



Beachcroft Cuts an Innovative New Path with Shared Library Services

Integreon Helps Beachcroft Gain Flexibility, Reduce Costs, and Deliver Quality Service

In 2009, UK law firm Beachcroft had a fully staffed in-house library in several locations. The library provided excellent service and, despite the lack of formal service-level agreements (SLAs), the satisfaction among the library's firm "clients" was high. But when two employees left, Beachcroft operations director Jeffrey Ng saw an opportunity to innovate, in keeping with Beachcroft's focus on innovative thinking, which is one of the firm's strengths.

The traditional response would have been to recruit and hire replacements for the two employees who had left and continue performing business as usual. But Jeffrey was convinced that moving to a shared library services model would provide additional benefits to the firm while continuing to deliver high-quality service.

"While our current library model was providing good service, we had no way of controlling budgetary costs and no way of scaling up or down," said Jeffrey. "Since legal research is a non-competitive function, I knew that moving to a shared library model would give us flexibility without putting firm IP at risk."

Shared library services free firms from the operational and administrative tasks associated with library and research services, while providing a flexible support team composed of knowledgeable and experienced librarians and researchers. The legal professionals from firms that employ a shared library services model gain timely and efficient access to large libraries and additional proprietary information resources traditionally available only to the largest law firms. This also benefits clients who receive better, faster service from the firm's lawyers because they can tap into resources they cannot provide on their own and which most law firms cannot afford.

There was only one provider in the industry who could help Jeffrey deliver on his vision: Integreon. Jeffrey and Integreon quickly got to work planning for the transformation. "Integreon brings a major talent pool that enables greater innovation than we could achieve on our own," said Jeffrey.

Careful Planning Leads to Flawless Execution

The key to the successful transition was the collaboration and planning among all the parties across critical areas, including preparing the library employees for their transition to Integreon and ensuring that the firm's "end users" experience no impact in service requests and delivery.

Outsourcing library services to Integreon did not mean loss of employment for the Beachcroft library staff; rather, they were transitioned to be Integreon employees. Integreon and Jeffrey worked with HR to address benefits and IT issues to ensure a seamless employment transfer. Most of the people who transferred to Integreon are there today and have the opportunity to work for a wide range of clients.

The team also planned carefully to ensure there would be no negative impact on service to the firm. In addition to setting up formal SLAs to guarantee turnaround times, they implemented systems – such as email and telephone extension re-directs – to avoid disruption to library service users. The efforts paid off. According to Jeffrey, "Beachcroft recently ran a user survey which showed that users are happy and that service is as good as it has ever been."

Positive Results Across the Board

Jeffrey is thrilled with the success of the shared library services program. Beachcroft benefits from team scalability. For example, planning for a possible merger with DAC required additional manpower for a discrete timeframe. Jeffrey noted, "Beachcroft and Integreon were able to plan early for a temporary spike in volume with additional resources that Beachcroft would not have been able to hire under the old in-house model." This enabled DAC to immediately tap into the services that could be scaled up without requiring a direct recruitment effort. And because recruiting and management have shifted to Integreon, Beachcroft gains additional HR savings. Real estate benefits were also realized. Transferring the library to Integreon has opened up valuable floor space that the firm can populate with billable activities.

Since Integreon took over running the service, the volume of requests has increased and the shared team is able to fulfill requests more efficiently than ever before. In a larger shared team, resources can be focused more optimally on tasks to increase overall productivity. Additionally, shared services bring in specific areas of expertise – such as knowledge management, business intelligence, or industry knowledge – in which an individual in-house team might not be able to invest. "Even though the library is a back-room function," said Jeffrey, "correctly packaged output delivered more efficiently means that clients get better, faster service from the lawyers."

Communication and tracking have improved. Integreon and Jeffrey meet monthly to track utilization, review SLAs, identify issues, and identify opportunities for improvement. This transparency offers more than just information about current operations; it provides insight into other ways to innovate in the way the firm provides information to clients. "Integreon works closely with Beachcroft to identify and pilot additional innovations on an ongoing basis," said Jeffrey. "Integreon is a very professional outfit," he continued. "To make us successful, they need to be very easy to work with and they are. They are always willing to work with us to resolve issues that arise or find new, innovative solutions."



About Beachcroft:

Beachcroft is one of the largest national commercial law firms in the UK with more than 1,650 employees, including over 950 lawyers and 162 partners and provides commercial legal advice and litigation services. Working with both national and international organisations, excellent service delivery and in-depth insight into clients' businesses are at the heart of the firm's strategy.



About Integreon:

Integreon is the largest and highest-impact provider of integrated legal, research and business support solutions to corporations and law firms. It is a trusted partner to 32 of the top 50 Am Law firms, 9 of the top 10 investment banks, and 11 of the top 50 global brands. Its 2,000 associates operating from 17 offices across North America, Europe, Asia and Africa address clients' specific support needs in areas such as market and competitive intelligence, discovery (disclosure), legal process outsourcing and other business services.