

WHITE PAPER

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Knowledge management in a competitive world

With law firms now fully recognising the value of cutting-edge technology, we expect the next ten years to be transformative in the way that legal services are delivered. Ten years ago when I began working in legal IT, knowledge management tended to involve multiple disconnected functions. For example, precedent management was often part of a firm's document management system. Now people expect to be able to search across several sources concurrently, rank results by relevance, and filter the results using a combination of taxonomy, structured metadata and extracted concepts and entities, and to do it 24 hours a day.

Firms recognise that knowledge is more than just documents, and searching for experts in a field is often the key to understanding. They have more content to deal with in the form of rich media including voice, video, wikis, blog and discussions. Searching this, displaying it appropriately and having the most relevant content on the first page is an ongoing challenge.

Phoenix, in conjunction with SJ Berwin have developed a cutting-edge award winning knowledge management (KM) solution that brings together Autonomy iManage Universal Search (IUS) and Phoenix Knowledge Assist. This combination of products gives lawyers faster access to the knowledge they need to produce top-quality advice. This increases productivity and collaboration and improves client service and value for money. The new system helps lawyers work faster and achieve more, helping to boost job satisfaction, and it strengthens the firm's market position and competitive advantage.

Phoenix worked with SJ Berwin to create a knowledge management solution that delivered its core requirements: fast, intuitive, user-friendly search capability that presents relevant results in one or two clicks. There were two key priorities: a straightforward user interface that required little or no training and the ability to weight search results in favour of the firm's specific knowledge resources.



Law firms trade on their lawyers' individual and collective expertise and experience. The speed and quality of advice, and therefore the client experience, can be enhanced by the ability to access precedents and other documents relating to similar recent work and to locate expertise within the firm. SJ Berwin was looking for a system that brought together its own knowledge with external resources.

SJ Berwin chose Autonomy IUS, the latest web-based intelligent search product, which interfaced with its iManage document management system.

"The project was driven by the importance of effective search and its value to the firm and its clients. People who may not appreciate the concept of web-based systems and Google-style search are using IUS and Knowledge Assist as a single source for all their knowledge and information requirements."

**–Simon Kosminsky,
IT Director, SJ Berwin**

The workflow tools for submitting, reviewing, categorising and publishing new content are particularly valuable. Knowledge Assist addresses the risk associated with updating internal precedents, standard forms etc by ensuring that all material is relevant, up to date and approved. Although in this case it is combined with Autonomy IUS, Knowledge Assist also integrates with SharePoint and Microsoft Search Server if Knowledge Assist is the only source required.

IUS is more than an out-of-the-box solution. It also offers a flexible framework that can be connected to specific internal and external sources of information and knowledge.

As IDOL, the engine behind IUS was not designed specifically for the legal sector; an initial challenge was to work out precisely how its powerful search technology could best be tailored to SJ Berwin's business requirements.

We needed to work with Autonomy to ensure that a wide selection of connectors with all the appropriate legal resources were available. The implementation was further complicated by the fact that SJ Berwin's international footprint meant that offices in different jurisdictions required the system to link to different external knowledge sources.

A pilot study was used to develop a user interface that suited all SJ Berwin's users from the most tech-savvy to those who prefer a more traditional approach to legal research. Usage figures and feedback demonstrate that SJ Berwin's lawyers rely on IUS and Knowledge Assist as the primary source for their knowledge and information needs. Furthermore, the look and feel of the user interface was customised to reflect SJ Berwin's brand.

The new system has enhanced the client and user experience. Lawyers' ability to turn around high-quality work faster has reduced costs for the firm and its clients, improving productivity, client service and value for money. Cutting-edge technology boosts client and lawyer satisfaction, it helps firms win and retain the top clients and talent that they need to maintain a competitive advantage in a challenging business environment.

