

Supporting organisation restructure with high performance end-user IT

SLA-DRIVEN BEST PRACTICE
SERVICE DESK FOR LEADING
INSURANCE AND RISK LAW FIRM

CASE STUDY

BLM



IN BRIEF

CUSTOMER CHALLENGE

- Improve end-user productivity and efficiency to support overall business strategy.
- Improve end-user perception of IT through increasing capability and customer service of IT support.
- Improve working relationship between IT Service Desk and other areas of IT.

PLAN-NET SOLUTIONS & SERVICES

- Service Desk Toolset Implementation & Integration.
- Service Transformation.
- An SLA-driven Best Practice Service Desk with extended availability.

BENEFITS

- Increased end-user satisfaction and productivity across BLM lawyers and staff.
- Improved customer service and responsiveness with access to extended availability at a commercial price point.
- Increased Service Desk resolution alleviates distracting workload for other areas of IT.
- Meaningful management reporting supports better on-going business and IT decision making.

BLM CASE STUDY

BLM IS A LEADING UK INSURANCE AND RISK LAW SPECIALIST. THE FIRM HAS OVER 200 PARTNERS AND 800 LAWYERS & TECHNICAL EXPERTS BASED FROM 13 OFFICES ACROSS THE UK & IRELAND.

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GROWTH, AMBITION & RESTRUCTURE

Following a number of major combinations and accelerated growth, the insurance and dispute resolution law firm rebranded to become BLM in May 2014 and set out its vision to become one of the leading global insurance and risk law specialists by 2020. This initiated a restructure of the firm to reflect its customers' needs and its goal of helping them to reduce the time and money they spend on managing risks and resolving disputes.

BLM's focus on an efficient client service delivery model naturally led to a spotlight on the contribution from IT and technology in achieving this. The firm brought in Abby Ewen as its IT Director to take on this challenge.

“ Now the Service Desk team is seen as an integral part of the IT department. First Time Fix rates have increased from 57% at the start of the project to recent statistics of 84%. Service Desk Resolution is now at levels around 90%, which is unprecedented. ”

Darren Broughton, Head of IT, BLM.

THE IMPORTANCE OF IT SUPPORT

When it came to the importance of IT support in achieving BLM's overall vision, there was a general consensus that lawyers and staff must have the necessary tools and support to perform their roles as effectively as possible. Both Abby Ewen and Darren Broughton, Head of IT at BLM, agreed that the Service Desk, in particular, directly impacts on end-user productivity levels.

The IT Service Desk team at BLM had evolved organically with the business and its existing capacity and structure were becoming stretched. It was beginning to affect the overall perception of IT. “The Service Desk is the shop window for IT. For many users, it is IT.” Explains Darren.

Plan-Net specialises in helping organisations transform their IT support functions by combining Best Practice theory and a strong track record both in the legal sector and other professional service sectors. The BLM IT management team made the decision to engage Plan-Net to carry out a formal, independent review of the Service Desk and its impact to the business and the IT function.

The review covered the people, processes and technology elements across IT support. Methods included key player interviews, process reviews, statistical analysis and ITIL maturity ranking to build an understanding of the current environment. Plan-Net also provided recommendations to transform the Service Desk into an enterprise-grade high-performance function.

From there, following a structured procurement process, the law firm chose Plan-Net to deliver this transformation and ultimately manage the Service Desk for BLM.

ENTER PLAN-NET, ENTER PROCESS

One of the main findings uncovered by the Service Review was a difficulty in accessing meaningful management reporting. The law firm was being held back by its incumbent toolset technology and a lack of formal process.

As part of the Service Transformation, Plan-Net implemented and configured ServiceNow, a leading Service Desk toolset software, in the firm. Darren Broughton comments “This was a really important step for us. It allowed us to access much more accurate figures and statistics around current performance, establish proper SLAs and start to measure against them.”

With this visibility, both Plan-Net and the IT team at BLM could start to analyse trends and build insights. BLM could better prioritise IT issues and investment by being able to interrogate information. Repeated and unnecessary calls were significantly reduced and a culture of continuous service improvement could begin with a definable starting benchmark.

The transition period, which took around 18 months, moved the function of the BLM Service Desk from one of handling and distributing contacts to a customer centric, highly responsive and resolution-based entity.

Besides better reporting and new Service Desk technology, the transformation work concentrated on defining and documenting process. Plan-Net spent a significant amount of time formalising processes on and around the Service Desk, including the role and accountability of the Service Desk Analyst, drawing from ITIL Best Practice and experience and then applying to BLM’s specific environment. Performance management mechanisms were put in place, including rewarding efforts to build and contribute to a new IT support knowledgebase. This would allow more and more issues to be resolved by the Desk and even by BLM staff themselves.

Driving customer service was the number one priority. Previously, BLM staff were obliged to raise issues through the online ticketing tool whereas Plan-Net has improved and encouraged phone contact to increase customer satisfaction. Plan-Net also extended the availability of this contact by drawing on its shared service capability and absence cover models to make the whole service more responsive – something BLM would not have been able to achieve in-house.

BENEFITS TO BLM

Darren explains there has been a number of significant benefits to the transformation project and Plan-Net’s ongoing management of the Service Desk.

With accurate and accessible reporting, combined with rigorous processes and the discipline of continuous service improvement, the BLM IT team and Plan-Net have been able to significantly drive down call volumes by tackling issues uncovered by regular Incident Analysis. For instance, contacts relating to blocked unharmed emails could be eliminated by making changes to the email filtering system. “Previously it was just not possible to identify and prioritise these issues. We had no structured way to reduce the number of calls.” Darren comments.

“With better reporting too, we have the evidence and back-up information to approach the business for investment or to highlight issues we need its support on.” Adds Darren.

“Now the Service Desk team is seen as an integral part of the IT department. First Time Fix rates have increased from 57% at the start of the project to recent statistics of 84%. Service Desk Resolution is now at levels of 90%, which is unprecedented. With only 10% of all contacts being escalated to other IT teams and better collaboration, working relationships between the Service Desk and the rest of the IT, especially the Desktop Support team have dramatically improved.”

“With end-user satisfaction hugely improved and less distraction for others in IT, we now have much more time to focus on other IT projects that will improve the business.” Darren concludes.

This includes projects such as the IT integration of new legal partners including most recently an acquisition of an Irish law firm, as BLM continues with its expansion ambitions and moves closer towards achieving its 2020 vision.

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With Plan-Net, we have been able to achieve an enterprise-grade IT Service Desk platform ready to support the business with our growth plans.

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Abby Ewen, IT Director, BLM



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