

The case for moving to web-based service management: Kennedys Legal Services

"Infra is ideal for streamlining our processes with other departments"



Kennedys: A leading London law firm

Kennedys
Legal advice in black and white

One of the leading law firms within the City of London, Kennedys is known primarily as an insurance-driven commercial litigation practice. In addition to its bases in London, the firm has offices in Essex, Belfast and Cambridge. Recently, the firm has expanded overseas in Hong Kong, New Zealand and New Delhi and has associated offices in the United States, Europe and India.

The firm provides a wide range of services from professional indemnity, product and employer's liability to personal injury and reinsurance, and has transport companies, hospitals and construction companies amongst its clients. With 70 Partners and over 130 paralegal and professional staff, Kennedys requires a robust and flexible IT infrastructure to underpin its administrative operations.

Quick Return on Investment aids move to a web-based model

The firm initially set up a help desk with Infra Service Desk to support the UK-based IT department. Latterly the new Infra technology has also been implemented in the Library and Record Management departments.

As a result, Kennedys has been able to move seamlessly from a client/server IT environment to a web-based model, while protecting their existing IT investment.

"Early success in the pilot project meant that the Partners were happy to sanction further investment in the Infra technology for other areas of the business," said Hugo Lawrence, Head of IT Operations at Kennedys.

"We already had an Intranet which had FAQs and help pages that staff could readily access. Integrating the Infra software has meant that users can now log problems and check their status over the Intranet, freeing up our support staff to spend their time solving problems."

Before Infra, the help desk used a specific tool for IT and another for the Library. But users were not always able to log a call — the system was either too slow or not available — and keeping track of workloads was proving difficult.

"We were receiving ad hoc emails and phone calls and couldn't prioritize our workloads or manage the work we had effectively," said Lawrence.

Infra Intranet link wins evaluation

Keen to adopt better management controls, Kennedys compiled a list of evaluation and selection criteria, and reviewed 26 suppliers in total.

"It came down to Infra for two reasons," said Lawrence. "Firstly it was a web-based solution, which meant that we didn't have to provide client software for individual machines or shortcuts."

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To enable users to seamlessly access the help desk system, Kennedys put a link on the company Intranet to the Internet Information Server where Infra is installed. This enabled the company to publish web pages that were immediately accessible to staff on the Intranet.

Lawrence continued, "Infra also had a very good change management component, which was the second main factor in our decision. It is ideal for streamlining our processes with the other departments."

Change Management is a comprehensive module in its own right, incorporating full workflow dependencies, graphically represented in a task and approval system.

Kennedys is implementing the Infra system to manage activities such as office moves, or new starters and leavers. These all require actions that cross a number of disciplines, for example procuring a new PC from IT and a desk and phone from facilities. Using Infra will remove duplication of effort, and provide a reportable history of changes for planning and accounting.

Fast service encourages users to quickly adopt Infra

Initially, Kennedys continued to run the two help desk systems in tandem, copying and pasting data between them. After just three months the Infra system was released to the user base so that they could log their own calls into the system.

The users reacted very positively — it was considerably faster and easier to use as they are not required to fill out a large number of fields as before. The IT department has also been encouraging people to use the system to log their problems so they can be quickly dealt with.

Lawrence continues to assess requirements from the other support departments, including the Library and Records Management, and then feeds them through to Infra.

The Infra team then does the design and development and helps Kennedys with the installation and code.

"One of the great things about the Infra technology is that is so easily customizable - we started with the IT help desk, then we were able to use the system, with slightly different configurations, in our other support departments," said Lawrence.

Previously, the library staff had similar problems to the IT department in that their help desk was slow and sometimes unavailable. This meant that not all requests for documents were being logged with the system, which resulted in a large administrative burden as Library staff tried to keep track manually. Now with the Infra system, each request can be logged quickly, tracked and fulfilled, and there is a complete records history to track where documents have been sent and to whom, making the workload more manageable, and saving time. Similarly, it enables users to be confident that requests will be dealt with.

This success has resulted in the development of future plans to extend the system to both the Facilities and Marketing departments.

Managing assets with Infra

Kennedys also now use the Configuration Management database component to manage their hardware and software assets. The IT department can assign a PC and printer to a particular user and log the information in the database, which saves support time each time a call is made. Using this data, they are also now able to log faults against certain hardware.

Mail Message Access

Another key benefit that the Infra technology brings is the Mail Message Access (MMA) facility. Certain users, such as developers in specialist areas, do not need to log in all the time to the help desk system.

If a job is allocated to them, Infra sends an email with a URL link that brings up the call that has been forwarded to them. It provides a much faster way to notify specialists of jobs and for them to respond, without needing to be constantly logged in.

"The Mail Message Access enables our teams to work much more efficiently and productively — they only need to get involved in projects when their expertise is required, and they are directed straight to the relevant document or folder," explained Lawrence.

Streamlined processes

Following the successful service procedures that the Infra technology has brought, Kennedys plans to integrate the Change Management system to manage business processes.

This will be particularly useful, for example, where a server may need to be relocated during an office move. The system will assess the risks to business associated with the move and provide accurate records of what has been done.

"Before Infra we had no way of measuring our targets or assessing workloads. Now we can see the whole picture and can prioritize our workload. Using Infra technology makes it all more manageable, and enables us to be more productive," said Lawrence.

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