

SharePoint Customer Solution Case Study



Global Law Firm Drives Efficiency through Search-Driven Applications

“By extending and enhancing our SharePoint search platform, we are able to present data to attorneys in new and unique ways.”

Michael Tominna, Senior Manager of Web and Search Systems, DLA Piper

Company: DLA Piper

Website:

<http://www.dlapiper.com/>

Country or Region: 30 countries

Size: 8,200 employees

Industry: Professional Services, Legal

Partner: BA Insight

Partner Websites:

<http://www.bainsight.com>

Company Profile

DLA Piper is the world's largest law firm with 4,200 lawyers and approximately 4,000 additional staff members in offices throughout the Americas, Asia Pacific Region, Europe, and the Middle East.

Software and Services

Microsoft® SharePoint® 2010

BA Insight

DLA Piper, the world largest law firm, struggled with manual processes across multiple siloed systems in a growingly competitive and resource-constrained era. BA Insight, a Microsoft partner, helped them transform the way their professionals search and access information from multiple platforms through a Business-Critical SharePoint solution, taking advantage of the line-of-business connectivity and enterprise search capabilities of Microsoft SharePoint.

Business Needs

The legal industry is in the midst of a major transformation including consolidation, a trend towards reduced-price alternative fee arrangements rather than traditional hourly billing, and an exploding volume and variety of information. Most law firms are struggling with key knowledge management challenges in a resource-constrained era of heightened client expectations and cost-consciousness. Chief among them is finding creative ways to reduce end-to-end search time so that employees can spend less time searching and more time working for clients.

Introducing the World's Largest Law Firm

DLA Piper employs 4,200 lawyers and approximately 4,000 additional staff members in offices throughout the Americas, Asia Pacific Region, Europe, and the Middle East. The firm has grown through mergers, like many other large law firms; applying the full talent of the firm is a big opportunity. Tapping the firm's knowledge and expertise amidst ongoing cultural and systems integration is a challenge; so is navigating the changes and increased business pressure in the legal industry.

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Manual Search Processes

Finding and reusing information was laborious and error prone. Looking for client information, for example, required manually searching multiple siloed systems and switching back and forth multiple times. In addition, creating tailored solutions for different groups was expensive and cumbersome, so much so that it often didn't happen, resulting in less efficiency.

Solution

DLA piper decided to address the challenges of industry transformation with the help of an IT initiative including integration of all their major data sources and a significant improvement of employees' user experience with SharePoint. They view their collective knowledge as a major strategic advantage, and strive to set the bar for the industry in knowledge management, especially search.

Business-Critical SharePoint

DLA Piper selected BA Insight, a Microsoft partner, to help them implement a Business-Critical SharePoint (BCSP) solution. The solution, called iSearch, transforms their search capabilities and unifies information from seven key business systems into a single SharePoint application. They wanted to develop and deploy search-driven applications on top of Microsoft SharePoint that would:

- Enable users to find content faster, better, and more efficiently.
- Provide attorneys with the tools to find all available knowledge within the firm, and to reuse this knowledge consistently.
- Reduce the gap time between non-billable events.
- Create a unified view of information.
- Reduce the number of information silos across the firm.

Line-of-Business (LOB) Connectivity

To achieve these goals, various LOB systems had to be connected first, including HP

Autonomy iManage, Thomson Elite, LexisNexis InterAction, Lotus Notes, and multiple SQL based systems. SharePoint, which was already in use in the firm for collaboration, was used as a hub to connect LOB systems and was supplemented with FAST search and BA Insight's Knowledge Integration Platform.

Enterprise Search

The iSearch solution is a search-driven application that provides search and exploration of clients, matters, expertise, and documents. It provides a unified view across all of these areas using BA Insight connectors, workspace, and UI components. Refiners are used heavily, using metadata brought from WestKM as well as other sources. Seven major systems are indexed in addition to SharePoint. A unified index with rich metadata, high-end search capabilities, and actionable results provides a much better experience. It brings the ability to mash up data instead of searching via silos. Searching for a client number, for example, brings in every single matter that's listed out of Elite as well as all contacts from InterAction, explored together in a single view.

Benefits

Today DLA not only has an industry-best search application, but also a platform that can be easily tailored, information that can be segmented by audience, and a design pattern that can be used for a series of tailored applications going forward.

Easy Access to LOB Data

Their improvements in enterprise search have transformed the way their professionals can access a spectrum of information from multiple platforms, from any location. As information is widely disbursed across many systems and often hidden among several document management systems, file shares, practice management applications, e-mail tools, and other systems, employees previously

had to open various programs, perform multiple searches, and review inapplicable material before finding what they need. With the preview technology, the time to finding relevant information is reduced as this technology bypasses the need for local downloads. Knowledge workers are able to surface information and appropriately evaluate every aspect of a client matter in a single area; and, have the capability of dynamically displaying the most important details instantly.

Accelerating Company-Wide Processes

Having an archive that provides instantaneous access enables attorneys to rapidly repurpose information. "Being able to refer to and re-use work done for previous clients is an enormous time saver for us and ultimately for our clients," says Michael Tominna, Senior Manager of Web and Search Systems for DLA Piper, who led the firm's implementation of BA Insight's Knowledge Integration Platform. "By extending and enhancing our SharePoint search platform, we are able to present data to attorneys in new and unique ways," adds Tominna.

Evaluating content such as billing records, document authorship, role in a project (e.g., senior associate, billing partner), or time spent on major cases, can offer a true composite of employees, to help determine whether they have essential expertise related to a current matter. This knowledge accelerates the staffing process, streamlines connecting experienced attorneys with critical time-sensitive client queries, and dramatically improves business development.

Potential Savings in the Range of Millions of Dollars

Enabled by DLA Piper's improvements in search productivity, knowledge worker and attorney efficiency has resulted in significant annual savings. At current average billing rates, saving each professionals even a single hour per week can save a firm millions over the course of 12 months, and the time savings

experienced at DLA is well more than this. With one site to visit and search, which has both client-centric and matter-centric views of documents, billing records, communications, CRM intelligence and research; each professional is likely to be much more efficient, and also more effective. "The financial payoff is certainly great – and what's more exciting is that with BA Insight we gained the right platform to begin developing and deploying search-driven applications." reports Tominna.

Competitive Advantage

Improving the firm's ability to find relevant documents in a unified view will result in enhanced client service. In addition, DLA Piper now has an agile foundation for developing client matter portals and dynamic search-based applications that support the unique information management needs of distinct practice groups. This helps DLA Piper meet higher client expectations for service at reduced costs and position themselves to win in today's much more competitive landscape.

Business-Critical SharePoint (BCSP) is a Microsoft partner program that includes top solution and service providers who focus on advanced SharePoint scenarios, including LOB Connectivity and Enterprise Search.