

## Implementing Proclaim to compete more effectively in the evolving legal services marketplace

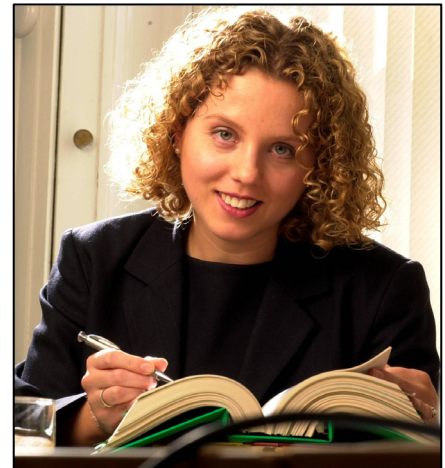
Lees Solicitors LLP is a Wirral-based, multi-disciplinary practice employing over 100 staff at offices in Birkenhead, Heswall, and West Kirby.

The practice recently chose Eclipse's Proclaim Practice Management system as a firm-wide replacement to its incumbent software. Eleni Kinch (pictured), Professional Support Principal at Lees, tells us about the practice, its reasons for IT investment and its strategy for the future.

### About Lees Solicitors LLP

Our focus is on client service and a desire to deliver over and above what we promise, in a clear and friendly manner. This approach is fast leading Lees to becoming Wirral's law firm of choice and a regional leader in certain areas of practice.

However, competition is fierce and not only do we have to compete with other law firms, but the introduction of alternative business structures is just around the corner (late 2011). This may see the entrance into the legal services market of commercial players and backers, such as financial services companies and the major retailers.



Our goal is to take our success to date and to expand upon it. The firm is currently undertaking a full strategy review in order to retain and improve competitive advantage and to increase its fitness to compete in the ever-evolving legal landscape.

### Our Requirements

In preparation, we do already have some great foundations in place - the firm is Lexcel and Investors in People accredited. Our services can very broadly be split into two sectors, "services for individuals" and "services for businesses", and within these sectors we can provide for virtually any requirement. For individuals we operate in personal injury, clinical negligence, conveyancing and remortgage, divorce and family issues, probate and wills, and court of protection. On the business side, our services cover dispute resolution, litigation, contracts and property transactions.

We have great people here, fantastic expertise across a huge range of areas, and a determined view in terms of where we want to be competing. To tie all of these operations together into a uniform Lees 'brand', we recognised the need for a practice-wide software system to ensure a consistency of approach and service delivery.

## The Implementation

During our procurement exercise, Eclipse's Proclaim system stood out as being inherently very flexible; not just in terms of day-to-day working and tailoring of the functional side of the system, but even down to the way in which it lent itself to being rolled out in stages - a key factor for us.

Why did we want to introduce the system in stages? There are pros and cons to both styles ('big bang rollout' and 'staged rollout'). To us, being able to phase the new system in means that we can generate better buy-in from fee earners, as they see - at a manageable pace - what the benefits of the new software are. A phased rollout also allows us to carry out some 'A/B' testing, where we can see how two different approaches work, on a smallish scale, and then go with the more successful of the two.

At the very beginning, the core Proclaim Matter Management system was implemented practice-wide to provide a standardised file opening system. This guides all fee earners down a strict compliance and risk assessment channel, and introduces effective general management of cases and documentation across all departments.

The next stage was to implement the 'quick win' systems for our more standardised processes such as conveyancing and personal injury claims. This project was very successful in terms of showing other, less standardised, teams what can be achieved with the software, and has paved the way for another ten work types to be brought on board. For these areas, we are developing Proclaim to fit in with our bespoke processes, workflows and document precedents, and we are aiming for completion - a couple of departments at a time - over the coming months.

## The Benefits

We are already seeing great gains from the use of Proclaim in managing data and reporting key information, across individual departments and on a firm-wide basis. The flexibility and ease of extracting data from the system is a real differentiator when held up against its peers in the market. In addition, the integration of Proclaim Accounts provides us with a complete firm-wide reporting base and a seamless approach to billing and financial management.

On a firm-wide level, we can now drill down to analyse key performance indicators such as the split of chargeable and non-chargeable time, and individual recovery rates for all of our fee earners. In addition, our heads of department can identify, at a glance, which matters need to be billed and if there are any areas for improvement. In terms of marketing, Proclaim is actively used to identify the source of new work (and its profitability), and to generate cross-selling opportunities within our existing client base.

We expect to see significant operational improvements from our continued use of Proclaim. The software will reside at the core of our competitive positioning and our speed of service, accuracy, and access to critical business intelligence will see us well placed to prosper in the new era of legal services.



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