Simple to complex, matter management needs to scale to fit your needs

Is your law department building the same single family home over and over again? Or creating custom skyscrapers? Maybe a mix of both, with other types of projects on the work plan as well?

The complexity of building projects can vary greatly. Simple homes built to set specifications usually run like clockwork, with a team of subcontractors who understand the building codes and familiar materials. You can get these done quickly with a preconfigured workflow.

Multiunit skyscrapers have endless complexity, as the builders get the framework in place and then customize floors and individual units to the needs of their occupants. Projects within projects.

And what if the same people you have running the single-family home playbook one day also have to build those complex skyscrapers? That's a lot of context-switching, and often, the team is spending too much energy on mundane tasks when they could be solving complex problems.

Legal departments manage the same spectrum of complexity. Routine employment NDAs can feel cookie-cutter, and partnership agreements need more legal expertise. A merger or acquisition can feel like that skyscraper — a complex build with multiple projects within the project.

How do legal departments manage this variety?

Enter the **matter management solution**. Modern law departments use technology to support consistent and efficient delivery of legal services. A comprehensive matter management solution can help you streamline your operations so your in-house attorneys can spend more time advising the business and less time tracking down information and completing routine tasks.

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Automation for the "single-family home" projects

A modern management system can help you streamline and automate portions of routine matters and projects.

Laurence Hayes, Associate Director of Systems and Operations at **InfraRed Capital Partners** helped implement a matter management system for his Legal department. "The effective automation of all the processes … significantly cuts the time otherwise spent on admin tasks and emails," Hayes says.

"For example, the Real Estate team sends quarterly compliance questionnaires to internal team members and external parties, such as property managers and accountants — but the number and nature of the questions needing answers depends on role and seniority," Hayes explains.

He says that historically, each stakeholder would receive an email. This would be followed by more emails to chase those who didn't respond. When all the data was collected, someone on the Legal team would manually collate the results and put them into a report.

Now he has an automated approach with his matter management system. "We can now send the questionnaires automatically, as well as tailor them so people only receive the questions relevant to them," says Hayes. "There are then automatic reminders and the ability to filter reports and highlight who hasn't responded or the exceptions reported. We can also automatically create the quarterly report for the Compliance team."

A matter management system can also streamline things for your business partners. Consider where you have opportunities for self-service, where stakeholders can complete simple legal tasks without talking to someone on your team.

James Hall is general counsel for **Skyview Capital**, a Los Angeles-based private investment company. Hall estimates that he gets about 20 NDAs per week from Skyview's mergers and acquisition activity. He doesn't need to review each contract, though. He needs to see only the ones that are out of the ordinary. "Using self-help for NDAs allows me to manage the numbers, what parties we're engaging with, measure the risks, and make sure we don't have any overlaps," Hall says.

> "[A unified platform] enables teams to share knowledge across jurisdictions and offices and actually know where the information is going. It's not just flying off into the ether or being forgotten in untouched folders on a dusty hard drive. It's going to specific people but is also constantly accessible by anyone else who needs it."

Workspace for the skyscraper matters

Automation isn't just for routine matters. In fact, many complex matters can benefit from streamlining as well. Think of complex multistep projects like litigation support or a new multiparty master service agreement. Within those, there are tasks that could be automated.

Hall's use of self-service for NDAs within an acquisition is one example. Some law departments use their matter management system to streamline the due diligence process in M&A work. One challenge of due diligence reviews is organizing the key documents for easy access and analysis. In-house attorneys can use a matter management system like HighQ from Thomson Reuters® to search across documents, mark them up, analyze, share, and build reports from the data.

Usually, skyscraper-style projects involve collaborating with outside stakeholders like law firms or the other party. A matter management system can enable communication and collaboration in these matters.

For instance, the **head of Knowledge Management at one global bank** likes that working on a matter management platform enables the Legal team to share knowledge with external parties, too. "We work with a large network of external vendors and panel law firms," the leader explains. "They can add information directly, ... which means they can feed in specific useful information to appropriate discussions or projects as they happen, instead of sending or receiving deluges of information in one go via email. Our extranet users can engage with us just as easily as our internal users, which really breaks down the barriers of communication and helps us work as a joined-up team."

The KM leader also notes that having a unified platform "enables teams to share knowledge across jurisdictions and offices and actually know where the information is going. It's not just flying off into the ether or being forgotten in untouched folders on a dusty hard drive. It's going to specific people but is also constantly accessible by anyone else who needs it."

Keeping track of all your job sites

Managing your department's tasks and matters would be straightforward if each person had just one matter to worry about. That's not how things work in a modern law department, though. Each person's inbox is whizzing with multiple ongoing matters, requests for archival material, and intake on new matters. A matter management solution is a single repository for all matters, giving you visibility into matter status across the team and making the history available to all.

"Before, I was using Outlook and it wasn't really effective," Hall says. Now, he has automated his workflow management so that he can produce task lists, obtain feedback, send out reminders, and track his team's progress. And he doesn't have to lift a finger to make it happen.

"Using this technology makes things a lot easier to control the full Legal Support function, from litigation and IP management to real estate portfolios and normal matter management," Hall says.

Hayes, from Infrared Capital Partners, sums up the operational challenges facing his organization: "We have more teams, we're investing in more jurisdictions, complexity and investor demands are increasing, and new regulations are coming through all the time. We needed to be more agile and cover a greater breadth of deliverables."

His team has grown to 140 people globally. "As businesses grow, silos naturally crop up and frustrate even the most efficient work and restrict agility. We realized that to keep up with the pressure of a growing business, we needed technology that could help us to standardize and improve processes in the most coherent and effective way."

Communicating and advising

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Using a matter management solution can help Law department leaders spend more time in the trusted advisor seat, giving the business insight on trends and issues that affect them commercially and operationally.

For example, Skyview Capital General Counsel Hall notes that one multinational acquisition came with some 300 different employee claims and litigation matters that needed analysis. "I created a data visualization based on the types of claims we had," Hall says. The resulting chart helped him identify redundancies that the business could consolidate easily.

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Hall sees that a matter management system can do things a lot quicker and more efficiently. He says, "and at the end of the day you're trying to save time so you can focus on things that have real value to the business," not on time-wasting administration issues.

A matter management system like HighQ is built to extend beyond the Legal department. It can integrate with core systems like those for Sales and Finance. And it can spark conversations about what can be streamlined beyond Legal-specific tasks. "We're talking to HR, Compliance, the company secretary — there are processes to improve in all these business areas," says Hayes of Infrared. "And in the years to come, we'll really try to build it out across the business."

A law department blueprint

General counsel and their teams will always be at the center of legal matters and tasks within their companies. That doesn't mean they have to be hands-on with every document or that they have to constantly play catch-up as new questions arise and tasks pile up.

A matter management system will streamline work and free up the team for more strategic advisory work. With a flexible system that can handle both the small houses and the giant skyscrapers of in-house work, your department can manage it all.

The right matter management solution is truly the blueprint to operating the way your business needs. It can help you offer self-service when that makes sense, manage the tasks and deadlines inherent in any legal matter, collaborate on complex matters, analyze data, and spot trends.

Get the efficiency, scalability, and visibility you need with matter management solutions from Thomson Reuters. Your team and your business partners will thank you.

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