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THE ULTIMATE
LEGAL OPERATIONS GUIDE
for In-House Counsel in 2022

Whitepaper

Lawcadia

THE ULTIMATE LEGAL OPERATIONS GUIDE

FOR IN-HOUSE COUNSEL IN 2022

Legal operations for in-house legal teams refers to the processes, activities, technologies, and professionals that enable a high performing, connected and efficient legal function in the delivery of legal services.

The most common legal operations processes relate to the entire lifecycle of a legal matter, from issue identification and instructing the legal team, followed by triage, work allocation, managing the process through to completion, and reporting. These matter-related processes traditionally incorporate work completed internally by the legal team and work that is briefed externally to law firms.

Let us review each step in the lifecycle:

- Intake and Triage
- Workflow Automation
- Matter Management
- Document Management
- Spend Management
- Collaboration
- Reporting and Analytics

Intake and Triage

Legal intake and triage refer to the process through which in-house legal teams receive and assign legal matters. In the in-house environment, legal intake is the process of receiving instructions from internal clients. At the same time, triage involves aligning the right people with the right task based on expertise and capacity. The overall goal of intake and triage is to enable in-house legal teams to delegate work appropriately, allocate resources and ensure the efficient delivery of services and/or the resolution of matters in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Automation capabilities and self-service systems effectively streamline and optimise the legal intake and triage process. In this way, in-house lawyers can be relieved of low-value and monotonous tasks and focus their attention on more strategic and valuable tasks.

Workflow Automation

Legal workflow automation refers to using software to streamline the creation, approval and management of legal work or matters. In essence, legal workflow automation involves using technology to automate a process and create a repeatable, structured workflow. There are many areas workflow automation can be used in legal practice, such as legal intake, triage, matter management, contracts, briefing law firms, regulatory compliance, managing spend, RFPs, and more. Automating these processes enables legal professionals to work more efficiently, save time and reduce operational costs whilst keeping up with the increased pace and volume of business.

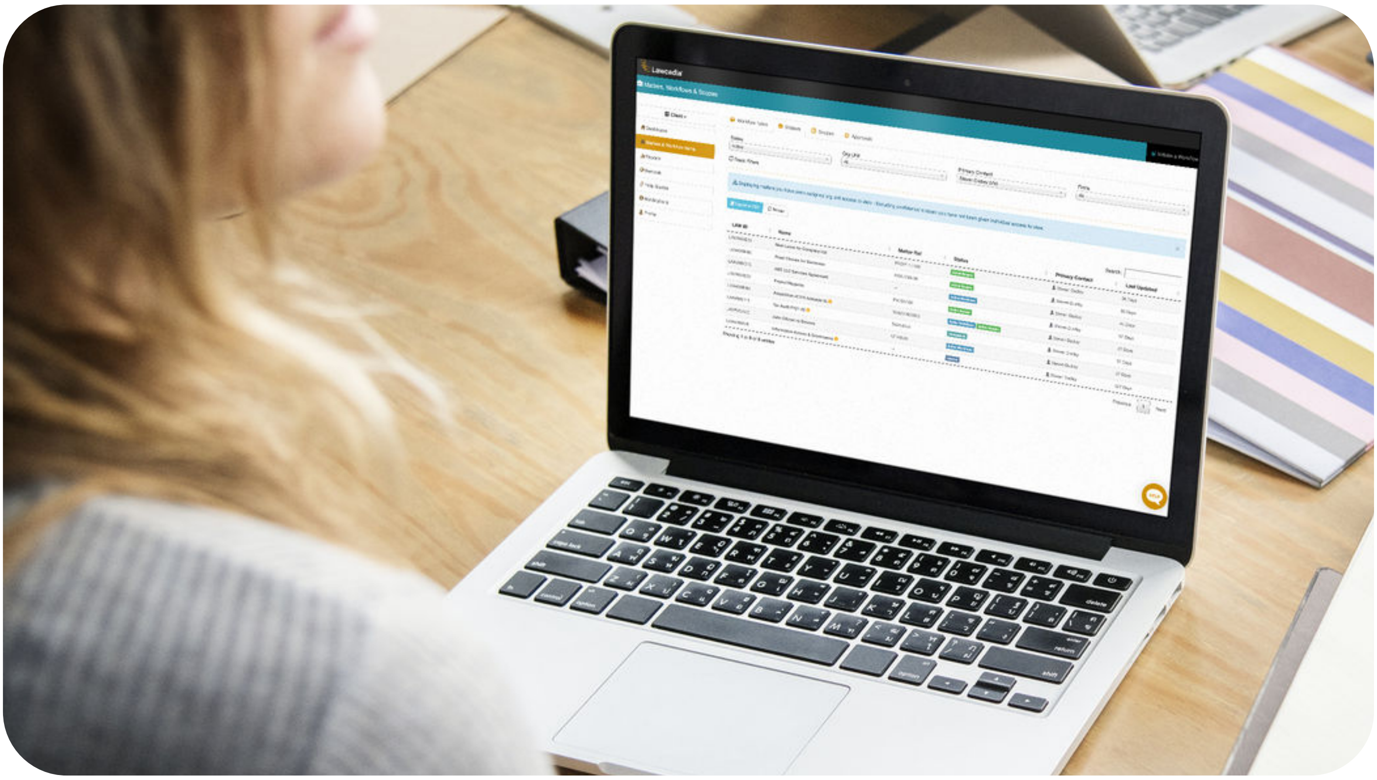
Workflow automation can reduce the time and cost of completing processes by 20% - 45%. A great place to start with workflow automation is identifying high-volume, repetitive, manual, and time-consuming tasks. For example, using technology to automate the receipt, approval, and delegation of legal requests from internal clients during intake and triage is an excellent opportunity to create standardised, consistent, and accountable workflows that help assign legal matters to their correct priority level.

More advanced workflow automation can take this a step further by autonomously configuring tasks in the correct order, delegating to the right person, capturing and reporting on the critical data points, and even generating a document simply by creating or updating a matter.

Matter Management

Matter management refers to the many activities involved in managing every aspect of a legal matter, ensuring that matters are completed within a reasonable timeframe while balancing team capacity with outsourcing legal work.

The importance is to create, manage and track your legal matters and seamlessly collaborate with your legal team and law firms. Whilst managing a matter can be done manually, it is becoming a best practice for in-house legal teams to use a consistent and structured process for receiving, managing, and monitoring legal matters using purpose-built software.



Legal teams can expand on matter management capabilities by building-in experience and knowledge through mapping out and automating the steps and activities usually required for successful completion of legal matters. This can be a checklist or template of tasks allocated internally and/or externally, ensuring best practice is followed and reducing the risk of something being overlooked or falling through the cracks. Further, automated communications using industry or organisation standards improve service delivery and can ensure compliance and minimise risk.

Ultimately, effective matter management requires tracking metrics and data points to highlight team capacity concerns, identify roadblocks, and demonstrate value and the use of organisational resources. Matter management adoption works best when these data points can be automatically logged and captured throughout the matter lifecycle, such as when a business user or internal client submits a legal request. In this way, the in-house lawyers are not burdened with time-consuming data entry which often gets neglected or is prone to human error.

Document Management

With centralised document management crucial for legal teams, enriched automation functions to ensure all documents and communications are collated and accessible in the one centralised matter is essential. Integrations with email service providers such as Microsoft Outlook and best practice document creation and editing software such as Microsoft Word within the one platform enable a single source of truth. Document management features, including version control and editing, and storage of all matter-related communication and documents, allow for a central repository that the legal team can access from one place, saving time and providing clear communication.

Some industries require storing their documents in a separate document management system (DMS), i.e., Content Manager and SharePoint. Integrating your document and records management systems with a matter management system is fundamental to providing a seamless transfer of documents and records into the required system while still allowing the single point of truth.

Document automation also uncovers a vast myriad of possibilities in document management. With standard agreements and contracts deployed as 'self-service', you can save time and improve clients' service delivery. Supported by the legal team, this enables the greater business to generate NDA's, confidentiality agreements, and other routine documents in minutes rather than hours. Automated drafts of documents can also be sent to the legal team for review and approval. The legal team should be able to demonstrate and illustrate the saved time and money easily. Importantly, in-house lawyers can spend time on the work that they enjoy and where they can add the most value.

Spend Management

Modern spend management must focus on the entire process of engaging a law firm, not just interrogating the bill after the work is completed. Best practice suggests that when briefing matters to outside counsel, the legal team can either send instructions to one law firm or opt to send a competitive brief (RFP) to multiple law firms to obtain competitive quotes based on a fixed fee, fee estimate or capped fees. (Ideally, there is an agreed protocol and logic to the decision framework for briefing law firms, and technology can be a powerful enabler to streamline and provide the structure for this.) The legal department then selects and engages the successful law firm using comparison tables to determine the most suitable based on their criteria (price, experience, project management, etc.).

Transforming the way that in-house legal teams work with their law firms, innovative technology solutions combine best-in-class workflow automation, collaboration, and project management. Legal department leaders can therefore ensure instructions are sufficiently detailed for optimal results. Control firm selection and engagement supported by logic-based workflow automation, capture and manage multiple fee structures including fee estimates, fixed and capped fees. Collaborate and agree on scope of work and budgets up front for each matter (or phase of matter), including the ability to receive, review, and approve scope and budget change requests from law firms and capture WIP, plus receive, and approve invoices.

In summary, an innovative approach to spend management allows legal departments to demonstrate value whilst reducing waste and increasing savings. Importantly, precise, repeatable, and structured frameworks for allocating budget expenditure will ensure accountability and can strengthen relationships with law firms by promoting transparent procurement decisions, predictable spend and delivering better legal outcomes.

Collaboration

Collaboration is defined as individuals working together to achieve a common goal. In legal operations, that goal is the successful completion of a matter and may involve internal and external communication across various departments. The ability to facilitate seamless collaboration and communication between the law firm and client is also a necessary competency to remain competitive in the increasingly digital legal landscape. Although the concept of client collaboration tools is not new, the processes, capabilities and scope of functionality provided by these tools have advanced significantly. Generally referred to as 'client portals', the next generation of client portals have evolved beyond file sharing and one-way communication flows towards real-time collaboration, project management, BI intelligence reporting and much more.

In addition to providing greater transparency and facilitating more effective communication and collaboration processes, some welcome side-effects of the new ways of using client portals include modernising and enhancing the client experience through customised multi-directional intelligent workflows and secure and integrated collaboration workspaces.

Reporting and Analytics

Reporting and analytics are indispensable to demonstrating value, sharing insights, understanding workload capabilities, and staying on top of spend and legal matters. Over the last few years, advances in this area have been significant, with the ability to use BI (Business Intelligence) reporting to customise dashboards and reports through in-depth analytics to drill down and review data points. Critically accessing the legal team's output and capacity, demonstrating their efficiency, and tracking status and workflow metrics as matters progress is a game-changer for General Counsel. This enables a greater dexterity to facilitate changes as required and continuously improve service delivery and performance.

As well as internal dynamics, General Counsel and legal operations professionals need a bird's eye view of actual legal spend compared to budget estimates, monitor budgets and spend of fees across time and firms and assess financial metrics in real time. Valuable insights can uncover law firm engagement and selection decisions, identify the firms that receive the most work and why, and track and review project management performance such as budget change requests and matters approaching budget.

Modern legal departments are increasingly seeking greater granularity over how law firms are resourcing their matters, and as such, regular updates provided by the law firms via streamlined workflows may be crucial. These additional data points could include insights such as fee earner estimates vs actuals across litigation or complex M&A projects, or perhaps a breakdown of the diversity and inclusion footprint of who is working on the organisation's matters.

Whilst these drivers may not be relevant for all organisations, for some, reporting to this level of detail without the high administrative and manual burden is a must-have. Ultimately, the General Counsel should be able to present the legal department's metrics, matters, spend and activity with easy-to-read dashboards that make an impact and inform strategic decision-making.

Legal Operations Systems and Solutions

When searching for a legal operation system, the focus is to uncover a provider that will engage collaboratively with the legal team to understand the problems they want to solve and then work with them to design and implement solutions using a highly configurable, easy-to-use platform. The resulting solutions should integrate the legal function into the organisation’s everyday operation so that it is no longer an afterthought but a key part of the business decision-making process.

Successfully implementing a fit-for-purpose system for an in-house legal team will support them to achieve consistency in how they receive, respond, and resolve matters and enable clear information of where each matter is in its lifecycle as well as opening lines of communication between legal teams, their law firms, and internal clients. Additional benefits include reducing workloads through automation, increasing client service levels, greater levels of reporting and analytics, and overall time savings.

This whitepaper has been provided by Lawcadia.

Lawcadia is an award-winning two-sided platform that in-house legal teams and their law firms use for legal intake and triage, matter management, collaboration, and spend management. The entire legal function benefits from streamlined workflows, greater control of legal budgets, accurate instructions, built-in document automation, collaboration tools, and actionable insights. Book a demostration using the QR code.

Why **Lawcadia.**

These are some of the reasons clients choose Lawcadia's awarding winning platform:

Greater efficiency

Intelligent, automated workflows, document generation and reporting eliminates manual data entry, reduces admin and saves time

Improve client service delivery

Client intake, collaboration tools and custom notifications provide transparency plus a streamlined customer experience

Predictable legal spend

Structured instructions, competitive RFPs, scope management and approval processes provides predictability and demonstrates value

Accurate data & BI reporting

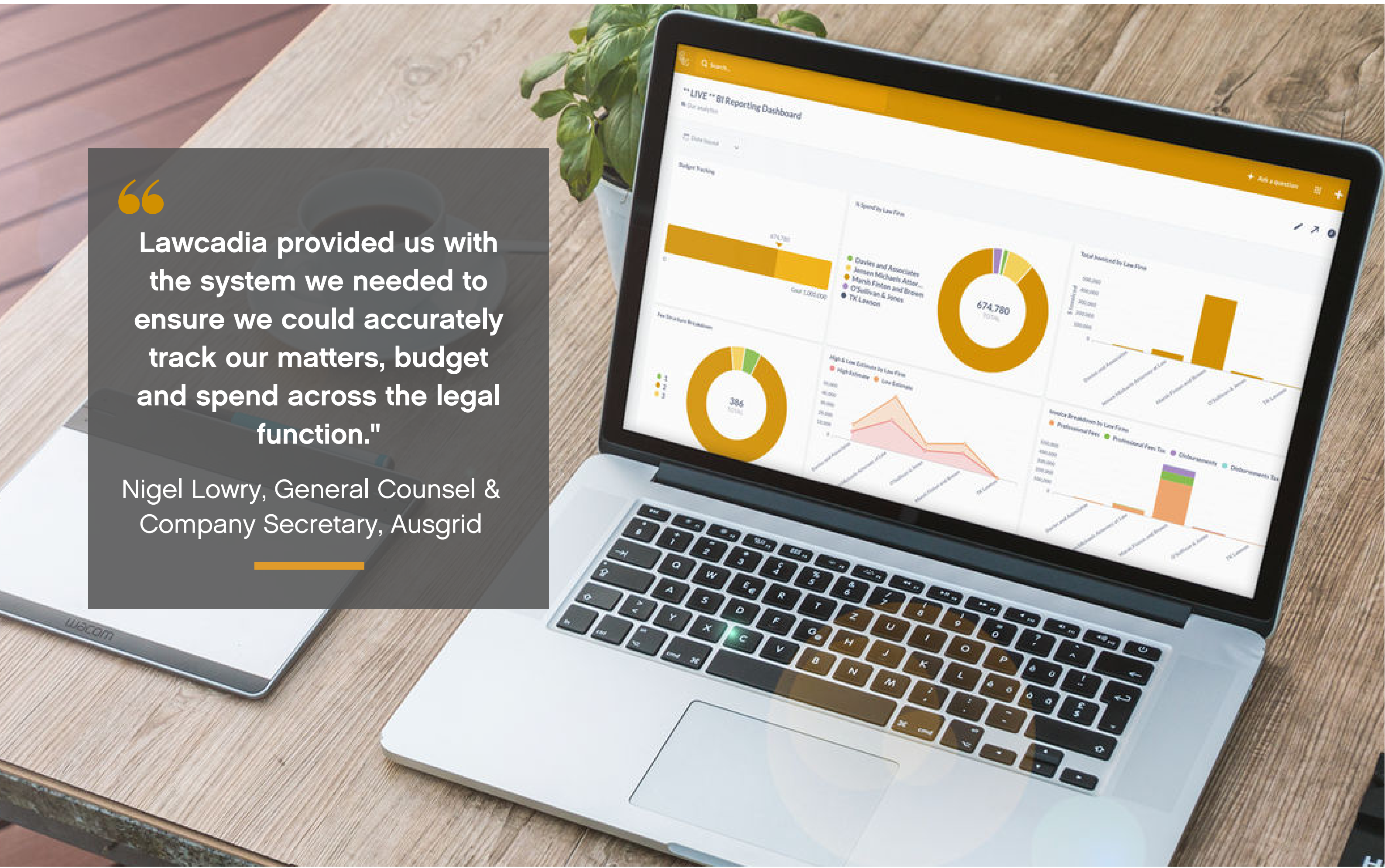
Empower decision making with a single system that connects internal clients, legal teams and law firms, with accurate data, insightful reports and custom dashboards

Enterprise-grade security

ISO 27001 certification, private-cloud infrastructure, on-premise deployment capability, along with best-in-class security controls, sets us apart from the competition

Sensational customer support

We are only as successful as our clients' implementation, and so we focus on tailored implementations, dedicated customer service, and on-going support



"Lawcadia provided us with the system we needed to ensure we could accurately track our matters, budget and spend across the legal function."

Nigel Lowry, General Counsel & Company Secretary, Ausgrid