

Maximising efficiency and consistency

Ashfords law firm adopts Lexis®PSL, Lexis®Library, and Lexis®Draft as its primary research and drafting resources

Ashfords LLP provides legal services to a wide range of businesses and individuals throughout England. The firm was established in 2004 following on the demerger of Bevan Ashford – although it can trace its origins back for over 100 years.

Today, it has offices in six locations including London and employs 550 staff, including 223 lawyers under 74 partners.

Committing to a single supplier

For years Ashfords had relied on an assortment of legal research products and tools from multiple suppliers. In 2018, the partners decided to eliminate redundant products to lower their costs. They also wanted to improve consistency throughout the firm by committing to a single supplier.

Brian Hegarty, a partner in the firm's Real Estate Team, spearheaded a trial in which Ashfords dual-ran LexisPSL, our practical guidance solution, and a competitor product for six months. At the end of the trial, based on user feedback, Ashfords committed to using LexisPSL, spanning 35 practice areas; LexisLibrary, the most authoritative service for legal research; and LexisDraft, a proofreading and risk mitigation tool.

Savings through efficiency

In evaluating the various products across their practice areas, Ashfords wanted solutions that promoted efficiency. "We can research things quickly through LexisLibrary and LexisPSL," said Brian Hegarty. "The information is up-to-date, clear and easy to find. We spend less time searching for answers."

Hegarty says Ashfords also needs to be efficient to maintain its profitability at the present rate of about 33 percent. Currently ranked as one of the top 70 law firms in the UK based on revenue, Ashfords intends to move up to within the top 60 range within the next five years.

Hegarty says Ashfords wants to be a streamlined organisation.

“Our clients are then paying for value. Our vision is to provide the best service and advice, cost effectively, to our clients as well as create an enjoyable and rewarding environment for our people. LexisNexis helps us achieve those goals.”

Succinct, modern writing style

Brian Hegarty says his Real Estate Team prefer the LexisNexis products. "The writing style is succinct and we like their use of modern language."

The team thought LexisPSL contracts and documents were especially good. "They offer a range of drafts and clauses to cover wide ranging scenarios," said Brian Hegarty. He adds that his team uses the property content in LexisPSL and LexisLibrary along with LexisDraft within their regular workflow. "They're essential to what we do."

Achieving consistency and excellence

One of the objectives Ashfords had for committing to a single resource for its research products and tools was to ensure consistency, especially with regard to creating documents. "We want our documents to be consistent in look, layout and style," said Brian Hegarty. "Using one suite of precedents, LexisPSL helps that process immensely."

LexisDraft also significantly reduces the amount of time Ashfords takes to proofread documents, savings that Hegarty says Ashfords gladly passes along to its clients. It also helps avoid typing errors and inaccuracies.

A level playing field

LexisPSL, LexisLibrary, and LexisDraft proved to be the right fit for Ashfords. "We're a mid-sized firm," said Brian Hegarty. "We are not resourced to create and maintain our own precedents."

He says LexisNexis levels the playing field for mid-sized law firms and perhaps even gives them an edge. "Law firms don't have the resources LexisNexis does for product development and product support. With access to their products, Ashfords can compete with larger firms and provide our clients with the same value."

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Partner
Ashfords

Ensuring a smooth transition

Some of the solicitors and staff at Ashfords had been using products by suppliers other than LexisNexis for more than 15 years. Hegarty knew their familiarity with those tools made them hesitant to switch. Fortunately, LexisNexis helped with the transition.

LexisNexis provided extensive training at each of Ashfords' offices. The face-to-face interaction, combined with online training, helped Ashfords employees feel comfortable with their new tools. "Even now, whenever we have a question, LexisNexis representatives are quick to respond," Hegarty says.

He also explains having immediate access to LexisNexis representatives via email is something Ashfords has found helpful. "Their response is always quick," said Brian Hegarty. "We always get fast resolutions to queries. The people at LexisNexis are very willing to engage with our lawyers personally and help them find the information they need."

Looking toward the future

Having successfully made the transition to LexisNexis products, the Ashfords management team views the commitment to a single supplier as a positive step in the firm's growth. They believe LexisNexis has provided the most comprehensive and extensive legal solutions for Ashfords' current and future needs.

Hegarty says the firm is now looking at other areas to further streamline the firm's operation. "We'll be looking at automated drafting and other LexisNexis products to support us," said Brian.

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