

Value Practice: Global Account Management at Eversheds LLP

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Interviewed while Chair of the Regulatory and Compliance Group

September 2008

Eversheds is one of the largest full service law firms in the world, with more than 2,000 legal and business advisors located in 40 offices across the UK, Europe, Middle East, Asia and Africa (EMEA).

This ACC Value Practice piece focuses on global account management practices implemented at Eversheds. The firm reports that it invested more than \$20 million in these practices and that cumulative first and second year savings of up to 35% have been realized by the firm's clients through related partnerships with the firm.

Global Account Management Strategy

After assessing the factors in the legal and business environment shaping the future marketplace for legal services, Eversheds created its global account model for client services.

Eversheds concluded that it could handle all of a client's work in the EMEA region at a significant financial savings to the client while maintaining profitability for the firm: reduced fees for routine work would be compensated for by increases in the overall volume of work and through more lucrative high-end complex litigation work. The firm undertook several key steps to implement its global account management strategy:

- *Project management methods:* Eversheds developed what it describes as 'highly efficient and consistent' project management methods that streamline legal work in a 'very business-like way';
- *Training for all staff:* The firm developed rigorous multi-level training programs for all its staff so that project management methods will be applied consistently by staff everywhere in the world; and,
- *Global account matter management system:* Eversheds developed what it describes as a 'sophisticated, firmwide Global Account Management' (GAMS) matter management system that enables appropriate staff to inventory, track, manage and report on all the matters for any client from any location in the world.

Streamlined Legal Project Management using RAPID and DealTrack. Eversheds developed two main project management systems: RAPID for litigation management, and DealTrack for transactional projects. These grew out of DuPont's system of early case assessment.

These methods, used at the beginning of matters, are described by Eversheds as enabling legal teams within the firm to identify the most efficient approach to accomplishing the client's objectives.

¹ Legal Business magazine honored Paul Smith in February 2008 as "Lawyer of the Year", one of the most prestigious awards in the U.K. He was awarded for his pioneering work in delivering new approaches to global client management.

They are described as producing measurable results and cost predictability and as including steps with specific activities designed to meet built-in quality standards.

- **RAPID.** RAPID takes early case assessment to the next level, which is to apply it throughout the life of litigation. The major project segments are Review, Analyse, Plan, Implement, and Deliver. The firm reports that the agreed upon outcome is achieved in 9 out of 10 cases and that 90% of cases are resolved out of court. Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) is an important part of the methodology.
- **DealTrack.** This methodology includes four major steps, with each broken down into granular activity steps: Scope, Plan, Execute and Close. Roles and responsibilities in the project are identified and assigned, with some going to Eversheds and others going to in-house counsel.

Firmwide Project Management Training. The firm requires all associates to attend a week-long program designed to fully train them on the use of RAPID or DealTrack (whichever is relevant to their practice) as well as other topics. This training is designed to ensure that all Eversheds staff, regardless of their location or cultural background, understand and embrace the same methodologies and performance standards. Training is held in England (Nottingham University) as well as in other countries.

Global Account Management. Key global account management practices include:

- **Global Account Management Team.** Eversheds provides a client with an account management team that is responsible for supervising all of the firm's work for the client using standards and methods tailored to each client's needs. Clients can work through the account team leaders or go directly to any Eversheds specialist or office when appropriate. The Eversheds account team is responsible for ensuring that cultural differences among the jurisdictional legal teams are addressed and managed smoothly.
- **Proactive Litigation Management.** By having financial data on all of a client's litigation matters in the region, the Eversheds account team says it is able to analyze cost and causation trends every month.
 - Data is broken out by the Eversheds team by client subsidiary or division, by country, by type of litigation, and by causation. Eversheds describes this approach as enabling its team to spot emerging litigation hot spots and to advise the client when it is appropriate to make operational changes to mitigate legal exposure.
 - Information related to potential compliance problems (such as inconsistent company practices from country to country) or actual lapses can be spotted by the Eversheds account team and reported up through the client chain of command before the problems become more serious.
- **Financial Incentives.** The firm's fees are subject to a variety of performance factors designed to provide incentives for the firm to exceed the client's goals. For example:

- In its relationship with one company, the firm's performance bonus is influenced by the results of a regular client satisfaction audit that measures the consistency and quality of the firm's delivery across more than 30 EMEA jurisdictions.
- The firm can also be awarded a "litigation avoidance" bonus based on the percentage reduction in legal proceedings against Tyco compared with the previous year.
- One client will also award a variable bonus based on the firm's performance in reaching a range of diversity targets, a high priority for both the client and Eversheds.
- **Timely Financial Management and Analysis.** When Eversheds has been selected to handle all of a client's legal affairs in the EMEA region, the firm is able to provide such clients with one monthly electronic legal bill detailing the costs for all of the client's matters.
 - This monthly submission provides the client with an immediate understanding of its legal expenses and activities for that month, without having to wait weeks or months for tens or scores of law firms to submit bills.
 - The electronic bill can be submitted to whatever e-billing system is being used by the client.
- **Financial Estimating.** The firm's ELITE system enables attorneys to access cost information about cases that are similar to the case at hand being budgeted. This historical cost data provides an additional reference point that can be considered in conjunction with the estimate developed using the RAPID and/or DealTrack project management methodologies. These data together enable the firm to offer what it describes as 'very reliable cost estimates for any type of legal work,' although the firm shares that there may be some aspects of litigation matters that are obviously subject to unexpected developments.

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