

Clearwell and Legal Inc: Cutting complex projects down to size

Huge volumes, tight deadlines, moving goalposts – it's all in a day's work for Legal Inc. When tasked by a government regulator to scan, code and process 25,000 pages and nearly half a terabyte's worth of electronic data, and to plan and complete the whole project in a four week period that included the Christmas and New Year holidays, Legal Inc set to the challenge with confidence – and when target dates were brought forward and scanning volumes doubled, they simply redoubled their efforts to deliver on time and budget.

What was the initial requirement from the client?

Having been awarded the contract on the 16th December, we needed to process half a terabyte of data and scan and code 25,000 pages and have the output available for electronic review by the second week of January. By any yardstick, this was an aggressive timetable but by leveraging the Clearwell early case assessment, review and analysis solution, together with our proven production methodologies and capacity, we were confident that it was achievable.

When and how did the requirement change?

In the first week of January, the client informed us that they were planning to conduct a review starting in that same week! In effect, this meant that our window for the electronic processing had been dramatically shrunk, and we needed to have all the data ready for review in just three days. Internal meetings took place and we mapped a new timetable to achieve this almost impossible timeline. In addition, the volume of physical material doubled but the due delivery date for that element remained the same with no possible extension.

Did you face any particular issues or challenges at the outset or did they only manifest themselves as they went along?

From the off we had to gain the respect and confidence of the client team. Everyone knew it was an extremely tough brief and we had to move quickly and surely to build an excellent working

relationship founded on mutual trust and support. Our Head of Client Management and our Project Manager kept lines of communication open at all times, managed expectations, were open and up front about issues and anticipated the client's needs and requests, leaving the team to focus on getting the job done.

We faced some inevitable challenges but they were dealt with head on, rather than fudged, and on the morning of the first deadline day, we trained the members of the legal team with all the electronic data fully processed and uploaded, ready for early case assessment and review.

At the same time, we addressed the resourcing, timescales and budgetary issues surrounding the redoubling of the scanning population so that we could still meet our second deadline. .

How did you tackle these issues and bring the project to a successful conclusion?

The calm, speedy and efficient resolution of the day-to-day issues owed much to our technical know-how and understanding of process and workflow. Knowing what tools to use and how to get the best out of them, understanding optimum methodologies, having the expertise to unpick common data problems, these all make for a very focused, streamlined effort and a very efficient, dynamic project. Supporting the client comes down to experience and expertise – knowing the value of communication, the importance of honesty, the need to manage expectations, and demonstrating from the outset one's capabilities, capacities and commitment to excellence. The ultimate successful delivery of all elements on time and on budget came down to getting the right mix of people, process and technology to ensure the requisite level of performance.

How was the project actually delivered?

We had a full governance schema relating to client management with a team of 10 support staff covering the full gamut of scanning, coding and technical skill sets. The technology platform deployed was the class-leading Clearwell solution, with Legal Inc overseeing the entire project management including mapping the methodology, the workflow process, the training, project board meetings and all supporting documentation.

Despite the tight timeframes, we successfully processed and loaded half a terabyte of data within just four days, and scanned and coded 50,000 pages in fifteen days.

There was a total of 0.5 TB of data indexed, comprising:

- 1,227,283 total items
- 773,284 unique items
- 229,640 discussions
- 7,558 topics
- 463,482 files
- 98,609 participants
- 60 GB of corrupt PSTs

This was an extremely tight deadline to meet and not necessarily achievable by other providers. What gave Legal Inc the confidence to say it could be done?

We beat two other leading service providers to the contract, and knowing both of their products and their project approach, we felt that the compressed timescales would have been a near insuperable mountain for them to climb, as even the initial implementation would have eaten up precious time. By utilising Clearwell, we were uniquely positioned to hit the ground running, its 'plug and play' simplicity allowing us to start producing results almost instantly.

Clearwell enables us to pre-process vast amounts of data and display file structures, timelines, custodians, volumes of emails etc. in a matter of hours. The same day we can see email discussion threads, showing exactly 'who said what to whom' and concept themes within the email population. Plus, we can take advantage of its ground-breaking facility to preview and select specific search term variations allowing us to quickly eliminate obsolete words and phrases that would typically be included in the search results and create false positives; this accelerates the identification of the 'needle in the haystack' while providing more predictable outcomes from a case assessment perspective.

A few more hours and the job is done, with all data now reviewable, producible and with a fully defensible audit trail.

How does Legal Inc differentiate itself from its competitors?

Projects like these that speak far more eloquently to our abilities than any words can. We delivered for the client on time and on budget, and they are so impressed with the calibre of our people and our work to date that they have already agreed to provide a reference for another high profile project that we are seeking to secure.

What appears to be truly valued is Legal Inc's in-depth understanding of today's leading technology tools and knowing what tool to deploy in any given situation; and our exposure to and understanding of the issues and problems at the 'coal face' and how to solve them calmly and efficiently. It was also clear from the excellent two-way relationship that developed that the quality of communication and project management was the cornerstone of success. Ultimately, that's what underpins our confidence in taking high risk, short-term projects and delivering to the total satisfaction of the client.

For more information on Clearwell or any of Legal Inc's litigation support services, please contact Nick Pollard | Head of Client Management | nick.pollard@legalinc.co.uk