuming. With 3E, the billing process has become much more streamlined and decentralized. The protocol now calls for draft bills, or proformas, to be generated at the end of each month and available immediately to fee earners and support staff. They also have the flexibility to generate a bill when these are needed, based on individual client needs.

"Our staff no longer has to wait for a cumbersome organizational-level process to generate invoices," explains Hall. "We can pretty much do what we need to do on a client-basis. It's much simpler than our previous process."

After implementing 3E during the firm's robust growth period, the billing team handles a much higher volume of monthly invoices without requiring additional staff to keep pace. In fact, there are probably less people overall involved in the billing process, and they are "completing the billing more quickly."

AL TAMIMI & COMPANY

Established in 1989, Al Tamimi is today the leading law firms in the Middle East and is the largest local, non-affiliated law firm in the United Arab Emirates. The firm has more than 360 employees in eight offices and has received numerous accolades including M&A Law Firm of the Year, Trademark Law Firm of the Year and Real Estate Law Firm of the Year 2010 by Corporate International Magazine.

3E MISSION

To support growth through real-time access to firm data and multi-currency, multi-jurisdictional capabilities.

WHY 3E?

3E is a next-generation financial and practice management system that can handle sophisticated transactions and reporting.

BENEFITS

- Improved visibility into profitability and productivity at a client and individual level
- Stable system with world-class technical support
- Ability to more effectively compete with other global firms

“The ability for our team to handle these complex issues quickly in 3E was a major step forward and has proven very reliable.”

Kevin Hall

Reporting

One of Hall’s favorite 3E features is the real-time accessibility of data, resulting in reporting that enables better management on both a short- and long-term basis. “All the information is in real-time, which makes us much more agile in terms of responding to client inquiries and, frankly, keeping up with receivables,” says Hall.

Hall and his team were able to generate reports with the previous system, but they would have to extract the core data, export to a spreadsheet and manually manipulate the data to create the view they needed. Now the team can easily generate standard and ad hoc reports within 3E and have confidence that the data is up-to-date and gives an accurate picture of the firm’s financial health.

“The way the databases work together is very powerful. I can take a Work in Progress report that is a few hundred pages long and filter it down to a report featuring a single lawyer or a single client in 20 seconds. It is quick and very helpful,” he continues.

Multi-currency & Multi-jurisdictional Support

For Al Tamimi, conducting business across regions and countries requires the ability to work with several currencies. Sometimes a single transaction may involve working with three different currencies. For example, a transaction could be initiated in US dollars and conducted in Kuwait, requiring a billing in Kuwaiti dinars. Then, at the organizational level, the payment would need a dirham equivalent, which is the native currency of the organization.

Previously, these types of transactions required a very manual and spreadsheet-intensive process. With 3E, it’s transformed into a completely automated workflow that handles the entire process smoothly and transparently, due to the sophisticated accounting structure and transactional mapping.

“3E keeps track of multiple currencies attached to the same transaction; so with a click of a button, I can report, at any time, the native currency of the office, currency of the individual transaction or a consolidated view at an organizational level,” says Hall. “The ability for our team to handle these complex issues quickly in 3E was a major step forward and has proven very reliable.”

3E General Ledger™ also has rate tables built in, so the profits and losses on exchange rates, between the time the invoice is issued and when it is settled, are handled automatically, according to the firm’s accounting rules.

ACHIEVING NEW LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE

Better Visibility: Now that Hall’s team is able to deliver real-time information into the hands of staff at every level, the firm has higher visibility into the fee structure and client profitability, as well as individual performance. Partners and fee owners have more information and tools to make mid-course corrections while maintaining focus on longer-term goals.

“We set out to gain more knowledge about our business and 3E has definitely helped us achieve that,” states Hall.

Stable System and Support: “We are not experiencing problems with system crashes or data corruption—or any of the other things that can happen in a highly complex system,” says Hall. When they do come across any issues, they have found Thomson Reuters Elite Support to be very responsive despite the different time zones. “Thomson Reuters Elite has proven to be very accommodating to our needs, which speaks well of them.”

With 3E at a stable point, the IT department now has additional time to focus on more strategic initiatives, rather than maintaining a large footprint of servers or reacting to day-to-day issues.

Ability to More Effectively Compete: Being technologically advanced is important in order to compete with other large global firms. “We need to be able to certify that we are capable of handling certain functions, providing information in requested formats and synching with various third-party systems. 3E facilitates this and better positions the firm to take on a diverse client base.”

ONWARDS & UPWARDS

Hall is now focused on how the firm can take advantage of additional functionality offered by 3E.

For example, the litigation team is excited about the new 3E Calendar Management™ capability in the latest version, which they refer to as the diary module. Lawyers are able to reliably manage deadlines and requirements of individual matters, as well as the constantly changing rules between jurisdictions. They can tie actions, dates, email reminders, and such for each matter and connect it with Contacts so they can, with one glance, see information on acting lawyers, secretaries, and outside counsel. Even more important is the functionality that enables lawyers to enter information in Arabic.

"We had been looking to buy a third-party application or develop a solution internally, but when I took a good look at what 3E had to offer, it just made sense to add this module," says Hall.

"For us, 3E is a bit like owning a Ferrari, but not yet knowing how to drive it really well," explains Hall. He looks forward to getting involved with the Thomson Reuters Elite User Groups and User Conference to see how other firms are leveraging the power of 3E.

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

