



Automatic success

INDUSTRY CASE STUDY

Document automation may not be a ground-breaking initiative, but the level of integration between the Clarilis platform and TLT's FutureLaw team has helped the firm offer clients otherwise high-impossible solutions – keeping lawyers' time focused on legal work, explain James Touzel and Siân Ashton.



Maximising the utility of automation has been an ongoing theme at law firms for many years, and that trend has certainly been true at TLT, which has been building document automation into its legal service delivery model since the early 2000s. James Touzel, partner and head of FutureLaw at the firm, explains that, more recently, the firm has been looking to achieve not only efficiencies through automation but also consistency across documents. "Rather than having people work entirely independently and producing documents the way they're accustomed to, we've put a high value on the ability to produce documents based on a set standard – be that our own or a client's," he says. Working on both low-complexity, high-volume automation tasks and much deeper automation has been the task of TLT's partner, Clarilis, since 2017.



Scaling up process

Additionally, Touzel says Clarilis is distinguished by being a platform that delivers automation as a service, providing a finalised platform to the firm. “They code document templates into the platform and provide it back to us fully automated – their PSLs work with us so we don’t have to burn lots of lawyer time doing the automation ourselves. Our lawyers can produce the legal content and, as a firm, we can focus on providing strategic advice to clients.”

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Siân Ashton, who is client service transformation partner at the firm and involved in the detailed running of the Clarilis automation system, elaborates: “As a matter of routine, we’ve used the platform for automating letters, templates for witness statements or similar, and billing documents. An example of how we apply automation to more complex, repeat-use templates is the Loan Market Association (LMA) documentation, which is extremely complex, unwieldy and full of square brackets and optionality – the curse of every lawyer. The Clarilis questionnaire is extremely straightforward, meaning first drafts can be done by more junior lawyers.

“It’s a really good way of creating a document with all the relevant data captured at the beginning of the process, so we can then go ahead and let the lawyers offer their legal advice without spending undue amounts of time on creating that document,” she adds.

Another application of the platform, Ashton says, is for less complex, higher-volume documents in employment law, such as in a redundancy situation, which often includes a large number of highly similar but slightly distinct terms. “Automating that can make a massive difference, because sometimes you wouldn’t be able to help a client at all over the relevant timescales without it,” she says.

One specific example Ashton cites is Biffa Waste Management, which contacted TLT with a request from its HR team to help make the business’s employment contract process more efficient following a significant change in employment legislation. “They have a steady turnover of staff and therefore have to go through the contracting process with thousands of people every year. If that process can be more automated, the HR team don’t have to seek the legal team’s input every time.”



Empowering clients

The relationship between TLT and Clarilis is one of partnership, Ashton explains, with the firm not only using the automation platform to deliver its own work for clients, but also, through TLT FutureLaw – in which TLT functions as a trusted adviser on tech and transformation – the firm introduces clients directly to vendors such as Clarilis.

In the case of Biffa, Ashton says, Clarilis contracts directly with the client – but TLT makes the introduction and provides legal advice. “Because we talk to clients continually, when we speak with clients about our own services we also talk to them about Clarilis and bring in their in-house team of experts, who work with the automation platform every day, as and when required.”

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Touzel explains this approach is integral to how FutureLaw operates, helping clients identify an operating model or blueprint for change in the legal department – a requirement he says clients are increasingly demanding from the legal market. “Though we’ve been operating FutureLaw for some time, clients’ expectations have moved on significantly over the last five years, and they now expect their law firms to provide advice on legal operations, legal process design and legal technology. And they appreciate that we can also act as a catalyst for change generally by advising on such tools, because we’re helping to change how legal services are provided.”

He adds that there’s extra value to potentially be taken from the system too: “Being able to analyse the platform’s data output and helping clients think about integration into other applications – especially where we’re helping solve more than one problem – will be firmly on the roadmap for our usage of Clarilis in the future.”

Less complex automations on a broader scale are also on the horizon for the firm, enabled by Clarilis, says Ashton: “Not everything we want to tackle is a big LMA document, and there are lots of smaller automations we’re looking to build up and roll out across the firm in the near future.”

