

Australian law firm speeds up legal process, realizes rapid ROI.

Overview

■ **The Challenge**

Ebsworth & Ebsworth wanted to manage and publish content over an intranet, corporate Web site and client extranets in order to speed up communications between its lawyers and clients

■ **The Solution**

IBM Lotus Workplace Web Content Management software and IBM @server iSeries servers

■ **Why IBM**

IBM provided the only comprehensive, integrated content management solution developed for the Lotus Domino platform

■ **The Benefits**

Accelerates the speed of doing business, increases responsiveness to clients requiring continual contact with their legal firm, and realizes an exceptional return on investment estimated at up to \$10,000 per knowledge worker each year by increasing productivity in information search and retrieval

Overwhelming documentation

Law firms are inundated with documents of all sorts, from briefs and research to regulatory information and e-mail, which needs to be shared among lawyers and, in many cases, clients.

When Ebsworth & Ebsworth, one of Australia's oldest and most widely respected legal firms, began the transition in 2002 from three separate partnerships to an integrated firm, it found itself steeped in a growing body of documentation.

"Lawyers spend large amounts of time looking for information so it was critical to get it all under control," recalls Lionel Bird, the firm's IT director. Otherwise, the firm risked losing significant profits through a lack of operational efficiency, an inability to maximize billable time and poor productivity.

What the firm needed was an intranet, linking the three law offices in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, where the lawyers could easily and quickly publish and share information, and at a low cost to the firm. For help, the firm turned to IBM and Eos Solutions, an IBM Business Partner.

Lotus Workplace Web Content Management

After extensive evaluation, Ebsworth & Ebsworth decided to transform its workflow environment with IBM Lotus Workplace Web Content Management. This solution allows the firm to integrate, manage and leverage unstructured content that could be used anywhere and at any time. The firm also utilized the IBM @server iSeries platform as hosting servers for its public Internet sites.

Eos Solutions was selected to implement the Workplace solution that, in one fell swoop, made publishing content on the firm's intranet, corporate Web site or clients' extranets simple, quick and inexpensive.

"The IBM Lotus Workplace Web Content Management solution allows our lawyers to respond effectively to any customer demand—or demands by staff—with greater speed."

*—Lionel Bird, IT director,
Ebsworth & Ebsworth*

"It greatly improved the speed of doing legal business," says Bird. "By improving the speed of sharing documents, we've become more responsive to our clients and to other lawyers who are searching for information."

Rapid ROI

Reducing the time to search for information is critical to the firm—and to a rapid return on investment.

"We found the average worker spends around 5-15 hours each week searching for information," says Bird. "The act of searching for information is non-productive time—time that could have been spent more effectively putting the information to use. Assuming a time savings of 10 hours per week, based on a salary of, say, \$50,000 per annum, the IBM solution saves us around \$10,000 per employee per year. With 400 employees in the firm, that's a significant savings and rapid ROI."

Accelerates business

In the Workplace environment, staff in different locations can share information and work collaboratively on client matters in order to deliver maximum value to clients and achieve operation efficiency.

The intranet, for instance, contains information that will increase productivity and efficiency. It serves as a single point of contact for staff to access information on daily law lists, news and events, precedents, human resources, training and more.

The Workplace solution has even helped the firm transform its static Internet presence into an efficient, cost-effective channel for publishing news and events—something its clients were demanding. "We can be more responsive to what our clients want and expect from a major law firm," Bird says.

Other areas of cost savings have included printing, document distribution, Web site management and marketing collateral. These business benefits have been realized through the speed in which the firm can publish content and automate workflow processes.

Reduces risk

Today's regulated marketplace also requires being able to manage content to meet governmental requirements. In increasingly regulated environments, the integrity of process demands strict and auditable management, as well as streamlined communication with affected clients. "Because of the speed with which we can do business, Workplace has been invaluable in managing content for regulatory compliance and in improving customer relationships," Bird says.

For more information

To learn more about IBM solutions, call your local IBM sales representative.

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