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Barry Roddick, Ignite team leader,
Eversheds Sutherland

Global top 40 law firm deploys Repstor custodian for legal™ to deliver matter management on Microsoft 0ffice 365

Eversheds Sutherland is one of the world's leading international law firms. It brings together 2,300 legal professionals to provide legal services coordinated from 61 offices in 29 countries.

The firm's international prestige relies on the ability to assemble the best legal professionals and subject experts for the matter in hand, wherever they may be located. For each fee-earner to work efficiently, he or she must be able to access and share case documentation readily across locations.

This is especially true for Eversheds Sutherlands' UK-based Ignite team which brings together experts dynamically for fast-turnover legal work. This is an important and growing area of the business. Due to the short turnaround times, service levels (SLAs) for this type of work are closely measured.

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"We need the best people in our network to be able to be fully productive and empowered with everything they need wherever they are," explains Graham Richardson, a partner at the firm. This has presented some practical challenges however. "Traditional document management is very location-specific, relying on servers based in particular offices," he notes.

Exploiting Office 365 for matter management

At the British Legal Technology Forum in May 2016, Eversheds Sutherland's UK IT team met Microsoft Gold partner Repstor. The company specialises in matter and email management solutions that work natively within Microsoft Office, Office 365 and SharePoint.

"They certainly got my attention," says Dale Bradbury, Eversheds Sutherlands' head of applications in the UK. "I had worked successfully with SharePoint in previous organisations and seen it develop as a platform over the years, but for matter management it was missing some key usability and interface features that were holding it back. Repstor had identified and filled those gaps! This is particularly true when taken in context with the broader Office 365 platform."

Although Eversheds Sutherland was an existing user of SharePoint, this had only been as an internal intranet hosted on its premises, not as a means of managing documents. To support the way the business was going, the firm was looking to use cloud-based Office 365 including SharePoint. Repstor's solutions made this a viable and potentially very attractive option.

To confirm the potential, Eversheds Sutherland has deployed Repstor custodian for legal in a pilot project with its UK Ignite team.

Because reporting against SLAs is important for the Ignite team, the Repstor solution also incorporates a rich business intelligence dashboard, harnessing Microsoft Power BI management reporting, to provide visual dashboards of the status of each matter. "We can see at a glance if anything is holding up progress, and where," explains Barry Roddick, who heads up the Ignite team.

Proven stability & performance

Although there are other software companies that provide an Outlook document management interface, Eversheds Sutherland has found Repstor's approach to be superior in several important ways. "Repstor's CTO has worked closely with Microsoft's Outlook and SharePoint teams in Redmond over the years," Dale explains.

"They have come up with an impressively responsive interface and a very stable solution that looks and feels like Outlook straight from the box. The stability is key, given how critical Outlook is to productivity."

The speed is striking too, he notes. "When you're managing documents in the cloud, it's vital that things don't slow down. In Outlook, Repstor have built a great synchronisation engine, so that needed files are automatically synchronised ensuring that the performance is incredible!"

Maximising fee-earner time & transforming transparency

The big difference to fee earners is that they can now access their matters directly within Outlook, whether on- or offline, while enjoying rich email management, document management and search capabilities all directly within their familiar Outlook environment. Repstor assist automatically suggests target matters when filing emails, and advanced features such as auto-tagging and tracking of emails and documents give a rich user experience, leaving fee earners to concentrate their time on the work in hand.

"The usability alone brings significant benefits," Barry adds. "Just freeing up an hour of a fee-earner's time from hunting down the latest documents is hugely transformational to productivity."

Sue Chick, digital project manager at Eversheds Sutherland, believes the law firm is in the best possible hands with Repstor, too. "There is no doubt that Repstor can do the job," she says. "The team are all experts in their field, and are extremely experienced. They live what they sell which is very important, and they work very collaboratively and transparently.

"What we particularly like is that they have a 'new technology' way of working, in that they're keen for feedback. The proof of concept has benefited from that, and we think of Repstor very much as a partner rather than a supplier. They deserve that level of recognition, because of how they've been with us," she concludes. "They're very much a relationship business, and for something as crucial as this, that really matters."

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